

South West Hospital and Health Service

PULSE

APRIL/MAY 2023 EDITION



CONTENTS

Board Chair	2
HSCE Message	3
Our Communities	
Peg McDonald celebrates 50 years with South West	4
Domestic and Family Violence Month	5
Pick of the Crop – a joint initiative with Health and Wellbeing Qld	6
Healthy lunchboxes in Charleville	7
Netball legend visits the South West	7
Volunteers – our change makers across the South West	8
Reminder to be sunsafe this winter	9
Australian of the Year empowering young people	10
Drumming raises the roof in Charleville	11
Under 8s getting healthy together	11
Our Teams	
International Day of the Midwife	12
Administration professionals celebrated across the South West	13
International Nurses Day	15
Our Resources	
\$12.87 million residential aged care expansion for South West	17
Our Services	
QLD-first Allied Health program encourages students to consider rural career	18
South West Spirit Award:	
April 2023 is the South West HHS Nutrition and Dietetics Team	
May 2023 is the Charleville Perioperative Services Team	19

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands across the South West. We also pay our respects to the current and future Elders, for they will inherit the responsibility of keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture alive, and for creating a better life for the generations to follow.

We believe the future happiness and wellbeing of all Australians and our future generations will be enhanced by valuing and taking pride in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—the oldest living culture of humanity.

SOUTH WEST TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Augathella – Bidjara (Bid-jara)
Bollon – Kooma (Coo-ma)
Charleville – Bidjara (Bid-jara)
Cunnamulla – Kunja (Koun-yah) with other interests
Dirranbandi – Kooma (Coo-ma)
Eromanga – Boonthamurra (Boon-tha-murra)
Injune – Kongabula (Kong-ga-bull-a)
Mitchell – Gunggari (Gon-gari)
Morven – Bidjara (Bid-jara)
Mungindi – Kamilaroi (Car-milla-roy)
Quilpie – Mardigan (Mar-d-gan)
Roma – Mandandanji (Mand-an-dand-gee)
St George – Kooma (Coo-ma) with **Kamilaroi, Mandandanji, Bigambul and Gungarri** interests
Surat – Mandandanji (Mand-an-dand-gee)
Thargomindah – Kullila (Coo-lee-lar)
Wallumbilla – Mandandanji (Mand-an-dand-gee)

This newsletter is produced by the South West Hospital and Health Service. All feedback and contributions are welcome. All published material has been approved by the Health Service Chief Executive.

Contact: SWHHS_Communications@health.qld.gov.au

Cover Image: Midwife Emily and Child Health Nurse Sue celebrating International Nurses Day in St George (story on page 14).



QUALITY



COMPASSION



ACCOUNTABILITY



ENGAGEMENT



ADAPTABILITY

From the Board Chair



Have you ever counted the number of hospital and health service (HHS) owned buildings that are in your local community?

Even the smallest of our facilities usually has more than one building, and at our largest facilities, the infrastructure associated with providing clinical and non-clinical services and housing for staff is numerous. Of utmost importance to the Board is the physical state of the wide array of buildings connected to our various Clinics, Multipurpose Health Centres (MPHSs) and Hospitals. The South West HHS constantly works on renewing and upgrading buildings in accordance with budget allocations.

Every month, the Board receives reports on capital works that are in progress and the flow of repairs and maintenance, both planned and unplanned. We also oversight the Infrastructure Master Plan, which outlines the state and condition of all buildings at every South West HHS location as well as improvement priorities. In 2022, a series of workshops and meetings were held at locations which identified, discussed and prioritised our Master Plan findings. These consultations viewed the current state of facilities through a lens of compliance with codes and guidelines; functional suitability as aligned to contemporary standards; operational efficiency; age and general building condition. Some of our buildings are over 80 years old (e.g. Charleville Hospital, Wallumbilla Clinic) whilst some are impressive modern facilities (e.g. Surat GP Clinic, Roma Hospital and numerous staff residences in various centres).

As a Board, we are keenly aware of how the design and state of buildings impacts both the quality of healthcare provided, as well as being a key factor influencing our ability to attract and retain staff to our rural locations. It is with delight we report that there is much work happening in the infrastructure space.

In recent months, we have had aged care extension projects established at Cunnamulla (an extra ten beds), and the addition of two aged care beds at each of the Injune, Surat and Augathella MPHSs. South West HHS has also approved a successful tenderer for building renewal projects at the Charleville Primary Care property, the St George Hospital Allied Health premises and the Morven Community Clinic rebuild. Moreover, the enhancement of perioperative and central sterile supply departments at Charleville and St George Hospitals is at the design stage. Staff accommodation offerings at Mungindi will be enhanced with the addition of six ensuite rooms and construction will commence once local government development and building approval is secured.

Smaller capital works include ongoing upgrades at many facilities with water quality and mechanical enhancements (e.g. Cunnamulla, Westhaven, St George). Other works planned include security fencing for staff accommodation at Cunnamulla; Roma Hospital walkways; Mitchell Reception area security and the St George staff saferoom. These examples provide a snapshot of the vast array of improvement works being undertaken. It is the belief of the Board that capital infrastructure should always facilitate and support the best service delivery and models of care for health consumers in South West Queensland.

The South West Hospital and Health Board meeting had a busy agenda, which included presentations from the Aged Care Safety and Quality Commissioner and team members, as well as a presentation on the Nuka system of care which may inform enhancements to integrating primary care to enhance the wellness of health consumers in the future. Board training was undertaken in Patient Safety and Quality and the usual governance reports and plans were presented, discussed and noted. In June, the Board will meet in Charleville for the monthly meeting, as well as hosting a quarterly virtual link-up with CAN Chairs and networking with representatives from the Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQ PHN) Board and leadership team who will also be in Charleville

Kind wishes

Karen Tully and the South West Hospital and Health Board

“

Future healthcare delivery is not focused on larger acute health facilities but providing better services differently, close to, or at home or within the community.

”

Page 10 – Infrastructure Master Planning Report for South West HHS



From the Health Service Chief Executive

Recently I was talking about the most important qualities that a leader needs with a wife of one of Queensland's Director Generals. We concluded that integrity and caring are the two most important qualities. In fact these are the most important qualities required of all members of our workforce.

Integrity because people need a true compass to follow. They need trust to be engaged. They need to believe that they are contributing to the greater good. They need to see principles in action. Integrity because that is the heart of good governance.

Caring because this is the core of human relationships. People need to be nurtured to feel safe and empowered. People follow leaders that care. Relationships are the core of our organisation; with each other, with our consumers, with our stakeholders and partners. Good communication is at the core of safety and quality in healthcare. Caring because we are in the business of health and caring. Organisations who do not care for their customers and communities run counter to the purpose of human society.

Then underneath these two qualities are the three enablers to ensure all employees can maximise their efforts for the organisation they work for; Motivation, Method and Means.

I am sure everyone who works for South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) is motivated to do the best job they can. Healthcare is staffed by the people of good intent.

Therefore, South West HHS needs to maximise the Means available to staff. Resources have to be wisely sourced and distributed. Infrastructure has to complement rather than impede.

The Method of work within the South West HHS needs to be maximised. South West HHS needs to enable the acquisition and maintenance of skills for all staff. The models of care and workflows need to be contextualised and enabling. The correct balance between compliance and work activity needs to be found.

Every day I hold myself to account to these five principles. Decisions around safe wellbeing, finance, Service Level Agreements, governance, resource allocation and time allocation need to be seen through the lens of these principles. I ask that others also hold me to account.

Dr Anthony Brown
Health Service Chief Executive



Emergency Crisis Support

Triple Zero – for emergencies

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636

*Staff got together to celebrate Australia's
Biggest Morning in Roma on 23 May 2023.*





OUR COMMUNITIES

PEG CELEBRATES 50 YEARS WITH ROMA HOSPITAL

For 50 years, Peggy McDonald has been nursing at the Roma Hospital.

During this time Peg, as she is affectionally known, has made some wonderful friends and become very close to some of her colleagues.

Nurse Unit Manager Perioperative, Samantha Mawn, said Peg has always been a valued member of the Roma Hospital team.

“She started her career on Sunday 20 March 1973, when her father dropped her off at the front door,” Sam said.

“There was no one around except an operational stream member who was pushing the tea hot box around when they found her. He sorted out her uniforms, showed her how to put her nursing cap up and put the safety clips behind her uniform buttons.

“Although daunting, Peg came back.”

Sam said there were many stories told of Peg’s early beginnings as a nurse living in the old nurse’s quarters and of having worked in the old annexe of the hospital which was then the nursing home at Roma.

“Peggy worked in a variety of clinical areas within the hospital moving between three different facilities during her career and she was involved in the setting up of our Flying Specialist Services clinic which continues today,” Sam added.

“During her time, Peg has seen many changes within the profession and has worked with many people across various clinical streams during her working life. She is very committed to delivering compassionate care to her patients, is very kind, caring, giving and dedicated to the Roma Hospital.”

Peggy not only has not just been a nurse over the last 50 years but has been a loving wife, mother to two sons and grandmother to five and a caring family member to many family members and friends.

“Peg is also a valued community member, and is often remembered by many of her patients due to being just Peggy. To think, she wanted to be a hairdresser!”

Roma Hospital Clinical Nurse, Jennifer Ferry, has always loved working alongside Peggy.

“Back in 1984, Peg took me under her wing and showed me the ropes, treated me as a friend and an equal – there wasn’t a lot of senior registered nurses (RN) or enrolled nurses (EN) that cared for the young back then,” Jenny said.

“When I decided to do my RN training, she was one of the few that supported me throughout my training.”

Jenny said Peg’s wonderful sense of humour always makes everyone, colleagues and patients alike, feel important.

“There is never a day when you don’t smile when working with Peg as she genuinely cares for everyone. She always takes the time to welcome new staff and makes them feel part of the team from day one. She is kind, considerate, compassionate, honest, reliable – the list goes on! Everyone loves Peg – staff, patients and families.”

Congratulations Peggy on your service, dedication and commitment to the Roma and surrounding community, and the inspiration you provide to us all!





DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE MONTH

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Month in Queensland is a critical time to shed light on an issue that affects countless individuals and families within our communities.

The South West HHS is committed to actively raising awareness DFV and taking a stand against domestic and family violence at every opportunity.

South West HHS Domestic and Family Violence Specialist, Senior Social Worker Heather Scriven said this year's theme for DFV month, held in May, was *It is in Our Control* to End Coercive Control.

"Domestic and family violence is an insidious problem that transcends boundaries of age, gender, race, and socioeconomic status," Heather said.

"It leaves lasting scars on its victims and poses severe consequences for our society as a whole. In the South West we believe that by fostering a culture of zero tolerance for violence and abuse, we can contribute to a supportive, safer and healthier community."

Heather said this year's theme highlighted the importance of recognising and addressing the underlying power dynamics within abusive relationships.

"Coercive control refers to a pattern of behaviours that seeks to dominate and control another person through various tactics, such as manipulation, intimidation, and isolation," she said.

"By shedding light on this form of abuse, we hope to empower individuals to break free from the cycle of violence and reclaim their autonomy."

Throughout Domestic and Family Violence Month, South West HHS organised a range of initiatives to raise awareness and educate our staff, patients, and the wider community.

"We provided specialised training and education sessions for our employees to equip them with the knowledge and skills to identify signs of domestic and family violence and provide appropriate support and referral pathways for affected individuals. This has also included the development of culturally appropriate supports" she added.

"We are also committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all our staff, patients, and visitors year round."

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic or family violence, we urge you to reach out for support. There are numerous helplines and services available, such as the following which can provide confidential assistance and guidance.

Together, let's stand united against domestic and family violence. It is in our control to end coercive control.

[Find out more →](#)



DVConnect Womensline
1800 811 811

DVConnect Mensline
1800 600 636

1800RESPECT
1800 737 732



PICK OF THE CROP IN THE SOUTH WEST

During 2022, South West HHS was offered the opportunity to participate in *Pick of the Crop*, an initiative that had previously been successfully piloted by Health and Wellbeing Qld (HWQld).

Healthy Communities' Rohan Ballon and Kathy Morrow started engaging with schools across the South West, supporting them to develop their Action Plans.

Kathy said across the South West, currently nine schools have since had their action plans successfully approved with another seven schools having their action plans in varying stages of progress.

"Schools that participate in Pick of the Crop enter a three-year journey," Kathy said.

"During this time Healthy Communities will support the schools on their pathway. The first year is all about creating the action plan – enabling schools to apply for \$5,000 boost funding to implement their plan.

"In the second year, there will be the opportunity to apply for a further \$2,000 funding with the third year focusing on building sustainability. This is a fantastic opportunity for our schools and we are proud to be associated with this project and the wider benefits this will bring."

If you would like to know more, Kathy and Rohan are keen to provide further information:
swhhs-healthy-communities@health.qld.gov.au

There are five components to Pick of the Crop: Farmer connections, Teaching and learning, Vegetables and Fruit @ school, Healthy School environments and Parent Connections.

Find out more →

WHAT IS PICK OF THE CROP?

Pick of the Crop is a whole school healthy eating program, aimed at increasing the opportunities for primary school students in Queensland to learn about and eat more vegetables and fruit. The initiative was successfully piloted by Health and Wellbeing Qld (HWQld) in across 35 Primary Schools in Queensland during 2021.

Having positive learning experiences in schools, along with connecting with teaching and learning in classrooms, is important to inspire children to taste and eat more veggies and fruit. This will encourage children to continue eating them as they get old, providing long term health benefits.

This initiative is therefore an exciting opportunity for primary state schools to advance their healthy eating strategies and support their students learning and wellbeing.

The program offers the opportunity for primary state schools to apply for \$5,000 boost funding enabling them to implement locally designed School Action Plans. These Action Plans will be developed in partnership with the Healthy Communities to build on the school's strengths, current actions and visions.





HEALTHY LUNCHBOXES IN CHARLEVILLE

The inaugural Healthy Lunchbox competition in Charleville was held during the annual Charleville Show in May.

HOPE's Jenny Peacock and Dietitian Laura Bate decided to hold the competition to help encourage families across the area to showcase their lunchbox ideas.

"We wanted families to get behind the initiative and share with the community what they think makes a healthy lunchbox," Jenny said.

"So it was not only a friendly competition but also a way to help educate kids and families about healthy eating and how easy it can be to make lunchboxes healthy. We want to thank everyone who got behind the initiative and we are already looking forward to next year's competition."

Jenny congratulated the following winners on the day:

- Alexander Family – Special Award: Most Practical Lunchbox
- Ang and Lacey Orupe – Special Award: Most Creative
- Castles' Family – Special Award: Most Innovative
- John Jones – Highly Commended

Congratulations everyone and we hope that this challenge has inspired you all with further options for lunchtime!



NETBALL LEGEND VISITS THE SOUTH WEST

More than 400 people of all ages joined Australia Netball coach and retired international netballer Vicki Wilson OAM who visited the South West recently.

Our HOPE Program partnered with Murweh Shire Council and Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH) to bring Vicki to Charleville and visit the five schools in the area.

HOPE's Suzanne Eustace-Earle said Vicki has been a regular visitor to the South West since 2017, providing mentoring and coaching clinics.

"She's provided sessions for kindy kids and their mums and dads, mentoring for coaches and referees, general ball skills to all students grade 3 upwards and also provided a session for up and coming players," Sue said.

"Vicki always says how much she loves coming to the South West because the kids are always so full of energy and eager to play and learn."

Thank you Vicki for spending time with us in Charleville and inspiring our future netball stars!



VOLUNTEERS – OUR **CHANGE MAKERS** ACROSS THE SOUTH WEST

Across the South West we celebrated and acknowledged our volunteers as part of Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering, National Volunteer Week (NVW) from 15 to 21 May.

This week-long event recognises the vital support that the millions of volunteers across our country provide to their communities and also encourages people to consider volunteering.

This year's theme was The Change Makers and was a perfect reminder of how volunteers can make a positive impact to the lives of those they serve. South West HHS Chief Executive, Dr Anthony Brown, said NVW was a celebration of our power to drive change and ensure volunteering is inclusive of all members of the Australian community.

"Volunteers come from all walks and stages of life and selflessly dedicate their time and skills to support our consumers, families, and staff across our facilities," Dr Brown said.

"They are the people who greet visitors with a friendly smile, provide comfort and companionship to consumers, assist with administrative tasks, form part of our hospital auxiliaries, join our Community Advisory Networks and do so much more.

Your contributions are invaluable and essential to our mission of providing the best possible care to those we serve. Our vollies are truly change makers, and we are grateful for your commitment and dedication to our hospitals and facilities.

"They make significant impacts on the lives and support we can provide across our facilities, and their supportive efforts have helped improve the quality of care we provide. Whether it's through assisting with patient care, or providing comfort to patients and their families, their selflessness and generosity never goes unnoticed.

"I know that volunteering can be challenging at times, especially in a remote and rural setting. However, your perseverance and dedication have allowed us to continue providing essential healthcare services to our community, and for that, we are all grateful. When I am visiting our many sites across the South West, it is always nice to see you and the evident pride you have in your facility and important role you play.

"Whether it is through a kind word, a smile, or a helping hand, our volunteers remind us that small gestures always have a big impact."

WHAT TYPE OF CHANGE MAKER ARE YOU?

Perhaps you might be a Caregiver, Guardian, Energiser, Defender, Inquirer, Communicator, a combination of some or all of these, or a different sort of Change Maker altogether!



MEET JOHN

He is one of our amazing volunteers at Charleville.

John started volunteering at the Charleville Hospital and Waroona Multipurpose Service just after he retired in 2012.

"I lived in the bush most of my life, so I never got to be around people or play weekend sport or that type of thing, but now I find myself around people all the time.

I love helping out the residents and cooking barbecues for them and staff. It really makes their day. I know all the people who are in Waroona and many in the hospital and have known them for many years. In fact, I have known one of the patients since 1968.

I feel very privileged I get to help. I drive them to different activities like bingo in Morven and the other day we drove to Augathella for a picnic in the park. They really do love getting out and about and it is so wonderful seeing how much they appreciate us taking the time. It really makes me immensely love helping them."

If you're interested in volunteering your time in support of one of our facilities, or joining one of our Consumer Advisory Networks (CAN), we would love to hear from you.

Contact us at SWHHS_Board@health.qld.gov.au

[Join a CAN →](#)

[Find out more →](#)



REMINDER TO BE **SUN SAFE** THIS WINTER

A new advertising campaign is encouraging young Queenslanders, outdoor workers and outdoor enthusiasts to stay sun safe this winter by reminding them to slip, slop, slap, seek and slide even during the cooler winter months.

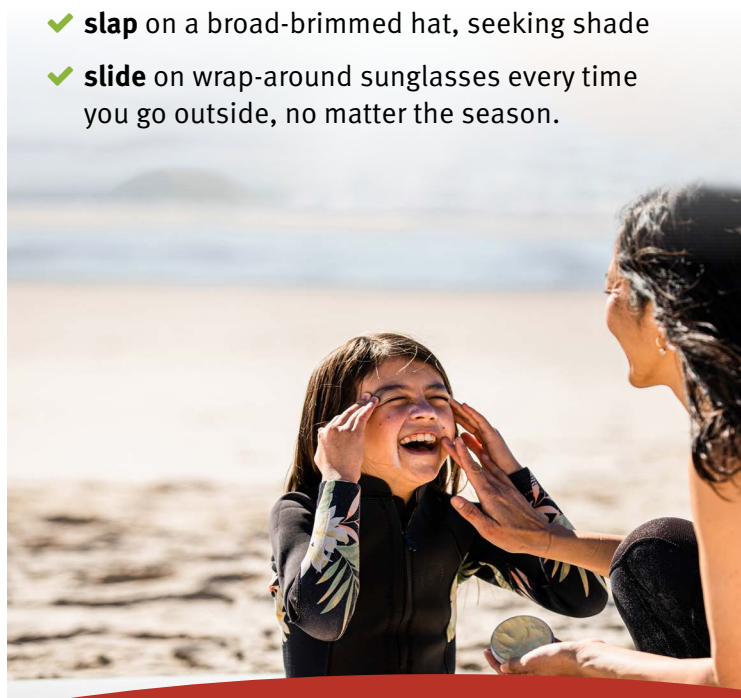
Two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime, while one Australian is diagnosed with melanoma every 30 minutes.

Queensland has the unenviable record of having the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, due to high levels of ultraviolet radiation year-round, our active outdoor lifestyle and an inadequate uptake of sun safe behaviours. And certainly here in the South West we should always slip, slop, slap, seek, slide – and do so year-round, as even though the temperatures may have dropped slightly, skin damage is still a very real risk and we always need to take care.

Too many people think these actions are only necessary when spending an extended period outside during the hot summer months. However, what a lot of people don't realise is that skin damage is still a serious risk in winter – even during incidental exposures, such as hanging out washing or taking a short walk – when you often don't think about protecting your skin because the weather is cooler.

So, always remember the importance of regular skin checks and please role model the following sun safe behaviours:

- ✓ **slip** on protective clothing
- ✓ **slop** on SPF30+ sunscreen
- ✓ **slap** on a broad-brimmed hat, seeking shade
- ✓ **slide** on wrap-around sunglasses every time you go outside, no matter the season.





AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

Communities across the Murweh Shire had the privilege of having 2020 Australian of the Year Rachel Downie speak to students, staff and parents about contentious issues challenging today's society at the end of May.

Rachel is the founder of Stymie – an anonymous online reporting system for use in schools internationally – which empowers young people to ask for help when they need support, or if they are seeing or experiencing harm.

HOPE Program's Jenny Peacock said the communities love it when Rachel comes out to speak to our communities.

"Stymie's purpose is to support psychological safety by empowering young people with the self-belief that they can say something on behalf of themselves or as a bystander for someone else," Jenny said.

"The way Rachel presents the information to all ages is so informative and relatable. Charleville High School and Charleville State School have been Stymie schools since the start in 2016, and now Charleville St Mary's and Augathella State school are also Stymie schools – helping our young people courageously stand up for themselves and their peers when they see or experience harm, both on and offline.

"Rachel tackled issues of bullying and harm, e-Safety, cyberwellness, personal safety and boundaries with the students, staff and parents in the school communities."

Rachel's road trip included Charleville High School, Charleville State School, St Mary's Primary, Charleville School of Distance Education, Augathella and Morven State School. Dedicated staff sessions and community information sessions were also provided in Charleville and Augathella.

Rachel started Stymie after one of her students took his life.

"I decided to actively work to help young people to realise their agency in building a culture of care hence I invented Stymie, an anonymous online reporting system for use in schools internationally," she said.

In 2022, Stymie delivered more than 95,000 notifications about self-harm, bullying, suicide ideation, family violence, illegal activity, sexual harassment, cyberbullying and mental health concerns.



Further information about Stymie is available at about.stymie.com.au/





DRUMMING RAISES THE ROOF IN CHARLEVILLE

With a drum in each hand, students of all ages from Cunnamulla and Charleville Primary and High schools took an exciting journey into African music and culture when they had a visit from InRhythm at the end of May.

InRhythm is all about connection, fun, mindfulness and creativity, with programs for all ages and abilities through the power of rhythm. Regularly invited to visit South West communities by the HOPE Program, this is the sixth time that Tim and Jason from InRhythm have visited local communities and they've proven to continually popular once again this year.

Each school drumming workshop teach musicality, culture and mindfulness, aiming to improve social skills, confidence and self-esteem, reducing stress and exploring resilience. The drumming is intuitive, spontaneous and highly accessible. It allows for the greatest amount of creativity and self-expression.

And of course, its just great fun!

Charleville St Mary's Principal, Katrina Dunne said the students were captivated and engaged instantly, and their participation and excitement was consistent throughout all sessions.

As a special addition to the schedule this year, Tim and Jason also held workshops and performed at Charleville's Annual Show.

The crowd was treated to a high energy drumming spectacular that got them up and grooving to the rhythms. Volunteers were also invited up on stage to join in and have a go.

UNDER 8s GETTING HEALTHY TOGETHER



Charlie is all smiles

Franky, Eleanor and Indiana



South West staff Laura Bate, Sally Gordon and Jenny Peacock

More than 200 kids enjoyed the annual Under 8s Day at St Mary's Primary School on 25 May.

Our South West HHS team from Charleville supported the day and hosted a healthy eating stall.

HOPE Program's Jenny Peacock said the South West stall was a great hit once again with the different activities available.

"We always promote healthy eating at our stall and make it a bit of fun. This year, we had apple slinkies, milk giveaways and some fun games kids which doubled as educational games about healthy eating," she said.

"It is always so encouraging to see so many kids from local schools, kindergartens, day care, playgroups from across the district – and School of Distance Education – come together to learn and play."



OUR TEAMS

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE

Midwives across the globe were celebrated on Friday 5 May as part of International Day of the Midwife 2023.

South West HHS Chief Executive, Dr Anthony Brown, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all of our midwives and supporting teams for their unwavering commitment towards providing excellent care to mothers and babies across our communities.

“The theme for this year’s celebration, ‘Together Again: From Evidence to Reality,’ is in recognition of the 33rd International Confederation of Midwives Congress, where the global midwife community will join together later this year, for the first time in more than five years,” Dr Brown said.

“It is also honouring the efforts of midwives and their associations to action critical evidence towards meaningful change for the profession and the women and families they care for. A midwife’s dedication and passion for the work they do is so evident in the countless lives they touch, families they support and the positive outcomes they help achieve.

“Their expertise, experience, and evidence-based practices have been invaluable in ensuring safe and healthy pregnancies, births, and postpartum periods for mothers and their babies across the South West for many years.

“I have been consistently impressed by the hard work and professionalism of our midwives and the wider challenges they face in a rural and remote context. They are knowledgeable, compassionate, and truly committed to their patients. They go above and beyond to provide personalised care and support, and their tireless efforts make a real difference in the lives of the families they serve.”

Dr Brown said he hoped we all continue to work collaboratively to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes, address disparities and health inequalities, and advocate for the rights of women and children.

“Thank you for all that you do, day in and day out, to ensure our families and communities across the South West have the best possible start in life,” he said.

MEET NICOLA FREIBERG

one our Charleville Hospital midwives

“I love all aspects of caseload midwifery. If I had to choose, my favourite part by far is supporting new mothers and their babies during the postnatal period. I find it especially important to offer new mothers extensive support during this time, specifically with breastfeeding and emotional support. I’ve never had a more rewarding job and love watching these little people grow in our community.”

Thank you Nicola, and your midwifery colleagues, for all that you do for new mums in the South West!



Nicola Freiberg, welcoming her second nephew into the world last June. Will's birth has been her most special moment of her career to date.



ADMINISTRATION PROFESSIONALS CELEBRATED ACROSS THE SOUTH WEST

On Friday 5 May, the tireless work of our admin and support teams was celebrated during Administrative Professionals Day.

South West HHS Chief Executive, Dr Anthony Brown, thanked each and every one of our Administration colleagues working across the South West for all their hard work and dedication to the HHS.

Without your tireless efforts, our facilities would not run as smoothly or efficiently as they do. You are the backbone of our operations, ensuring that patient care is our top priority

By always going above and beyond you help ensure our health service is functioning at its best, and I cannot express enough how much we rely on all your expertise and hard work.

“You are at the heart of every facility and the first point of contact for many of our patients and visitors, and as we all know, a warm and friendly demeanour helps to create a welcoming atmosphere for all who enter our doors.”

Dr Brown also made special mention of the importance of the work behind the scenes which is so important to ensure the smooth running of the service.

“From managing patient records and scheduling appointments, to answering phones and greeting visitors – in addition to all other duties behind the scenes at our facilities and offices – our administrative professionals support a wide range of critical services that keep our facilities ticking along.

“Please know that your hard work and commitment are truly valued and appreciated each and every day. Thank you for your tireless efforts, your unwavering dedication, and your positive attitudes. You consistently demonstrate your commitment to excellence, and your professionalism and reliability are truly outstanding,” he said.

Tori Fleeting – Learning Services Officer, South West Learning On-Line shares with us what it means to her to be an administration officer in the South West HHS.

“

A place I am proud to call work and a team that has become family to me!

As administration officers, we provide support to ensure things run smoothly in the offices by carrying out a large variety tasks.

Working in the Learning and Development team my support role is vastly different to other administration support roles in the health service. We are a unique unit that strives to improve staff education and ultimately patient care.

Working in this team I have been fortunate enough to work alongside some amazing people, challenging my professional and personal skills in a positive way which has allowed me the opportunity to succession into a new career pathway as a Learning Service Officer.

As an administration officer I'd be typing up documents, responding to business enquiries, coordinating internal and external training, processing finance documents and providing customer service all in a day. Now, as a Learning Services Officer, I've also gained the knowledge and skill to build new online interactive training modules and so much more.

”





Meet some of our Administration Professionals! Here is a little write up from the St George Admin team

Here at St George Hospital, we commend ourselves on being professional, efficient and proactive employees. We are a great team that work well together, as well as with staff members from other departments. Even though we work in a fast-paced – and sometimes hectic – environment, we always take the time to support each other in our various roles, whether its helping with daily tasks or providing some much-needed chocolate.

Working in a supportive environment is one of many benefits to working for the South West HHS.



Meet Emma Humphreys
Manager of Health and Clinical Information, Health Information, Quality and Safety Unit.

“Often when we think healthcare; doctors, nurses, allied health staff come to mind! Although our clinicians are vital, our administration teams are often overlooked as being the vital workforce supporting our clinicians to deliver the very best care to our communities.”



Meet Jo Bright
A/Senior Health Information Analyst/Health Information Officer

“I find my career as a Health Information Officer very satisfying but also very challenging as one day is never the same and there is always something different to do.

Helping a variety of staff members to problem solve or correct errors is something that gives me a great feeling of satisfaction. I have a fantastic team and feel valued not only for my work but as a member of the team.”



Meet Kasha Murray
Kasha works frontline at Surat Hospital and is currently expanding her skills with the Health Information team.

“I enjoy the different challenges that arise every day. As well as the constant learning and working together as a team to create a positive outcome.”



Here is Chrissy Tincknell
Executive Support Officer – Finance Infrastructure and Corporate Services and a bit about why she loves her job!

“I had no prior health experience when I started with South West, so my first weeks were a huge learning curve. Nearly four years on, I continue to learn more from those I work with across the health service which is something that I love about my job.

I have worked with some great people who are willing to teach and share their knowledge which helps me to understand how what I do in the background helps our frontline staff. I am also lucky to work with a team who are dedicated to community, so everything we do is with that shared goal in mind.”



Meet Katie Birney
from Dirranbandi from the Health Information Team who is currently working in the Quality and Safety Unit.

“I am very fortunate to work with a great team who make it enjoyable to come to work. It is satisfying to know that we help people every day and my role gives me the flexibility for work/life balance.”



INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Focusing on a “brighter” future of nursing and how the profession can help improve global health for all was at the centre of this year’s International Nurses Day.

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every 12 May, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth. This year the theme for International Nurses Day (IND) was Our Nurses. Our Future.

South West HHS Chief Executive, Dr Anthony Brown, extended his appreciation and gratitude to all nursing colleagues across the beautiful South West.

“Your dedication, hard work and sacrifice are essential to providing quality care to patients and ensuring their well-being,” Dr Brown said.

“Nurses are at the forefront of delivering healthcare to our communities, providing care to patients in various settings, including hospitals, clinics, our aged care settings and patient homes – either in person or online.

“Nurses are a such a vital part of our health system. Alongside all South West Hospital and Health Service teams, your selflessness, commitment, courage and resilience over the past few years are also a testament to your professionalism and dedication to patient care.”

Dr Brown also recognised our nurses’ passion, and commitment to ongoing learning and professional development, ensuring they were always equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to provide high-quality care to our patients.

“Our nurses’ selfless service and tireless efforts are truly appreciated and valued. All of you have made a tremendous difference in the lives of so many, and I am proud to work alongside you,” he said.



Meet some of the **wonderful nurses** we have working across the South West!



Charleville nurse Mel Back shares why she loves being a nurse.

“From a very young age my Ma had a diabetic leg ulcer and every school holidays I would go and stay with her and each morning I would help with her dressings, and she was so grateful that I helped her, and that is where my love of nursing started.

I love being a nurse as I am helping patients when their most vulnerable. Not only am I giving excellent medical care, but also ensuring the patients feel safe, comfortable and cared for.

Working in a small community you get to know patients outside the hospital environment, and then when they come to hospital, they are relieved that there is a familiar face.

Working in rural and remote community gives me the opportunities to work in many different areas in one day, from general ward to theatre and back to emergency. It is such a diverse job and being able to use all my nursing skills to ensure that patients receive patient centred care is so rewarding.”

Thanks Mel, and all your nursing colleagues across the South West for all that you do for your community!



Meet Georgina Rudken, Clinical Nurse Educator at Westhaven Aged Care Facility in Roma.

“I am a proud third-generation aged care nurse with a special interest in gerontology and providing high quality, holistic care to our community’s aging population.

I am a big believer in the inherent worth and dignity of the older person, and I love the focus that aged care nursing places on this.

I am very passionate about making the aged care sector the best it can be for its consumers and workers, and have participated in a number of research projects and studies to contribute to the knowledge base within this sector – I have found my professional vocation within the field of geriatric nursing.

I find a lot of meaning and joy working with people who have dementia and other cognitive impairments, and it makes me feel like I can make a difference caring for people in their twilight years.

I love my residents and team at Westhaven and feel so blessed to be a nurse within the South West.”

Thank you Georgina, and your colleagues, for your evident passion and commitment to serving our residents and supporting the independence of our older community members!



Meet Tahni Cosgrove from Roma Hospital.

“I love being a nurse as you get to be there with people through some of their darkest and scariest times and help them navigate through it.

Being someone’s voice and advocate is something few have the privilege in doing. If it wasn’t hard enough balancing shift work with two small children at home, this year, I am extending my studies into midwifery and I am very excited to be able to join women in their journey of bringing life into the world.

Sounds like a lot on my plate doesn’t it, but I have always had this dream of following in my mother’s footsteps and I am inspired by her passion in everything she does.

I can’t wait to see what the future holds for me in this career!”

Thank you Tahni for all that you do and we wish you well in your further studies!

Our Nurses. Our Future.



OUR RESOURCES

\$12.87 MILLION RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE EXPANSION FOR SOUTH WEST

Elderly people living in the South West can be assured they will have access to quality aged care closer to home thanks to joint state and federal funding.

Cunnamulla, Injune, Surat and Augathella multipurpose health services will expand existing aged care spaces through a \$12.87 million upgrade with Cunnamulla expected to be completed by early 2024 and the other three sites are expected to be completed by end of the year.

These communities will have access to not only aged care services but also acute hospital services, allied health, early intervention programs, and community health services, all under the one roof.

Cunnamulla's health service will receive a new 10-bed residential aged care unit at a total cost of \$7.6 million.

The Injune, Surat, and Augathella multipurpose health services will each receive two single bedrooms with ensuites, at a combined cost of \$5.27 million.

Work at Cunnamulla, led by New State Builders, has already begun and is expected to be completed by early 2024, weather permitting.

Work at the other three sites, by contractors S&K Duff Builders and DJ Buckley Builders, began in May and are expected to be completed by the end of the year and we look forward to providing further updates as this exciting works progress.

FURTHER INFORMATION

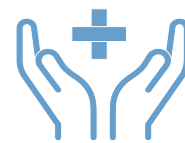
Cunnamulla:

- The new 10-bed unit will replace a temporary four-bed aged care unit created in March 2021.
- Works are being undertaken by New State Builders (Dalby).
- The brand new, purpose-built residential aged care unit will include:
 - 10 single bedrooms with ensuites
 - An activity room, lounge, and dining area
 - A sensory garden for residents and their guests

Injune, Surat, and Augathella:

- In addition to the two-bedroom extensions, the shared living and recreational space currently available to a residents in each facility is also being expanded
- Works are designed to bring all available aged care beds together in the one section, instead of being split across different locations in the facilities
- Works at Injune and Surat will be delivered by S&K Duff Builders Pty Ltd (Roma)
- Works at Augathella will be delivered by DJ Buckley Builders Pty Ltd (Toowoomba)





OUR SERVICES

QLD-FIRST ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAM ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO **CONSIDER RURAL CAREER**

A new innovative program to expose final year Allied Health students to life and work in rural areas is proving a hit across the South West.

The Rural Immersion Placement Program – Allied Health (or RIPPAH) was a first for Queensland that included community experiences for students rather than just a clinical practice placement said Helen Wassman, Executive Director Allied Health.

“We hope this early positive exposure to living and working in rural areas will help them decide to pursue a career in the country once they have completed their studies,” Helen said.

Ms Wassman said RIPPAH had been developed in collaboration with Southern Queensland Rural Health (SQRH) and the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer (OCAHO) over the past two years, with the first participants starting in the program from January this year.

“SQRH kindly provide free accommodation to every RIPPAH student along with a student bursary, and OCAHO sponsors a project officer position to facilitate the planning, implementation, and evaluation of RIPPAH to ensure it is sustainable and meets the needs of our community and health service partners.”

Ms Wassman said the RIPPAH program was available to final year Allied Health students who specifically expressed a desire and a passion for pursuing a rural health career.

“As part of the program, students are immersed in the community where they are offered opportunities including social activities, rural farm stays, part-time paid employment, and sporting team membership. This is designed to expose them not just to the variety of work available should they take up a rural health career, but also the social and personal benefits of living in a small community.”

Ms Wassman said the first three students to join the program included a physiotherapy student from Central Queensland University and two dietitian students from Queensland University of Technology.

“A further seven Allied health students will join us during the remainder of the year from the University of Queensland, Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology,” she said.

“All the students will undertake placements of between 10 and 15 weeks. Our first three students were based at Roma Hospital, and subsequent students will also be placed at Charleville and St George. From those hubs, they may also have the opportunity to experience short outreach visits to our other facilities throughout the region.

“For instance, we will have two nutrition and dietetics students at Charleville Hospital for 10 weeks in April, May and June, followed by a physiotherapy student completing five weeks at Charleville Hospital and five weeks at St George Hospital, integrated with the SQRH student clinic in July and August.”

Ms Wassman said as final year students, all those participating in the RIPPAH program would be on the cusp of deciding where they wanted to start their careers once they had graduated.

“We certainly hope their RIPPAH experience will help them decide to work with us or in other rural and regional areas of Queensland, and its so pleasing to see great interest in applications,” she said.

One of the first three participants in the program is physiotherapy final year student Laura Rutherford from Central Queensland University, who hails from Marmor, south of Rockhampton.

“I heard about the RIPPAH program, and I thought immediately that’s exactly what I want to do with my career,” she said.

“As well as offering an extended rural placement, the program gives you the opportunity to get involved with the local community as well as work in a rural hospital. I’m passionate about working in a rural area and this seemed like such a great opportunity to get some real exposure to what it would be like to do once I finish my degree.

“I also liked the idea of doing the placement in Roma because I have a lot of family around there and I know the region quite well. It just seemed to all fall into place perfectly.”



The RIPPAH team at Roma – from left – student dietitian Olivia Raccanello, South West Hospital and Health Service Executive Director Allied Health Helen Wassman, physiotherapy student Laura Rutherford, Clinical Educator Lisa Baker, RIPPAH Program Lead Rhiannon Barnes and student dietitian Matisse Tisdell.



May 2023 #swSpirit

Congratulations to the Charleville Perioperative Services Team for being the May 2023 #swSpirit recipients.

The Team always surpass our South West values of engagement, adaptability, compassion, quality and accountability with their unwavering dedication and remarkable efforts always going above and beyond.

Your demonstration of adaptability in high-risk situations, coupled with a collaborative response, is truly commendable as is your ability to adapt to challenging circumstances which is not only invaluable but showcases your remarkable skills.

The whole team continually displays resilience and willingness to assist as on-call staff even after hours for the hospital, exemplifying engagement as true team players.

Setting up the family tree initiative in the CNC's office at the start of COVID enabled patients to meet the team prior to surgery and was an extraordinary display of compassion and foresight for community members scheduled for surgical services.

This thoughtful gesture not only addressed the challenge of mask-wearing but also provided comfort and familiarity to the patients during a time of significant uncertainty.

Once again, congratulations to the entire team for your exceptional achievements. Your dedication, adaptability, compassion, and commitment to quality continue to inspire us all.

Your remarkable contributions make a significant difference in the lives of those you serve, and we are incredibly proud to have you as part of the South West HHS team.



April 2023 #swSpirit

Our #swSpirit for April 2023 is the South West HHS Nutrition and Dietetics Team

Cristal Newman, Jasmine Light, Laura Bate, Deborah Grier and Rohan Ballon are all leading examples of how to emulate the South West HHS five values of adaptability, accountability, compassion, quality and engagement.

In their role they cover an expansive area, travelling most weeks to deliver a comprehensive dietetic service across the region in both clinical and community-based settings.

Working in a rural and remote setting, our dietitians are very much generalists, meaning they need the skills to manage every possible dietetic scenario.

Helen Wassman, Executive Director Allied Health, said clients and colleagues were often intrigued by what dietitians do.

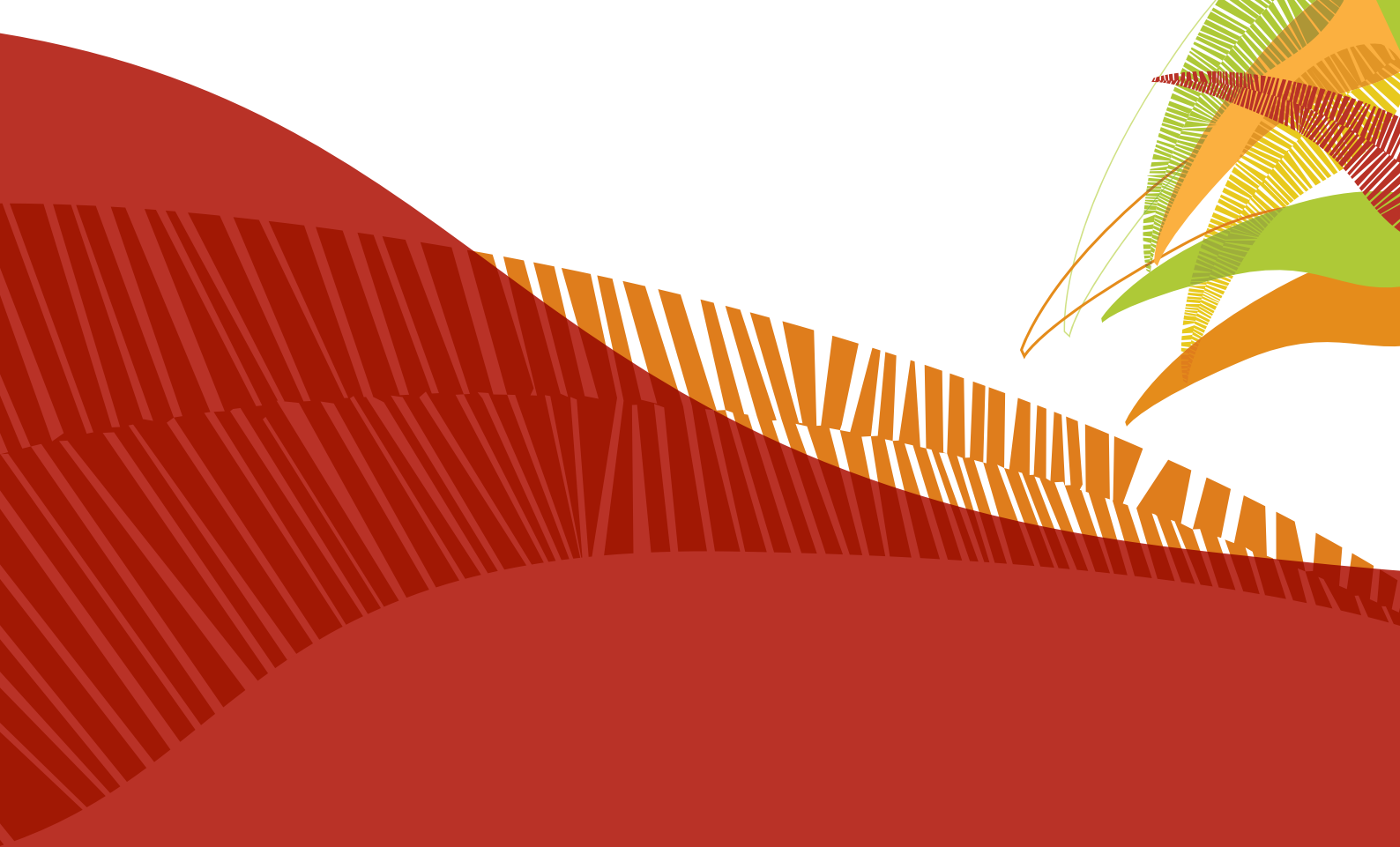
"They're often surprised to learn that their job is about more than advising overweight patients on how to reduce their waistlines, and often hear comments such as "I thought you just talked about eating more fruit and vegetables" or "I'm not eating rabbit food!" or "I thought you only did weight loss," Helen said.

"But they offer so much more and play an important role in managing many chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, obesity, malnutrition and food allergies. They're also experts in treating clients with irritable bowel conditions, coeliac disease and diverticulitis as well as a long list of other chronic and acute conditions.

"Dietitians see people across the whole lifecycle, from birth to end of life, as well as people with disabilities and special needs. Our team always goes above and beyond for our communities, and we are truly so lucky to have such a dedicated team. As part of their role here in the South West WHHS, they also review health facility menus and audit food wastage, continually looking to improve the quality of food offered to our patients.

"Health promotion activities are also a focus and our dietitians support university students on placement to our facilities. Two of our dietitians are also in the process of completing postgraduate studies themselves, so after a long day at work, they get to go home and study!"

Above all else, our dietitians understand that nutrition is something that can be controlled and that it has a major impact on our health, not just to avoid disease but also to live the healthiest life possible.



southwest.health.qld.gov.au

