

MEDIA RELEASE

For Release: Wednesday 24th May 2006



NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK 21 – 28 May 2006

Northeast Health Wangaratta Palliative Care Service works closely with people with a life threatening illness, their families, carers and the community providing information, support and equipment, aiming to improve quality of life by helping to relieve distressing symptoms and empower people to retain control of their life.

'Partners in Care' is the theme of National Palliative Care Week in 2006 and Palliative Care Australia is jointly supported by the *Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP)* and *Carers Australia*. A partnership with these organisations is highly appropriate for an event such as National Palliative Care Week as each organisation plays a significant role in the care for palliative patients.

National Palliative Care Week is designed to not only celebrate the achievements and efforts of all those involved in the care process of someone with a life threatening illness, but to raise the awareness of palliative care throughout Australia.

Northeast Health Wangaratta Palliative Care Service provides advice and support to individuals and their families facing a life limiting illness and their providers of care. The dedicated palliative care team is comprised of specialist nurses, loss and grief co-ordinators, trained palliative care volunteers and administration staff.

Anyone (family, friends, doctors, nurses) can refer to palliative care simply by contacting the Northeast Health Wangaratta Palliative Care Service on 5722 0184.

Generous Gift from Wangaratta Pathology Research Foundation

The Palliative Care Unit's at Wangaratta, Benalla and Yarrawonga were the grateful recipients of \$3,110.00 each from the Wangaratta Pathology Research Foundation Incorporated earlier this month.

Mr Richard Marsh, President of the Foundation explains "The Wangaratta a Research Fund was originally established to promote research and other scientific investigation into the causes, diagnosis, treatment and cure of malignant melanomas as well as a gastric and breast carcinoma particularly nit not exclusively evident in North Eastern Victoria. This research was conducted by Dr Jerry Schultz and Dr Richard Williams both Pathologists at the Pathology Department of the then Wangaratta and District Base Hospital".

"The Foundation was formed in the early 1980's by a number of local business people, local doctors and other interested people to raise funds from North Eastern businesses and organisations prepared to support this important research. As well as raising funds the foundation members would administer the money raised so the 100 cents of every dollar raised was able to go towards the research, this was a very important role of the foundation. Money also came from bequests".

"One local social group who became very strong supporters of this research over a number of years was the North Eastern Old Time Dance Club Inc. who raised in excess of \$50,000.00".

Mr Marsh says "The two doctors involved in the Foundation, left Wangaratta a number of years ago, although Dr Richard Williams continued research at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne for a number of years with the financial support of the Wangaratta Foundation; that work has now ceased and the Foundation Members decided it was time to 'wind up' the Foundation and distribute the remaining funds in accordance with the original objectives of the foundation".

The Foundation's remaining funds are being distributed to; Malcolm Sargent Kids with Cancer, Anticancer Council of Victoria via the Wangaratta branch and the Palliative Care Units at Wangaratta, Benalla and Yarrawonga.

Northeast Health Wangaratta Palliative Care Clinical Co-ordinator, Ms Heather Wickham thanked Mr Marsh and the Foundation Members for their generous donation towards the organisations Palliative Care services.