

Kaleidoscope

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Word from the Editor

By popular demand *Scoop* has returned – with a new focus on staff achievements, community partnerships and service improvements.

Information on child health operational matters can be sourced at one of our quarterly staff forums, The Latest, email and the new Children, Young People and Families Clinical Network Newsletter - Network News.

If you want everyone to know how good you are, you should call me on 4921 3844 and I'll whip* up a masterpiece for *Scoop*.

*needs to be whipped by November 1.

To those who continued to submit story ideas during *Scoop's* drought, thank you.

Sarah Beames – *Kaleidoscope* Editor

A model approach to NURSING



Mark Amey (above) and Cathy Vickery (below) are two of five neonatal nurses currently engaged in the nurse practitioner program at John Hunter Children's Hospital

The ongoing training of nurse practitioners in the neonatal intensive care unit at John Hunter Children's Hospital is improving continuity of care, expanding career opportunities and creating a more supportive environment for junior staff.

The Children's Hospital is currently the only intensive care unit in NSW committed to ongoing nurse practitioner training, with five nurses engaged in different stages of the program.

Program Supervisor Dr Paul Craven said the nurse practitioner model of service delivery meets the needs of patients, individual staff and the overall management of the unit.

"A nurse practitioner has a wealth of experience in neonatal nursing, and then undertakes two years of advanced training in life support, neonatal resuscitation and the management of critically ill newborns," Dr Craven said.



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A MODEL APPROACH TO NURSING...

continued from page 1.

“Their understanding of both nursing and medical practice means they are an excellent resource for parents and junior staff.

“We aim to have one nurse practitioner rostered on each shift to improve continuity of care, communication and support for parents and junior staff,” he said.

As an example, junior doctors are usually rostered on six-month rotations across various areas within the health system during their training.

“Your first placement in an intensive care environment can be incredibly daunting as you implement the theory of caring for a 500 gram baby on life support.

“Having access to the nurse practitioners as a source of neonatal education, orientation and support has been invaluable to our junior staff and this has a flow on effect



Nurse Practitioners Mary Wagner and Marilyn Owers (above) have completed their training.

to the level of care provided to patients and their families,” Dr Craven said.

Providing nurses with an opportunity to expand their career not only has positive implications for the individual, it also increases staff retention and consistency in service delivery.

“We know that if we give our nurses as many opportunities as possible to develop their clinical skills and overall responsibilities, they are more likely to enjoy their work and hopefully make neonatal intensive care their specialty,” Dr Craven said.

“Before the nurse practitioner role was created, nurses would reach a point where career development meant taking on an education or management role.

“Now nurses can expand their practice in the clinical arena and continue their passion for direct patient care.

“The transitional nurse practitioners Mark Amey, Cathy Vickery and Kym Pollock have entered a very exciting 18 month period and will be given every encouragement, support and



Mary Wagner caring for a young patient

opportunity from medical and nursing colleagues to help them succeed. Our current nurse practitioners Mary Wagner and Marilyn Owers continue to offer excellent support and care,” he said.



Kym Pollock (pictured), Mark Amey and Cathy Vickery (front page) are transitional nurse practitioners, having recently begun the 18-month training program.

Surgeon SUTURES top HONOURS

Students HELP educate

Occupational Therapist Lisa McGavern from the The Hunter Orthopaedic School (THOS) recently presented to 108 coaches at the NSW Riding for the Disabled conference.

She talked about THOS, and the reason the school decided to participate in the Riding for the Disabled program for schools.

Two children helped Lisa present, allowing her to share their story and demonstrate the program coaches need to develop.

"After the lecture, I went into the riding ring with my two clients and walked everybody through the preparation that goes into a session," Lisa said.

"The kids rode for about 30 minutes, and it really gave me a great opportunity to talk about the "therapy" behind the riding."

In another setting – this time at the University of Newcastle – Lisa presented to faculty of health students on Family Centered Practice and Paediatric Assessment

"The highlight for the students was that they got to meet two families from the The Hunter Orthopaedic School," Lisa said.

"The first mum and child spoke about the impact on a family of having a child with a disability.

"The second child and carer came to have a play session with two other typically developing children so that the students could analyse typical and atypical movements and play skills.

"I think having the "real life" examples was excellent for the students and would like to thank the families for being involved," she said.

Paediatric surgeon and Kaleidoscope Area Director Professor Trish Davidson recently received the highest honour awarded by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

The Sir Louis Barnett Medal is deemed by the College's Council to be a signal honour and is only bestowed on persons who have made an outstanding contribution to education, training and advancement to surgery.

The Council acknowledged Professor Davidson's broad contribution, including her appointment as Censor-in-Chief,

Chair of the Education Policy Board, Chair of the Board of Specialist Surgical Training and a member of Council Executive.

As Censor-in-Chief, she was influential in the major reviews of RACS accreditation of training posts and the surgical assessment of international medical graduates. Her many academic publications have also made enormous contributions to teaching and training activities in surgery.

Professor Davison is the second Hunter based surgeon to receive the Medal, alongside 2006 recipient Professor Stephen Deane, Clinical



Chair of the John Hunter Hospital Division of Surgery.

Highlighting the Hunter's dynamism, Professor Deane read the Citation for Professor Davidson's Award at the College's Annual Scientific Congress in New Zealand earlier this year.



Professor Davidson won the Sir Louis Barnett Medal awarded by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

MAKING MUSIC

is child's play

If you call yourself a serious writer, sometimes you have to lose the pointy PR shoes, and get involved.

Last week, I joined in one of the Early Childhood Music Programs run by Kaleidoscope's Play Facilitator and Educator, Rebecca Ferbrache. The Conservatorium of Music has never seen a trumpeting elephant quite like it.

Rebecca said the nine week program aims to increase the bond between the parent and child by giving them fun, practical and age appropriate tools to facilitate interaction.

"There's nothing more hands on than music as it is task based, allows the child to take the lead and encourages two-way participation," she said.

Rebecca encourages parents to watch and listen as their child explores the instrument or music based activity.

"By watching and listening, parents allow their child to use their imagination and interpret the activity in their own way. The balance between the 'rules of play' and exploring the boundaries is difficult to achieve, but is very rewarding in the long term," she said.

In week one, there was a boy who liked to set the rules, a boy who participated through 'teddy bear' and a boy who played within the rules.

My visit was the last day of the program.

As the session developed, the rule setter beat the drum in time because he wanted to be part of the game, teddy bear participated but didn't lead and the boy who played within the rules tried new things.

They were also just kids.

The drum was hit out of turn, there were a few wayward trumpeting elephants (I didn't understand the rules) and *Row Row Row your Boat* sunk when someone thought tackling would be more fun.

In the chaos there were boundaries; moments for each child and parent,



where they were both unconscious and fully committed to enjoying the task at hand.

Rebecca said over time, the parents learned to 'let go' and see play from their child's perspective.

"Adults worry about what other people will think if they romp about the room like a lion.

They worry what others will think if they sing *Incy Wincy Spider* out of tune.

"In a group environment, you quickly learn that the most important thing is your child's response – usually the child is too busy

participating to notice whether or not you can sing. And if you're dressed up, or acting out a role, all the better!" she said.

The program – which operates on a referral basis for Kaleidoscope clinicians – includes a one on one consultation to discuss expectations, a home visit and a music kit for use at home during the program.

Each parent also receives an album of photos that captures the positive memories of the time spent with their child in play, the times they sat on the floor and joined in and the moments when they were watching their child's enjoyment.



HAND *in* HAND

Public Relations & Fundraising Unit Locked Bag 1, Hunter Region Mail Centre, Newcastle 2310

THERE ARE FAIRIES IN OUR GARDEN



In a secret courtyard at the John Hunter Children's Hospital, Fairy Sparkle built a Fairy Garden; a haven for giant mushrooms, butterflies, woodland creatures and families who need time out from the intensity of the clinical environment.

After 18 months of planning, fundraising and construction the garden was officially opened in March this year.

Fairy Sparkle – a woman who gave up her career and material possessions to dedicate her life to supporting children through illness – built this Garden with the support of the Hunter Community.

Director of the John Hunter Children's Hospital, Ms Pat Marks said transforming the unused courtyard into a garden sanctuary has been a labour of love with many volunteer hours and community donations making it possible.

"Fairy Sparkle inspired organisations like Variety – the children's charity, the National Australia Bank and fundraising collaborations like The Gastronomic Lunch to make philanthropic gifts that would transform the way we support patients and families through treatment," Ms Marks said.

The John Hunter Children's Hospital is committed to supporting parents and carers –

not only through sound medical advice and treatment but also by providing access to as many home comforts and recreational facilities as possible.

"Over the last ten years, our community has helped fund a range of support services for children and their families in recognition that health care is about much more than only treating the medical condition," Ms Marks said.

"The completion of the Fairy Garden represents one of our greatest achievements, as its success has relied on the support of so many people.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN Local Heroes

The soft side of HARD GRUNGE



Thirteen-year-old Thomas Hill from Aberdare likes playing the guitar and wants to be a comedian. Three-year-old Novocastrian Lizzie Walters likes lamb cutlets and pink icing.

Both Thomas and Lizzie are brave. Thomas has diabetes and a thyroid condition. Lizzie has cystic fibrosis.

The John Hunter Children's Hospital is a big part of their lives. They know the staff by name, they know where to find their clinic and they know what to expect when they get there.

Thomas and Lizzie are Hospital Heroes.

During the 2007 Woolworths Fresh Future Appeal, they will represent the children's hospital and paediatric units throughout Hunter New England Health at fundraising events held by local stores.

The Fresh Future Appeal raises money for children's hospitals and wards across Australia.

The campaign's success is largely due to the fundraising efforts of Woolworths staff, who organise events – including barbeques, raffles, trivia night and balls – during September and October.

Children's services in the Hunter New England Health region have enjoyed a long association – one that continues to grow each year – with the Fresh Future Appeal.

In 2007, Woolworths have again set their targets high with a range of local projects on the agenda at John Hunter Children's Hospital, Tamworth Hospital and Manning Base Referral Hospital.

By supporting your local store's activities, you are helping children's services in our region.



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Fresh Future Charity Ball 2007

7pm Saturday October 6
West's Leagues Club

\$80 ticket please call Adam
for more information
0425 200 887

Andrew McCallum, Rob Wilson and Mark Waddingham collected thousands of signatures to convince grunge kings Pearl Jam to include Newcastle in their 2006 tour.

Andrew said the win for fans was a win for the Children's Hospital, who benefited from a pre concert fundraiser hosted at the Premier Hotel.

"The night was a get together for like-minded Pearl Jam fans – an opportunity to have some dinner before heading to the concert, listen to some of our favourite songs and help our community at the same time," Andrew said.

The night raised more than \$3,000 – which was pooled with \$8,000 from Toys R Us – to fund the first stage of the Emergency Department mural project.

Artist Cath Chegwidgen, (*pictured below*) is transforming the procedure room into a circus arena.

Emergency Medicine Paediatrician Dr Mark Lee said the bright colours and the characters on the walls have already made a big difference to children's anxiety levels.

"When the children walk into the room, they focus on the activity splashed on the walls rather than the upcoming painful procedure, the bright lights and the strange equipment," he said.

"It's a great way of reducing anxiety levels. We use it as a talking point with the children, a way of engaging with them on a personal level to help them relax in what can be a very intimidating environment," he said.



NEWBORN transport service takes to the SKY

Last year, Xstrata Coal headlined a community fundraising campaign to purchase a new transport unit worth \$180,000 for the neonatal intensive care unit at the John Hunter Children's Hospital.

Neonatologist Dr Paul Craven said after a 12-month fundraising campaign, and a further six months of staff training, the transport unit is ready for its first emergency call.

"Thanks to the support of the Hunter community, and in particular, Xstrata Coal, Kids Club, MincoTech, Gram Engineering, and Glandore Estate Wines, babies born prematurely or in medical distress in regional areas now have access to the very best in transport technology," Dr Craven said.

The transport unit is used to transfer premature and sick babies from areas like Maitland, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Taree and Tamworth to the John Hunter Children's Hospital for life saving intensive care.

"When a baby is in medical distress in a regional area, our retrieval team travel via the Westpac Rescue Helicopter or road ambulance to assist," Dr Craven said.

"We provide advice to the attending medical team prior to our arrival, stabilise the baby when we arrive and give intensive care during the journey back to the Children's Hospital.

"The transport unit supports the baby during transfer, delivering oxygen, and giving us a clear picture of their heart rate, oxygen levels and temperature," he said.

Approximately 80 babies from the Hunter New England region need the assistance of the neonatal retrieval team each year.

"We are sincerely grateful to Xstrata Coal and the community

for helping us provide these babies with the latest in mobile intensive care," Dr Craven said.

Xstrata Coal NSW's Chief Operating Officer, Mick Buffier said Xstrata Coal was proud to support the John Hunter Children's Hospital.

"The John Hunter Children's Hospital provides life saving specialty care for the communities which support our operations," Mr Buffier said.

"We are proud to support the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and help ensure they have much needed new and mobile equipment available to assist local families in their time of need."

As part of its ongoing commitment to Community Social Involvement, Xstrata Coal this year provided a further \$80,000 to the neonatal intensive care unit for the purchase of new ultrasound equipment.



Dr Paul Craven, Xstrata Coal Group external Affairs and Property Manager Val Istomin, NSW Chief Operating Officer Mick Buffier and NICU Director Dr Chris Wake at the launch of the new transport unit.



John Hunter Children's Hospital Kids Club donated \$15,000 towards the new transport unit.

A SPECIAL GIFT

One family's personal journey inspired amazing donations and gifts-in-kind to support the fundraising campaign... a living legacy to little frangipani baby Amy Heddle.

Amy's mother, Kelly Heddle (pictured), shared her experience with many supporters, explaining her appreciation of the specialist care provided by the NICU staff who played such a critical role in Amy's short life.

Kelly's story and the strength it gave her, inspired donations and gifts worth more than \$20,000 in support of the transport service.



The MAGIC of reading

The Rotary Club of Newcastle Enterprise wave a very big wand in support of children's health and reading programs.

With a puff of smoke and an abracadabra – “the World Festival of Magic 2006” – the Rotary Club raised \$20,000 to fund the construction of the BookNook on our medical ward.

World Festival of Magic Coordinator Mr Bob Aus said Rotary has an affinity for literacy programs on a national scale, and the BookNook offered a local opportunity to promote reading.

“Over the last four years we have supported the Children's Hospital in a medical capacity, providing funds for the therapeutic spa bath on H1, a new fleet of patient controlled analgesia and overhead tracking on the adolescent ward,” Mr Aus said.



Members of the Rotary Club of Newcastle Enterprise raised \$20,000 to fund the construction of the BookNook.

“We are equally as committed to supporting programs that aim to minimise the stress sometimes caused by the hospital experience.

“The BookNook is an opportunity to support literacy, as well as assist the children's hospital in their mission to provide an environment of total wellbeing for patients and their families,” he said.

BookNook construction began in the play room on the medical ward early in August, and will be in full operation by October.



The construction of the BookNook – funded with a little magic – began in August and will be in operation from October.

A BOOK OF MEMORIES

The Children's Hospital would like to acknowledge donations made in loving memory of Mr Peter Bone, Mathew Gilson and Brendon Gilson

Thank you



Fundraiser OF GASTRONOMIC PROPORTIONS

In a true display of Novocastrian generosity, 120 locals raised \$103,820 in support of Kaleidoscope at the annual Gastronomic Lunch held at Harbourview Function Centre in May.

The event's success is due to the dedication of chief organiser Mr Neil Slater of Scratchleys and his restaurant manager Danielle Psarris.

Combine their efforts with the commitment of Mr Gary Ashford, who donated the venue, and the enthusiasm and creativity of seven Foreshore restaurant Chefs from Paymasters Café, Starfish Café, Breeze Restaurant Crowne Plaza, The Brewery Restaurant, Silo Lounge Bar & Engine Room, and you have a recipe for success.

The allocation of monies raised from The 2007 Gastronomic Lunch will be distributed to the John Hunter Children's Hospital as follows: \$50,000 to the Fairy Garden, \$40,000 to Diabetes and the balance of \$13,820 to Music Therapy Program.



Gastronomic Lunch organisers Neil Slater, Donna Davis and Danielle Psarris with Fairy Sparkle

Like any major event it's the team of supporters behind the scenes, including the various restaurants' staff that offered their assistance on the day, who also deserve to take a bow.

Jason Maxwell, Auctioneer extraordinaire, encouraged very energetic bidding resulting in \$64,250 to add to the overall total.

For willingly contributing Auction Items for the day, special thanks is also extended to Mick Summers & Tim Ryan, Kevin and Michelle Corbett, David & Clare Mulham of Hunter Valley Gardens, Neil Slater, Peter Leonard Gardiner, George Tsiros of Peacock Hill, Frank Frasca of Growers Best, Studio Life Photography, Crowne Plaza Terrigal, Ibis Hotel, Civic Theatre and Blue Star Catering, Adsteam Harbour and Westpac Rescue Helicopter, Ross Baines of Metrol, Peter McKinnon of Rotacaster and Gordon Ormiston of Simons Carpets Choice.

MORE THAN *face* VALUE

Sixteen year old Ben Barber (pictured) loves mountain bike riding and hanging out with his friends and family. He has “in your face” energy and acts on impulse; you never know if there’s a hug coming next, or another practical joke.

On face value, Ben seems like any other 16 year old. He’ll talk to you about “stuff,” bouncing from one subject to the next and dutifully answer your questions with 16 year old answers like “nuthin, can’t remember, yep, nup, don’t know” or a shrug.

Half way through the conversation, he’ll forget what you’re talking about or ask you what your name is again.

You could be forgiven for expecting more of Ben. He is 16, looks 17, and there are no scars, or physical signs that tell you to anticipate anything different.

Two years ago, Ben had a devastating mountain bike accident that left him with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI).

Ben’s helmet, the First Aid delivered by his friends and the intensive care he received at the Sydney Children’s Hospital saved his life. His family and Kaleidoscope’s Paediatric Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team (PBIRT) at the John Hunter Children’s Hospital are now helping him learn to live it.

PBIRT Team Leader Matthew Frith coordinates the specialist services that Ben needs to help him cope with everyday living.

“Like many of our patients with an ABI, Ben’s journey with the health system had only just begun when he came out of hospital,” Matthew said.

“It was such an important milestone for Ben and his family, because after months of the unknown he was finally talking, walking and joking around.

“They then had to come to terms with another kind of loss, because the Ben they knew before the accident had changed, and long term support and rehabilitation was needed to help him recover.

This ongoing uncertainty is something every family finds difficult.

“Everything changes in one moment - a bike accident, a fall from a horse, a car or pedestrian accident or the onset of a virus - and you can’t predict what the outcome will be,” he said.

Ben lost three months of life in hospital because of the accident, but in terms of memory, he lost years. He still asks his mum about what he was like before the accident.

An ABI can affect a child’s skills in attention, memory, behaviour and communication as well as their fine and gross motor skills.

In hospital, Ben learnt to walk, talk and eat again.

“The focus of Ben’s care is now on improving his social skills and ability to process and retain information, particularly at school. Put simply, we are looking to retrain, or find new ways for Ben’s brain to learn,” Matthew said.

“The transition from hospital to school is very difficult, because in most cases the child may look as though they have made a full



physical recovery and their friends and teachers may expect them to behave and perform as they did before the injury,” Matthew said.

This transition is so important for patients like Ben, that the PBIRT developed a DVD resource for teachers throughout NSW.

The DVD - funded by the Motor Accident Authority with additional support through Northern Sydney Carer Support - follows a ‘patient’ through his hospital admission, rehabilitation and eventual return to school.

“The DVD highlights the possible changes teachers may see in a child with an ABI and provides simple strategies to address them,” Matthew said.

“Our team has a strong focus on delivering services to children and their families after they leave hospital. We provide outreach to areas like Taree, Tamworth, Maitland, Muswellbrook and the Central Coast and actively engage with schools to help each child reach their full potential.”



Kaleidoscope’s paediatric brain injury team Ann Hardy, Matthew Frith, Dr Rob Smith, Katie McDonald, Jenny Keller, Brodie Warren, Marney Isedale and Jodie Enderby care for young people like Ben.

The first FAST FOOD ~ INCREASING THE UPTAKE

Mums in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and the Children's Hospital will benefit from a newly created consultant role dedicated to ensuring families make informed decisions about breastfeeding.

Lactation Clinical Nurse Specialists Shonnett Porter and Deborah Ireland are responsible for delivering lactation education to the 1200 mothers touched by the neonatal intensive care service each year.

Shonnett said the aim of the position was to increase the uptake of breastfeeding through education, as well as improve breastfeeding outcomes for mothers in the nursery and the Children's Hospital.

"Our aim is to visit every mother in the nursery to help them make an informed decision about breastfeeding, and assist them through education when it comes to feeding, expressing and using formula," Shonnett said.

"Many mums in the nursery think that because their baby is premature, they won't be able to breastfeed.

"We're there to make sure they know they can, and are able to talk them through the nutritional, immunological and long term health benefits associated with breastfeeding. We also talk about breastfeeding as a way of strengthening the bond between mother and baby, which can be difficult in the intensive care setting," she said.

Deborah said many mums are influenced by their past experiences with breastfeeding and often assume that if they experienced difficulty with one child, they will automatically have difficulty with the next.

"We are able to reassure them that each child is a new experience and hopefully, open the doors to the joy of breastfeeding; the convenience, the bond, the feeling of success, and the nutritional benefits of the original fast food," she said.



The Lactation Clinical Nurse Specialist position is a first at the Children's Hospital and comes after NSW Health adopted the UNICEF/ World Health Organisation's Baby -friendly Hospital Initiative.

Part of the Initiative recommends that every maternity setting has an "enabling environment", with a person trained to ensure mums are

aware of the importance of breastfeeding.

NSWHealth have built the requirements of a Baby-friendly Hospital into their accreditation process as a way of encouraging mums to take up and continue breastfeeding exclusively until their baby is six months of age, and up to two years after the introduction of solids.

Shonnett and Deborah said that they are not here to push breastfeeding, but rather educate mums and support them in their decision.

"We're there to talk with the mums about their concerns or difficulties and ensure they are making an informed choice about what is best for them and their baby," Deborah said.

Shonnett and Deborah – who job share the full time position – are based in the NICU but also take referrals from the Children's Hospital.



Meeting MAUREEN

Dr Maureen van Rossum du Chattel is the new Paediatrician at Taree.

Maureen comes to Taree from the Netherlands where for the past five years she has worked in a large training hospital – St Franciscus Hospital – in Rotterdam as a consultant paediatrician.

Maureen is highly qualified and has a special interest in infectious diseases and neonatology.

In addition to her work commitments in the Netherlands, every two years, Maureen dedicated six months of her time and skills working on five projects with Doctors without Borders in Angola, Birma, Afghanistan, Burundi and Sudan.

She is now looking forward to setting in Australia with fiancé Osama, who is currently working as an SRMO John Hunter Hospital Emergency Department. He plans

to transfer to the Emergency Department in Taree in a few months time.

“My fiancé and I are very excited about settling in Taree. It is a beautiful area and such a lovely coastal region,” Maureen said.

Mr Tim Mooney, General Manager of Manning Rural Referral Hospital said the community will benefit greatly from Dr van Rossum du Chattel’s skills and expertise.

“Following a rigorous recruitment and extensive selection process, it is very pleasing to welcome Maureen and her fiancé to our team and to our community,” said Mr Mooney.

Maureen will be joining Dr Tom Campbell who for the past 12 months has been the cornerstone of the service in Taree, working tirelessly in a part-time capacity to ensure paediatric services could be delivered to the local community.



Maureen van Rossum du Chattel moved to Taree with fiancé Osama to take on the role of Paediatrician

“Dr Campbell has provided consistency, professionalism and stability for our staff and service while we have been awaiting the new appointees.

“On behalf of the Hospital’s staff, patients and families, I would like to express sincere appreciation to Tom and acknowledge the significant contribution he, and our

many locums, have made,” said Mr Mooney.

Maureen will be supported by a second full time Paediatrician at Manning Rural Referral Hospital. Recruitment for that position is progressing well and Dr Dylan Wesley is expected to commence at the end of October.

Springthorpe.

BY DR LARRY RODDICK

Dr Barry SPRINGTHORPE



After 30 years of service, Dr Springthorpe retires

Children’s Hospital Dr BJS007 (AKA Dr Barry Springthorpe) retired in August after 30 years on the paediatric and neonatal rosters in Newcastle facilities, including the Royal, Belmont, Western Suburbs, Wallsend, Mater and Christo Road.

Barry began in Newcastle as an RMO at the Royal in 1961 where he worked for two and a half years. He also spent time at The Children’s Hospital at Camperdown, hospitals in the UK and in Canada and as a GP in Taree where he completed his FRACP.

Barry returned to Newcastle as a paediatrician in 1976. He became the region’s first developmental paediatrician and opened the Child Development Unit which has grown to be the Child and Family Health Team. Barry instigated SIDS management and also started the local awareness and management of child abuse. Barry went into private practice in December 1980.

On behalf of colleagues and former patients and their families, we wish BJS all the best for his retirement.

Fishy friend finds NEW HOME

John Hunter Children's Hospital resident 'Axel' the Mexican Walking Fish has a new home, thanks to the generosity of the Pet Shop Boyz at Mayfield.

Nurse Unit Manager Cathy Grahame said Axel has been on the ward for six years and is very popular with the patients and staff.

"Axel is great to have around because lots of our patients like to feed her and this responsibility encourages them to get out of bed and start moving around," Cathy said.

"Axel is also a bit of a legend, as she had a major health scare in the past and pulled through.

"A couple of years ago, a pebble lodged in her throat and one of our junior doctors had to get it out.

"When the kids hear this story, they take a real interest in her welfare and often check up on her during their stay," Cathy said.

After six years in a modest tank, Cathy decided Axel needed something more palatial and

approached the Pet Shop Boyz for help.

Pet Shop Boyz part owner Danny Boskovoski said if Axel played a key role in keeping patients feeling positive, he deserved the very best home.

"From what I've heard, Axel brings a lot of fun and excitement to the medical ward, so it's great to be able to make sure he has the very best accommodation," he said.



Axel shows H1 patient Eliza and Danny from the Pet Shop Boyz her new home

Snapped



Chris Doolan, Donna Williams and Chris May farewell Maria (second from left) at a lunch in September

For those who were able to make it along to Maria Aziz's retirement lunch, I would like to pass on the special thanks of the nurses in J2.

Maria turns 67 this week and has given an enormous amount of time to the health system. She has many stories, which remind us how far we have come as a profession and as a society in the span of one working life.

We were really pleased to see how happy she was with the afternoon and with the range of staff (and the special guest patient) who were able to attend and celebrate the conclusion of her career.

Thank you for sharing this celebration of Maria's career with us. – Chris May, Nurse Unit Manager J2



Roving Ward Grandparent Joan James spends time with Emma Ellis while she waits for her clinic appointment.



Representatives from the NSW Rural Fire Service recently donated \$4,750 to the paediatric surgical team to help support patients receiving treatment for burns. Funds were raised through The Vee Triple F Bash - a charity ball that was also about offering service personnel a chance to relax after a busy bush fire season.

WHAT'S YOUR TEAM UP TO?

Stories already in the pipeline for next edition include developments in paediatric emergency medicine outreach training, construction of the new community funded oncology day unit, Lyndal Moore's success at the achievement awards and the roll out of simulation training for child health staff.

If you have a story idea, please contact Sarah Beames on 4921 3844 by November 1.