

MEDIA RELEASE



NHW Annual General Meeting The Year that Was 2007/2008

Wednesday 26th November 2008

Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW) held a successful 136th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday evening, with the presentation of the Board President Mr Allan Wills' Annual Review, the release of the organisation's 2007/08 Annual Performance Report and the Quality of Care Report, guest speakers from NHW's Friends of the Hospital Auxiliary and the presentation of the prestigious Staff Quality Awards.

The seventh Quality of Care Report aims to provide people with information regarding the quality and safety of patient care at Northeast Health Wangaratta. Victorian public hospitals are now required under legislation to produce such a document each year.

Mr Wills stated that the Quality of Care Report informs our community about the aspects of health care that affect them most.

Led by the Quality and Safety Department, the collation of the Quality of Care report is the combined effort of a large number of our staff and the Community Advisory Committee. The focus is to provide the community with information on services delivered by NHW, to detail activities and identify quality outcomes.

Of particular interest this year is the "centre spread" highlighting the development of our new residential aged care facility "Illoura". Opened on the 12th of December 2007, Illoura is home to 60 aged citizens of the Wangaratta sub-region. The state of the art facility includes 46 single and eight double bedrooms, all with ensuites. The large common areas enable the lifestyle team to lead recreational activities such as arts and crafts, games, men's Friday luncheons, physiotherapy group sessions and many other resident focussed activities. Other initiatives since the residents re-located include the formation of a "Gardening Club" for dementia sufferers and the development of a new newsletter which includes quizzes puzzles and competitions. The facility was the subject of an Aged Care Standards Agency assessment in April 2008 and received very favourable feedback.

Other interesting aspects covered in this year's report include: developments in the mental health program, information on how clinical risk is managed, Wal's Story – a palliative care journey, our results in the key areas monitored by the Department of Human Services and details of key achievements by our staff.

Mr Wills reported on the Annual Financial and Performance Report explaining that the cover for this year's report has a facilities flavour, with a photograph of the current landscape of the main campus. "Inside the back cover you will note other aerial images taken in 1950 1981

and 1996. These photos illustrate the continual growth of the facilities at Northeast Health Wangaratta”.

“In 2007/08, 14,514 patients were treated in the acute units, including a significant number from the waiting list, due to specific targeted Commonwealth and State funding. There was a further 6% increase in emergency presentations to 18,158 and 553 babies were delivered. As a result of increasing demand, the sub acute inpatient program (Rehabilitation and Geriatric Evaluation and Management) received additional non-recurrent bed days funding, which assisted us to treat 328 patients in this area. The community-based and outpatient occasions of service delivered by Northeast Health Wangaratta exceeded 120,000 for the year. This covers areas such as home based nursing, allied health, sub acute ambulatory services, chronic disease management, aged care services to the home and a wide variety of community mental health services”.

“Of continuing concern to the Board of Management and Executive is the inability of the organisation to record an operating surplus. Before capital purpose income and expenditure, depreciation and finance costs the net operating result was a deficit of \$861,000 compared to a deficit in 2006/07 of \$679,000. We were fortunate to receive significant support from the Department of Human services to ensure liquidity, and continue to work closely with them to identify operational areas where the organisation can improve its financial performance while maintaining the current level of service delivery. In this regard, there have been a number of reviews during the previous financial year to consider the future of the WJ Smith Linen Service. Unfortunately due to the working capital position of Northeast Health Wangaratta, the Board is unable to fund much-needed replacement equipment and is reliant on the Government to support the ongoing operations. At this juncture the Board is awaiting advice from the Minister for Health”.

Both reports will be widely circulated throughout the community and is currently available from the Hospital’s front reception and available on NHW’s website www.nhw.hume.org.au

Northeast Health Wangaratta Staff Quality Achievement Awards

Quality Awards are presented at NHW each year to individuals or departments that have made significant improvements in their work place. These improvements may be to benefit: our patients, the community, our staff or the whole organisation.

The three categories for Quality Awards in 2008 are the same as previous years: Clinical, Non Clinical and Customer Service.

The Clinical Quality Award was this year presented to the: Review of the vitamised diet at Illoura Residential Aged Care – a joint project between speech pathology, dieticians, food services and Illoura staff.

Concerns were raised by a resident’s family members about the consistency of vitamised food being offered to residents at Illoura. This prompted a full review of vitamised meals currently being offered - not only the consistency but appearance, variety and nutritional value. Speech pathology and dietetics were the main drivers of this process with food services and Illoura staff also playing a role in the review and improvement. They discovered that there was a need for improvement in all the abovementioned areas. As a result there has been a new menu developed for residents on vitamised diets with improved nutritional content. The name has been changed from vitamised to ‘pureed’ to more accurately reflect the consistency. Presentation has been also been improved. Satisfaction with this new menu will continue to be assessed and refinements made as required. Congratulations to all involved on a fantastic project that showed collaboration between health disciplines and a definite improvement for residents at Illoura.

The Non Clinical Quality Award was presented to the: Design and introduction of a trolley for use in the Supply Department to reduce lifting injuries to staff.

In conjunction with Service Assist, NHW initiated the development of a battery operated self propelled trolley with electric work bed elevation enabling the safe movement of heavy supplies for distribution to NHW's many buildings, including across external paths and grounds. This has reduced the manual handling risk to staff, not only within the supply department but in other wards & departments at NHW. The evaluation was completed by department staff that trialled the trolley and showed 100% satisfaction with this product. All staff commented on how much the trolley has reduced the effort needed to move supplies around the organisation. The fact that the trolley can be used by staff in all departments that need to move goods or equipment from area to area and has greatly reduced the risk of injuries to staff. This innovation was short listed for the Worksafe Victoria Award for the 'Best Solution for preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders'. Congratulations to the Supply Department and Occupational Health & Safety on this great innovation.

The Customer Service Award Winners for 2008 are: Ros O'Shanassy & Karen Holwell.

This year saw a large number of nominations for the customer service award. In judging the customer service award we are looking for an individual or department who embody the customer service philosophy we strive towards at NHW. The winners of the Customer Service Award this year were decided by our Community Advisory Committee. After much deliberation it was decided that two awards would be given this year, as the top two nominees could not be separated.

Ros works as a member of the Food Services Department and was nominated by the staff of the Oncology Unit. The nomination states: "Ros is an integral member of the oncology team- in fact we often note she is actually the most important member of the team. Her gentle considerate manner is greatly appreciated by all the patients and their families. She realises the sensitive nature of working in this area of care and her compassion with this group of patients is outstanding. Many chemotherapy patients travel long distances to come for treatment and often feel quite unwell when they get here. Ros always remembers what each patient prefers to drink as well as what they can manage to eat for lunch. She also makes a point of remembering the name of their spouse or carer which is important as this can be a traumatic experience for the whole family. She will often quietly make a drink for a relative who is distressed. Despite having many other responsibilities associated with her job, Ros never appears rushed when caring for our patients and always finds time to go the extra mile to ensure that they feel special".

Karen was nominated by Dr Joanne Bowmaker and works as an Associate Charge Nurse in the Emergency Department. In her nomination Dr Bowmaker makes note of Karen's boundless enthusiasm in the face of extreme workloads and her ability to keep laughing and keep us all laughing when the department is full and busy. "She is so kind and friendly to the patients, even when they are grumpy and being difficult. Her goodness is absolutely genuine, and I have never heard her say an unkind word about anyone. She mentors the junior staff and is very active in teaching and updating us in Advanced Life Support. She is an inspiration to us all".

All award recipients are congratulated on their achievements and dedication to ensuring quality comprehensive health care is provided to the community in North East Victoria.

In conclusion Mr Wills stated "As an organisation we continue to grow and develop as the delivery of health services in rural communities becomes more challenging. The Year in Review would not be complete without acknowledging the efforts of our visiting medical

officers and dedicated staff, who often contribute above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the community has the best health service possible during times of resource scarcity”.

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