

# MERSEY MESSENGER

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## CEO'S MESSAGE —

As this is the last Mersey Messenger before Christmas I'd like to thank all of you for your hard work and commitment during what has been a huge year of changes and challenges. You've all handled the transition with professionalism and I appreciate the support you've given me during this time.

I truly believe being back in State hands is a good thing as it gives us greater capacity and staff numbers. We now have the opportunity to utilise the next three years to create a solid and positive Mersey Community Hospital.

Work is well underway setting up the North West Health Services Network. The first meeting was held last week and we got a good response from a range of health service providers and community representatives.

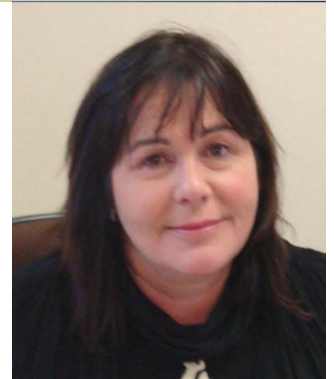
The aim of the Network is to achieve better integration between primary and secondary health care services in the North West. In the past we have found that health providers are at times overwhelmed by demand and often don't know what other services could be available. In addition, it is often the case that patients are moved across the systems that are not well linked and that don't communicate with each other.

We have a significant challenge to on our hands to improve the health status of the North West population. One of the keys to achieving this is through primary and secondary sectors working closer together and linking services; to be part of the same team.

It would be great to have representation from the Mersey at future meetings, so if you are interested in receiving more information, contact Nikki Karpeles ext 5520, who will include you on a distribution list.

Have a Merry and safe Christmas.

Best wishes, Jane Holden



## INTRODUCING "TRIM" DOCUMENT & RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Our CEO, Jane Holden is keen to introduce a Document and Records Management System (TRIM) to the Mersey Community Hospital which is in line with other State Government Hospitals and Departments.

The potential benefits of "TRIM" is to provide a more reliable and transparent system with improved access i.e. corporate information can be captured and shared.

Currently corporate documents and files are relatively unmanaged, with electronic documents residing on personal and shared file drives and paper documents filed in personal hard copy filing systems throughout the hospital.



## STORYBOARDS

Thank you and congratulations to all units for your wonderful displays, which have been featured around the hospital for the past two months as part of accreditation.

They have not only brightened up the halls but have been a great way for patients, their relatives and also staff to get a better understanding of the excellent work that is happening in each department.

The Mayor of Latrobe Mike Gaffney recently came and judged the storyboards and said it was incredibly difficult to pick a winner because they were all so good. In fact it was so hard he had to choose two, each receiving \$500 to spend on something for their ward (not a night out on the town).

The first award for the best storyboard went to the Emergency Department. Mike said their display was fantastic and had a real attention to detail. It featured flashing lights and wooden clothes pegs with cut out pictures of staff members' heads; some even had tiny stethoscopes around their necks made out of paper and beads.

The second award for the most creative display went to the High Dependency Unit for their Tree of Knowledge. The tree represented the department growing their own nurses through the HDU graduate program.

The Mayor also gave an honourable mention to the Women's and Children's Health Unit for their display of Asthma Andy. Mike Gaffney said it was not only a creative and detailed display but Asthma Andy was an excellent concept for helping children understand asthma and their treatment, and he applauded staff for coming up with the idea to use the program.

Well done to all units for putting in so much effort!



Mayor Mike Gaffney presents  
Alison Ellis, CNC Emergency  
with an Award



**Congratulations**

**To  
All  
Units  
For  
Your  
Wonderful  
Displays**



## FAREWELL—PETER CROSS

The Mersey Community Hospital will always have a special significance for Peter Cross. It's not only the place Peter's spent the past 33 years working, but it's also where he met his wife 44 years ago, who was training to become a nurse.

"My mate worked at the hospital and set us up on a blind date and we haven't looked back since."

Peter says dating a girl from the Nurses Home was no easy task.

"The rules were strict, I had to have Christine back by 10pm and they wouldn't let me past the front door... they were like the Gestapo!"

Peter started work at the hospital as a Storeman in the Supply Department. He then moved into Stock Controlling and then into Purchasing where he did a stint as Acting Manager. For the past 20 years he has been a Purchase Officer and says he's loved his job. When asked what has kept him

here for so long he replied: "Well I live at the end of the road so I guess that's pretty handy. But really it's all about the companionship and I'll really miss that."

Nine years ago Peter was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease which he says was a huge shock. Despite the enormous challenges it presented, Peter continued working full-time up until 18 months ago when he cut back to four hours a week.

"You've got to stay positive and never say never. I look at others with Parkinson's and realise how lucky I am to be mobile."

Peter is certainly a doer, and he's had five children to keep him active in the community. Peter loves helping others, not only does he volunteer at the Visitor's Centre but also with the Scouts, Latrobe Bicycle Race Club, the local Football Club and the Latrobe Brass Band. Years ago he even took 55 kids to the United States and Canada as

part of the Tasmanian Festival Wind Symphony (now known as Youth Music Tasmania).

Retirement certainly won't mean kicking back with his feet up. Instead Peter intends to spend a lot of time in his three and a half acre garden. He's also involved with the Parkinson's Support Group, which he said has been incredibly valuable for him and his family.

"I've been overwhelmed by the level of support I've received from others, particularly family, friends and work colleagues. It's certainly makes me appreciate life and want to make the most out every day."



## OUTPATIENT CLINIC REVIEW

As part of Tasmania's Health Plan, Mersey Community Hospital will become the regional centre for certain services for residents of the North West.

To support this principle, a review of current practices and services within the Outpatient Clinic is necessary.

Susan Martin, Administration Assistant, has kindly accepted to co-ordinate this review on behalf of hospital management. Susan has extensive knowledge and experience as a Practice Manager within General Practice.

This is an opportunity for staff to explore possibilities for better work practices.

Your contribution to ensuring we deliver an effective Outpatient Clinic Service is of upmost importance. Please provide Susan with your suggestions and assistance.

Contact Details:

Susan Martin  
2nd Floor—D Wing  
6426 5620.

DID  
YOU KNOW?

16 DAYS  
UNTIL  
CHRISTMAS



## POINT TO PINNACLE RACE

21 kms of  
steep and  
winding  
terrain  
Up Mount  
Wellington  
Hobart

As if working long shifts at a hospital isn't demanding enough, three of our hard-core staff members decided to take on the Point to Pinnacle, just for fun. Director of Surgery Dr James Roberts-Thomson, Oncology nurse Jennifer Pule and Nurse Unit Manager in HDU Jackie van den Berg all took on the freezing winds to race 21 kilometres up Mount Wellington in Hobart, and survived to tell the tale.

Jennifer Pule participated to raise funds for the Mersey Maidens. She finished in 3hrs 12mins but says she only just made it.

"I wasn't very well prepared and got really hungry during the race. Luckily a really nice man gave me some sultanas and nuts along the way, it saved me."

It was Jennifer's first race over 10 kilometres and says it was a huge physical challenge but an incredibly rewarding experience.

"I've dedicated my medal to Anne Wilks who is the Nurse Unit Manager for Oncology. She is a wonderful woman and works really hard. I also dedicated it to all the patients and their families because facing cancer is an uphill battle and they all show such amazing strength."

For Jackie van den Berg it was her third Point to Pinnacle, but still a huge challenge.

"It was a really tough race and was very windy and icy cold but when you are surrounded by other runners I think it spurs you on and keeps you going, plus I'm not a quitter."

Jackie ran her personal best

time of 2hrs 53mins and says she was thrilled with her performance.

"This race was good preparation for me because I'm competing in the London Marathon for the first time next year which I'm really excited about. I love running and also I work in health so I feel it's important for me to practice what I preach, so to speak."

First time participant James blitzed the field in an impressive 2hrs 32mins.

"It was a great experience and the view was spectacular, although it was very chilly."

James is certainly no novice when it comes to running, in fact earlier this year he took part in the London Marathon and plans to do it again next year.

"I'll be running to raise awareness and funds for the Tasmanian Devil. The money will go towards a setting up a Devil sanctuary on the east coast."



L-R Jennifer, Jackie, James

Gale force winds, fog and freezing conditions.

Winner of the Point to Pinnacle—Jospahat Malawi crosses the line on a foggy Mount Wellington.



## CHAPLAINCY GROUP

They are a small group of ladies with very big hearts. Many don't know they exist but the service they provide is invaluable for many. They are the hospital Chaplains, and for the past 15 years they have quietly sat with sick and dying, providing holistic support to patients' relatives and have been someone to lean on for staff when they need it. Retired teacher, Bettye Cox set up the Chaplaincy group and today she is still the Coordinator of the program. She and her team of four Chaplains operate in an inter denominational capacity and provide a 24 hour service for anyone who needs them.

"Sometimes some very traumatic accidents can happen and the nurses and doctors do a wonderful job staying strong and doing their jobs so professionally, but after it's all over I might find someone in a store room crying and I'll just sit with them and listen, I think it helps."

Bettye says the staff at the Mersey are amazing and deserve medals for the work they do. She says during her time she has seen some miracles performed, particularly in the Emergency Department.

"Some years ago a man was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition after a farming accident and everyone thought he had little chance of survival. I spent days and nights sitting with his family members who were distraught. Thanks to the outstanding team of surgeons and nursing staff he recovered. I saw that man in the supermarket just the other day and he is now a proud father of four. It's nothing short of a miracle," she says.

Becoming a Chaplain involves six months training in the Clinical Pastoral Education program.

"It's a big commitment, and a lot of what we do is voluntary, but I must say it's worth it. I love what I do and find it

"rewarding".

Vice Coordinator of the Chaplaincy Program Maureen Clarke was one of those willing to make the commitment. She worked at the Mersey for 25 years as a midwife before retiring in 2002 and she says she couldn't let go of the hospital.

"I love this place, particularly the people in it, and I feel so lucky that I can still be involved and make a positive contribution."

Maureen says one of her favourite aspects of the job is organising a group of school children to come to the hospital every Christmas and sing carols for the patients. "To see the patients' faces light up when they listen to the children is just wonderful and it really makes you appreciate life."

The Chapel is located on the second floor and is available for quiet time and reflection.

Chaplaincy Group members are Bettye Cox, Maureen Clarke, Joan Humble, Jane Allen and Heather Turner. They can be contacted on 5402 or 0417 533 385.



PHOTO: Maureen Clarke (left) and Bettye Cox (right)

With one of their favourite patients Evie Hinds

Earlier this year, MCH nominated Ms Bettye Cox for a Community Achievement Award in the category of Volunteering Tasmania Volunteering Award.

Although not officially an "Award Winner", the judging panel congratulated Bettye on her outstanding achievements.

## CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PERIOD

**Operating Theatre** will be closed from Monday 22nd December, 2008 until 5th January, 2009. **Day Procedure Unit** (only) will be operational 22nd and 23rd December, 2008.

**Outpatient Clinics** will close 16:30 hrs Friday 21st December, 2008 and resume 9:00 hrs Wednesday, 2nd January, 2009.

**NEWSLETTER  
CONTRIBUTIONS:**  
Please email your  
Newsletter  
Contributions to:  
jan.carr@dhhs.gov.au

Next Edition Jan 09  
Deadline 09/01/09

Many thanks to all staff  
who contributed to this  
issue



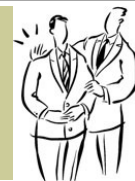
**This is our  
last edition  
for 2008**

**We look  
forward to  
lots of  
interesting  
stories in  
2009**

**Be safe!**



## PATS ON THE BACK!



I would like to nominate two very special people I have come across this year who go the extra mile.

### 1. Mary Shepherd the librarian.

Mary comes over from Burnie every week to assist with library skills and university research papers. It appeared no effort, to not only help myself but all the other staff who were struggling with their university studies. Mary looked up research papers and was able to get hold of papers we could not access through our system here. Mary always gave 100% and with a smile (cheeky one at that). I would like to formally thank Mary for this tireless effort. Truly a special lady.

### 2. Elissa Shaw CNE theatre.

Elissa is a newbie to education and she has excelled past our expectations. Recently Elissa organised a dinner in-service which was a great success, and she organised this with little assistance.

Elissa has the special quality (the X factor) which you do not see as often now, she is passionate about theatre and training and always strives for the best for her team. The Clinical Education unit is very proud of our little Elissa, and wish her all the best for her wonderful future in nursing.

Kerry

*Kerry Hall*

## ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL CHRISTMAS VISIT

Christmas came early to the Mersey this year when more than 20 students from St Patrick's School filled the halls with the sound of carols on Monday. The annual event was organised by the Chaplaincy group, and a big thanks to all of the Chaplains for managing to keep the five and six year students under control on the wards; certainly no easy task!

The patients were touched by the beautiful singing and the kids loved making everyone smile. They also enjoyed the fact that

they got out of doing school work for the day and got a free morning tea and lunch.

Even the media got involved with Win Television, The Advocate and C-FM/7AD radio coming along for a piece of the action.

It was a very successful day and it demonstrated just how lucky the hospital is to have such a committed Chaplaincy group. The ladies gave up a lot of time to organise and carry out the day and by the look on the patients' faces, it was well worth the effort.

