

HEARTBEAT

FREE



MILDURA
BASE PUBLIC HOSPITAL

HOSPITAL HISTORY

WERRIMULL'S BUSH NURSING PAST

RIO'S LEGACY

THE FIGHT FOR LIFE

DRIVING AMBITION

SON TAKES THE WHEEL

CITY HEART FASHION

RAISING FUNDS FOR THE LUCAS FOUNDATION



A FREE PUBLICATION PRODUCED FOR OUR COMMUNITY

SPRING EDITION
2023

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FROM OUR FOUNDATION CHAIR

WELCOME TO OUR 'HEARTBEAT' MAGAZINE

After the overwhelming response to our first edition of Heartbeat, we have had to increase the size of our Spring publication. This reflects how well the publication has connected with the community and local businesses.

Heartbeat is an opportunity to tell the many untold stories which are often overlooked by other media outlets. In this edition we look at everything from dry cleaning technology to garlic farming and much more. The Foundation has a busy few months ahead as we start the countdown to the end of the year.

Our cocktail party and fashion parade at the new Powerhouse precinct in September was a huge success, with over 200 people attending. It was the first time the facility had been used and is certainly going to be a great addition to Mildura. A huge thank you to City Heart and the many local fashion houses who supported the event and also to our wonderful community members who attended. I would also like to thank Mildura Rural City Council and our Foundation sponsors, whose generosity has been incredible.

Our Gala Ball will be held this year at Club De Vinci in October and the Hollywood themed event will again be a sell-out, with over 400 tickets sold. After the huge success of our inaugural ball in 2022 the bar has been set very high, but I have great confidence all expectations will be exceeded this year as our events team delivers another amazing night of entertainment.

Our final event of the year will be our golf day at the picturesque Coomealla Golf Club. As we continue to grow the Foundation and look at innovative ways to raise funds to improve healthcare in our region, I would invite anyone who would like to support us to contact one of our Foundation team members. Whether you are a business, school or an individual there are many ways you can assist the Foundation as we continue together to create a healthier, happier Northern Mallee.

Kind regards,
Ross Lake,
Foundation Chairman



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A HOSPITAL CONSIGNED TO HISTORY

THE STORY OF WERRIMULL'S BUSH NURSING PAST

IT is not commonly known but Werrimull once had a hospital.

The Werrimull Bush Nursing Hospital served the pioneering families of the Millewa from 1927 to 1947.

The hospital building is long gone, with the town's police station now occupying the site on which it stood, but there is a helpful reminder of it once having existed -- a simple, commemorative plaque.

That plaque is on the site of the town's former doctor's residence which shared a town block with the long-gone hospital.

The plaque, according to the Monument Australia website "commemorates the work of the doctors, nurses, staff, hospital committee and ladies auxiliary who were involved with the Werrimull Bush Nursing Hospital..."

The plaque inscription reads:

"This was the site of the doctor's residence. "The Bush Nursing Hospital 1927-47 where hundreds of children of the original settlers were born, was on the north-west corner of this township block.

"We remember with gratitude the work of the doctors, nurses, staff, hospital committee and ladies auxiliary in the new Millewa community.

"Plaque unveiled on 1.10.1995 by Dr Winton Phillips (Mildura) who was resident doctor at Werrimull from 1938 - 41."

WE REMEMBER WITH GRATITUDE THE WORK OF THE DOCTORS, NURSES, STAFF, HOSPITAL COMMITTEE AND LADIES AUXILIARY IN THE NEW MILLEWA COMMUNITY.

Now there will be readers who remember Dr Phillips and his daughter Wendy Shurey lives in Mildura still, a resident of Princes Court Homes.

Wendy was born Mildura's Base Hospital and later worked there as senior nurse during the 1960s following her training at Royal Melbourne Hospital.

And Wendy is well versed in her father's time at Werrimull, recalling that the hospital had no electrical supply.

"My father would perform surgeries by Tilley lamps, and in those days they used ethyl and ether anaesthetics and there weren't any oxygen cylinders within 'cooe' of the place," she said.

Primitive indeed.

Dr Phillips passed away in an Anglesea nursing home, aged 95, in 2010.

"I recall cutting up his (doctor's) provider certificate when he was about 90," Wendy said.

"Even after had had retired from everyday practice he still had people, many of them from the Italian community, who would come to see him for prescriptions.

"His second wife Edna had passed away and prior to going to Melbourne to a retirement village, he remained in his Walnut Avenue home where his regulars, who were so fond of him, would come to the house for a consultation."

The Werrimull Bush Nurse Hospital may have been short-lived, but some research revealed an interesting history.

This from Melbourne's The Argus newspaper, published from 1848 to 1957, on Wednesday, October 12, 1927, under the headline 'Bush nursing, a new hospital at Werrimull'.

"The establishment of a bush nursing hospital at Werrimull marks a further extension of the fine work being performed in country districts by the Bush Nursing Association, consisting of the president (Sir James Barrett), the superintendent (Sister M. I. Gillis), Dr Marshall Allan, and Mrs J. S. Fraser, who visited the district and opened the new hospital, which is 40 miles from Red Cliffs.

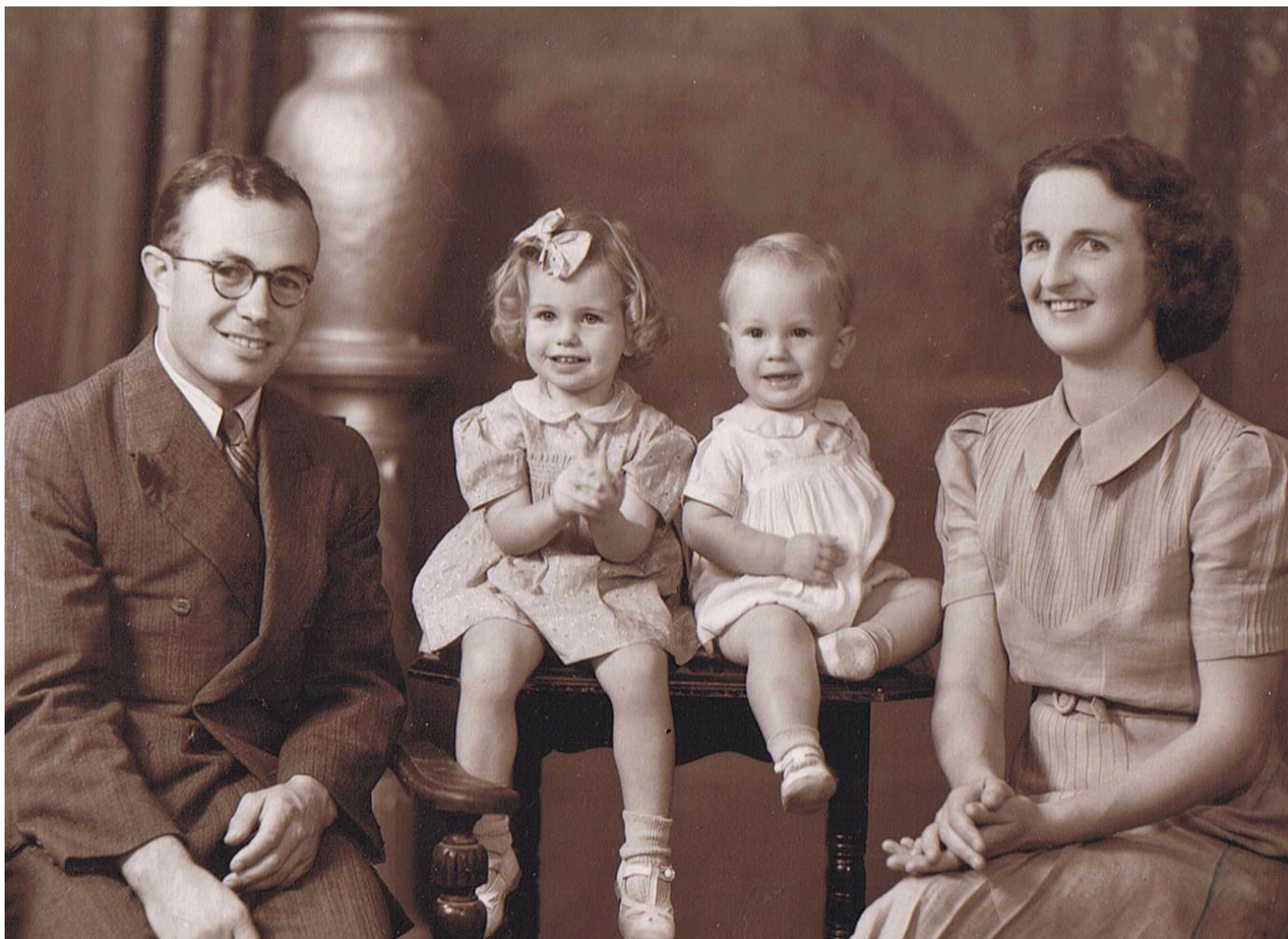
"It is the first bush nursing hospital which has developed from a nurse's cottage, and is well situated in Werrimull, where three years ago no town existed.



A PIONEERING FAMILY HOME UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT WERRIMULL.



ORIGINAL WERRIMULL PUB WHOSE APPEARANCE HASN'T CHANGED MUCH.



DR WINTON PHILLIPS WITH CHILDREN WENDY, BRUCE & WIFE BABS.

"The cost of carrying on the work of the hospital and the salary of the nurse will be borne jointly by the State Ministry and the Bush Nursing Association for two years to give the settlers in the district a chance to establish themselves firmly before undertaking the full financial responsibility of the institution.

"The hospital was declared open by Mrs Fraser, who is a member of the central council of the Bush Nursing Association.

"Mrs Fraser commented on the general excellence of the hospital and the enthusiastic manner in which the settlers set about having it established. Recognising the peculiar difficulties of the settlers in the district the Bush Nursing Association had helped more to the establishment of the hospital at Werrimull than any other under its direction."

"Sir James Barrett paid a tribute to the generous financial assistance given to the association by the Edward Wilson (of The Argus) Trust by placing large sums of money at the disposal of the association for the carrying on and the extension of its work."

And this, several years later, again from The Argus of Friday, March 8, 1935, in the form of a letter to the editor.

SIR - It was reported today that the Bush Nursing Hospital at Werrimull, in the Millewa, might have to close owing to the doctor having removed to Mildura. This warrants some explanation. The hospital was established by the people of the district, with substantial aid from the Edward Wilson partnership of The Argus. With the exception of a donation from the Government to the Mallee centres in 1930, the only other contribution from it has been an annual subsidy for addition to the sister's salary.

Up to date Werrimull has had the services of a medical practitioner. The number of patients treated in the year ended June 1934, was 164, including 88 maternity cases. Werrimull is 46 miles from Mildura, and, in the absence of the hospital, the sick and injured would be compelled to travel that distance at considerable expense. We are informed that practically all the farmers are on sustenance, but while the medical practitioner was available, they managed to make the hospital at Werrimull self-supporting. Residents of Melbourne in similar circumstances can get medical services at the public hospitals. Is it not

reasonable to ask that the Government should subsidise a medical practitioner to serve the needs of a large a population, provided the hospital can maintain itself? There is a Bush Nursing Hospital at Kooloonong, 60 miles north of Swan Hill, which has no medical practitioner. If medical service can be provided for these places the hospital services can continue. No medical practitioner will practise in these parts of the State unless he is assured of some remuneration.

The other 42 bush nursing hospitals which are working are experiencing no difficulty. The trouble at Werrimull and Kooloonong is entirely due to the peculiar circumstances of the Northern Mallee.

The letter was signed yours etc, Lizzie F. Mitchell, president, Central Council, Victorian Bush Nursing Association and James W. Barrett, honorary secretary Central Council.

So, it appears the pioneering families of the Millewa were largely responsible for the establishment and funding of their hospital. A fine example of the community spirit that still exists amongst the members of the farming families in that area.



And Heartbeat is not the only entity to take an interest in the hospital at Werrimull – there were others before us.

Earlier research on the hospital by Irene Douglas and Patricia Priest in the 1990s revealed that the Victorian Bush Nursing Association purchased the land to build “a cottage hospital” using materials also paid for by the VBNA.

“The Bush Nursing Hospital was added to this cottage in 1927, and began functioning in July the same year,” the pair’s research paper continued.

“Sister Osler (Mrs J. Goldsmith), remembers succeeding a relieving nurse and living in a tent for three months until the cottage was built, and that Dr Davis came to Werrimull six months after that.

“Membership fees were a guinea a year for married members; this entitled them to concession rates. In 1944 fees were increased to one pound 10 shillings and 15 shillings.

“The hospital committee paid all bills and wages (except for matrons’ wages) so the committee and the ladies auxiliary engaged in year-round fund-raising activities to supplement income received from subscriptions, hospital fees, out-patient fees, and donations from other organisations.

“Doctors at Werrimull were Dr Davis 1925/1926 - 1935; D. Buxton 1936-1938; D. Phillips 1938-1941; Dr Zieher 1942-1944 and Dr Holland 1944-1945

“On October 1, 1995, at the pioneer plantation in Werrimull, Dr. Phillips will unveil a plaque honouring everyone who worked in, at, or for the hospital.

“Sr Saunders (June 1946) ran the hospital as a Bush Nursing Centre for the last six months until it was closed in December 1947.

“The W.B.N.H. provided employment for many girls when they left school. Some worked at the hospital for two or three years then moved to other jobs. Some became nurses or pursued nursing related careers, as Lou Adams and Alma Schier did, no doubt as a result of their experience.

“In 1934 at the suggestion of the W.B.N.H. matron (Sr Simpkin) Clare Simpson worked for two months to get used to hospital life before starting her nursing training at Ballarat. She returned as Sr Simpson in 1937. Dulcie MacCallum did the same.

“Also on the domestic staff were a cook and a gardener/handyman. The last-named position was held by Mr A.S. Fletcher from end of 1929; Mr. H. Welfare until April 1935, then Mr. J. Nash who stayed more than 10 years.

“After the hospital closed all assets were sold and the proceeds invested.

“In June 1956 it was decided to divide this money between the Meringur, Werrimull, Yarrara, Merrinee, Karween and Cullulleraine Hall committees.

“There were hundreds of babies born at

the Werrimull Bush Nursing Hospital (70 in the first year!) but because the hospital was in existence for a comparatively short period of our history, they have become a very select group of people.”

But our story doesn’t end there!

It has been suggested that the Werrimull Bush Nursing Hospital building is still with us, having been moved to Mildura sometime after the hospital closed in 1947. Margaret Turvey, widow of Sunraysia photographic doyen Don Turvey, told Heartbeat that she recalls her husband pointing out the hostel accommodation building on the corner of 7th Street and Pine Avenue, opposite the Seven Pines Motel, as the former Werrimull Bush Nursing Hospital.

We believe the building is still owned locally and while Heartbeat has been unable to confirm Margaret’s recollection, we would love to hear from anyone who might know for sure.

*** The plaque inscription and other details came from the Monument Australia website, while The Argus article and letter came from the archives of the National Library of Australia’s ‘Trove’ website. We also thank Wendy Shurey (nee Phillips) for her recollections and access to Irene Douglas and Patricia Priest’s research paper.**



DR PHILLIPS WAS A LAY PREACHER AT THE AC IN WERRIMULL.



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STATE OF THE ART

THEATRE UPGRADE AT BASE

MILDURA Base Public Hospital (MBPH) recently completed the first phase of an exciting \$5.4M Theatre Upgrade Project thanks to funding provided by the Victorian Health Building Authority, investing \$1M to enhance their Endoscopy medical equipment.

A crucial part of this initiative, was the replacement of the outdated endoscopy equipment with cutting-edge technology, ensuring that MBPH continue to deliver high quality medical services to their patients.

MBPH CEO Terry Welch said this significant upgrade introduced 12 state-of-the-art Olympus endoscopes, which boast unparalleled precision and functionality.

“These advanced instruments, coupled with Ultra High Definition monitors, guarantee crystal-clear imaging during procedures,” Mr Welch said.

“Additionally, an electronic medical recording system enables seamless data management and analysis. This ground-breaking equipment marks a pivotal moment for our hospital and its commitment to patient care.

“By investing in the latest technology, we can provide more accurate diagnoses and treatments for various conditions including: colon cancer, colorectal polyps, ulcers, coeliac disease, Helicobacter pylori, stomach cancer and oesophageal cancer.”

Mr Welch said that MBPH patients can now benefit from the most advanced medical services available, positioning MBPH at the forefront of healthcare innovation.

“The successful implementation of this project is a testament to our dedication to excellence and our unwavering commitment to staying abreast of the latest advancements in the medical field,” he said.

“As we continue to progress, MBPH remains focused on providing our patients with the highest standard of care, ensuring their well-being and peace of mind. This project is a perfect example of how MBPH connects its HEART values to our patient care and the community. The Theatre Upgrade project will continue with the main construction works planned to start in October 2023.”



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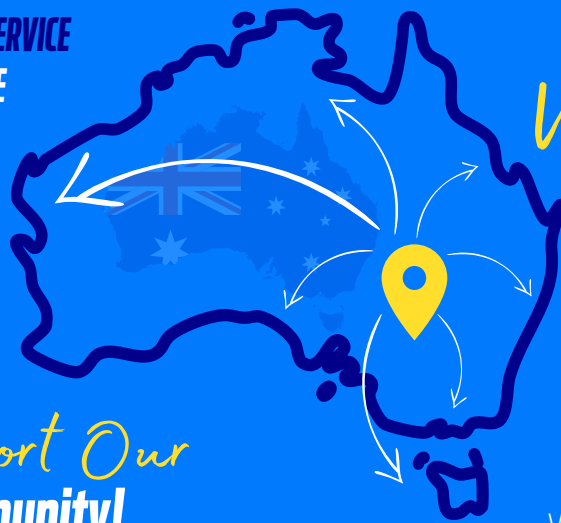
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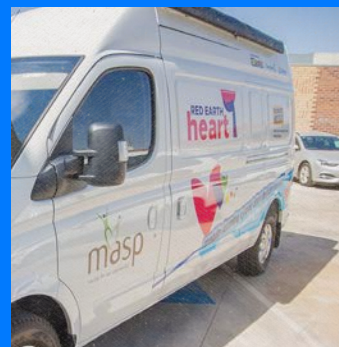
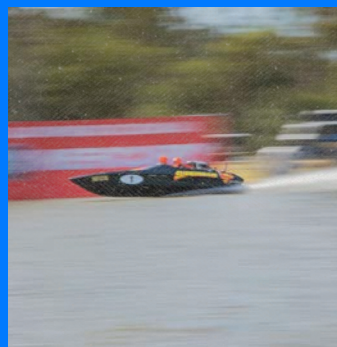
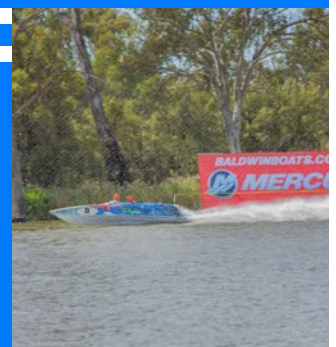


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MILDURA DOCTORS GET TEACHER TRAINING

OVER THIRTY DOCTORS IN MILDURA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA HAVE STRENGTHENED THEIR TEACHING AND SUPERVISORY SKILLS THANKS TO FREE TRAINING PROVIDED BY MONASH RURAL HEALTH'S NORTH WEST VICTORIA REGIONAL TRAINING HUB.

The training is part of the new Clinical Teaching and Education Pathway, a three stage program to strengthen teaching and supervisory capacities among doctors within regional health services. The program was originally developed by Monash

Rural Health's Dr Lisa Hall, Senior Lecturer in Education and Evaluation, and was recognised with a Monash Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences' Dean's Award for Excellence in Education - Industry and Community Education Programs in 2022.



As a teaching hospital, Mildura Base Public Hospital supervises over 40 Monash University medical students on placement, as well as 18 interns and 119 house medical officers, including those seconded from other health services, each year.

Mildura Base Public Hospital's Director of Medical Education, Dr Mary Beth Maclsaac, was excited to partner with Monash Rural Health to offer the innovative Clinical Teaching and Education Pathway program to all the hospital's doctors with supervisory responsibilities.

"We appreciated the supervision support and training offered by Lisa Hall and the team at the Monash Rural Hub. The peer to peer teaching model allowed for sharing of experiences and collaborative learning. Our clinical supervisors gave very positive feedback about the program."

Associate Professor Hieu Pham, Deputy Director of the North West Victoria Regional Training Hub, said the enthusiastic take-up of the program in Mildura reflected the region's commitment to strengthening the medical workforce.

"We know that high-quality teaching and supervision is key to supporting our medical students and junior doctors, and helps build a strong local medical workforce. Monash Rural Health and the North West Victoria Regional Training Hub are proud to support our local health services and primary care clinics by bringing this world-class training to our region."

Twelve of the participating local doctors have been sponsored by the North West Victoria Regional Training Hub to further develop their skills in clinical education and supervision by completing an additional workshop delivered by the Monash Centre for Scholarship in Health Education in July.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR HIEU PHAM,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE NORTH WEST
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POWERHOUSE GALA EVENT

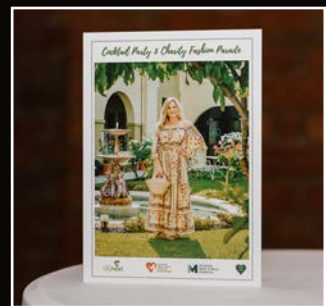
A woman with short grey hair, wearing a dark blue, short-sleeved, tiered dress and high-heeled sandals, is walking away from the camera on a black runway. The background is a dimly lit event space with other guests and bright spotlights creating lens flares.

THE FIRST EVENT AT THE NEWLY REDEVELOPED AND RE-OPENED POWERHOUSE ON THE MILDURA RIVERFRONT WAS A SELLOUT SUCCESS.

About 180 people attended Mildura Base Public Hospital Foundation's cocktail party and fashion parade on Friday night. It was staged as a fundraiser for the Lucas Foundation. Tickets cost \$130 a head and all were sold. The foundation, which financially supports families with seriously ill infants, is named after Mildura's Lucas Whitelegg. In 2013, Lucas was diagnosed as the nation's youngest ever baby to contract botulism. He spent nine months in intensive care and a further six weeks on the ward of the Monash Medical Centre. Hospital chief executive Terry Welch said the foundation was "breaking in" the Powerhouse as a function site and he thanked all those attending for their support for the foundation. "The Lucas Foundation is famous for helping children and families in need and that's what this is all about," he said.











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RIO'S LEGACY

AND FIGHT FOR LIFE



FOR KAREN AND RYAN FOWLER, THE LOSS OF THEIR LITTLE BOY RIO IN 2018 TO A RARE ALMOST UNKNOWN CONDITION, WAS AN UNBELIEVABLY HEART WRENCHING CHAPTER IN THEIR LIVES.

Formerly, from Sydney, the couple moved to Mildura recently, where Karen had accepted a position as a Psychologist at the Mildura Base Public Hospital in the Community Mental Health Team and Ryan took up the role of Head of Primary / Deputy Principal at Trinity Lutheran College.

Here is the story of Rio's fight for life and what inspired his parents to establish 'Rio's Legacy'

Rio James Fowler was just 15 months old when he was admitted to Sydney's Randwick Children's Hospital after his third presentation to the emergency department on November 9, 2017, due to

reoccurring Gastro. Unfortunately, Rio did not recover and despite 40 nights in hospital, never returned home.

Rio's episode of Gastro and the severe symptoms associated, accelerated an underlying condition that Paediatric Doctors informed Karen and Ryan, they had never seen before in a child. Doctors believed that what Rio was experiencing, was so rare, he potentially was the first and only child in the world to have it. "Pathology and genetics teams worked vigilantly to find answers for us and sent samples overseas to no avail". Rio was eventually diagnosed with the broad term Arterial Vasculopathy.

Rio's arteries failed to supply enough blood to all his major organs and the blood vessels around his body. Despite major aggressive medical intervention, Karen and Ryan were eventually told that his condition would progress, and his body would progressively shut down.

Ryan said they were confronted with the advice from a Vascular Surgeon, who informed them that there weren't any answers to deal with Rio's deteriorating condition.

One of the doctors said to us "We don't know what to do Ryan and Karen, he's on six anti-hypertensives and we can't keep

his blood pressure below 160" and that was when he told us that his arterial were abnormally thick, and its inner walls were closing / restricting blood flow".

"It was at that point, that they said to us that our son had a "life-limiting" condition - I hadn't heard that term before."

During his time in hospital, Rio survived five major surgeries, including two amputations (high thigh and hindquarter), kidney (renal) failure, heart impairment, failure, and consistently high blood pressure readings (250 systolic over 180 diastolic).

The hospital then mentioned 'Bear Cottage' located in Manly, which is an end of life, respite hospice where they accommodate and look after families and their terminally ill child.

From Christmas 2017 onwards, Rio's condition continued to deteriorate, and he was transferred to Bear Cottage.

"It was just like being at home and we were able to stay there for as long as we need to and all at no cost to us. We able to be parents again with our kids," Ryan said.

"Bear Cottage said as the weeks went on that "Rio became their number one concern due to his progressive condition" which was very comforting, as any parent can imagine."





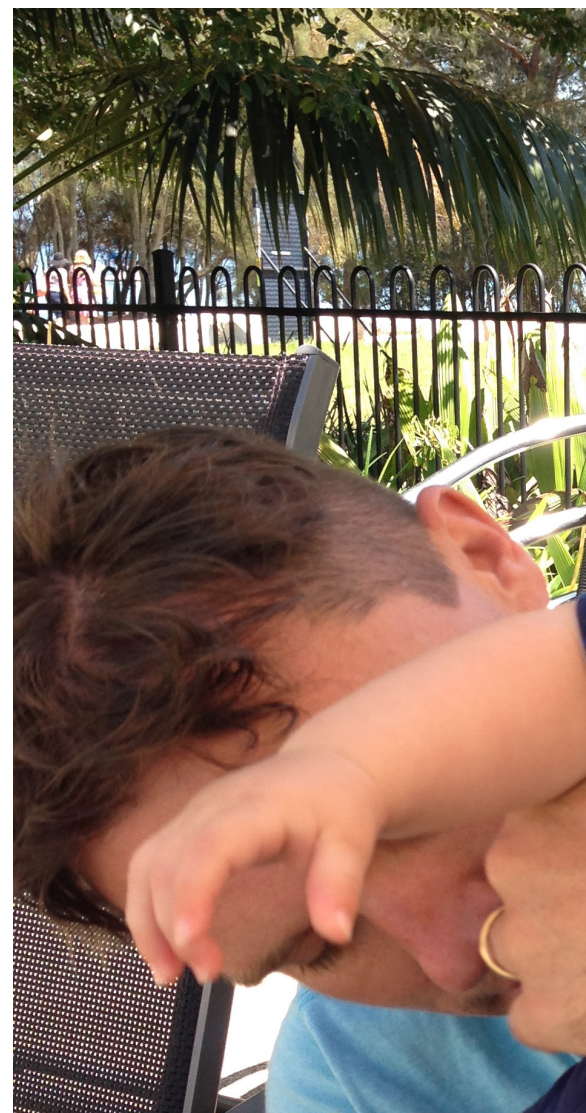
Rio continued to inspire his anguishing parents and all around him including his four-year-old sister (Remi), with his smile, fight and will to never give up. He made the most of every moment, engaging in play, dancing, and asking for chocolate when he was able to. Rio's courageous and brave fight came to end on 15th January 2018. He was a beautiful little boy who will be forever loved and dearly missed.

Following Rio's passing, Ryan and Karen, after learning that there are only three hospices in Australia, were inspired to establish Rio's Legacy, which aims to champion places like Bear Cottage and support children with a life – limiting condition and their families. Rio's Legacy is also looking to build a hospice in Western Sydney, and wish to see more nationally, due to the need across Australia. "We believe that all children are 'fearfully and wonderfully made' and that's our slogan for Rio's Legacy," Ryan said.

"When you learn that there are over 50 hospices in England - you ask how it can be that there are only three in Australia?" Ryan said.

Since then, Ryan has taken part in several endurance physical challenges to raise awareness and money. "Called Rio's Run, in 2018, I ran from Melbourne to Sydney which took me 26 consecutive days," he said. "I then rode from Adelaide to Sydney 2019 via Melbourne and Hobart (Rio's Ride) and in 2021, I ran and rode around Western Australia (Rio's Challenge of Hope) completely over 1,000kms and successfully donated over \$120,000 to what will be only the 4th hospice in Australia and first in WA that the WA Government are building over there."

Already the charity has raised almost \$730,000 and donated over \$260,000 to support children with a life – limiting condition and their families. To further raise funds and awareness for the hospice Rio's Legacy is looking to build in Western Sydney, on September 18, Ryan will set-off on 'Rio's Challenge '23' where he will run and cycle from Queensland's only hospice Hummingbird House (one of only 3 in Australia) to Western Sydney, arriving at 3rd October at Oran Park, after an epic-16 day - almost 1000 km journey.





If you want to learn more about Rio's Legacy, check out the website and socials below:

<https://rioslegacy.org.au/>

Instagram: @Rios.gift

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/rio-s-legacy/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/riosgift>

MBPH Foundation House fundraiser launched. Ryan and Karen's story very much mirrors MBPH Foundation's aim to build Foundation House, which will provide a home away from home for families of patients undergoing treatment at the MBPH – a vitally important added service.

A major fundraiser has been launched which aims to raise more than \$2million.

The Lucas Foundation has previously raised funds to provide comfort and assistance to residents of Sunraysia, suffering financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances or illness affecting their children.

The MBPH Foundation is proud to be continuing the legacy of the Lucas Foundation in supporting families and children under the age of 12 who need to travel to metropolitan areas for medical treatment for extended periods.

To make a donation to the Foundation House fundraiser visit: www.mbphfoundation.com.au/donate.





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- One visiting Respiratory & Sleep Physician

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GARLIC CRUSADER

ONE MAN'S BELIEF IN
COOKING STAPLE'S POWER

AFFECTIONATELY known as 'Garlic Nick', Nick Diamantopoulos is revolutionising the garlic industry globally and he's doing it from a factory at Iraak, a half hour's drive from Mildura's CBD.

A study conducted by the Melbourne-based Peter Doherty Institute has found that an Australian grown garlic variety produced by Nick's Australian Garlic Producers could reduce COVID and flu-related infections.

According to the new scientific research extracts of a yet to be named garlic have shown antiviral activity with up to 99.9% efficacy against the viruses that cause COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) and the common flu (influenza type A) at laboratory level.

The landmark finding comes after Australian Garlic Producers commissioned Doctor Julie McAuley, from the Doherty Institute, to establish which was the best garlic variety to use in its health supplements.

More than 20 varieties of garlic were tested in different forms as part of the study, but the trials found only one type of garlic was effective in curbing the viruses.

This latest announcement is just another step in Nick's incredible life story to prove the health benefits of garlic.

For the past 25 years Nick, a scientist who majored in chemistry and mathematics at university, has devoted his life to the development of the Australian garlic industry.

His story is one of sheer persistence and an ability to brush aside adversity to achieve his goal.

It has not been an easy journey, and one that has tested him personally and his family.

Like most great entrepreneurs, he has experienced the highs and lows of owning his own start-up business and while now many would see his story as one of 'rags to riches' the early years were not easy.





NICK DIAMANTOPOULOS PLANTING GARLIC

Leaving his comfortable job as an industrial chemist in the brick manufacturing industry he soon found himself broke, losing everything, including his car! But that didn't stop him, and he reverted to riding a push bike around Melbourne and hitching rides in the back of Australia Post trucks to far flung farms in regional Victoria and New South Wales to plant his garlic seed.

You can imagine the perplexed look on the farmer's face when this Greek man arrived at his farm gate, carrying a bag of seed over his shoulder after walking nearly 5km.

"I have a vivid image of arriving in Hay, New South Wales, at 6am holding on to a few bags of garlic seeds and walking miles to a farm to deliver garlic for a trial," Nick said.

"Looking back now I can still see the perplexed look on the farmer's face – somewhere between bemused and the disdainful, trying to figure out if I was for real or a complete nutcase."

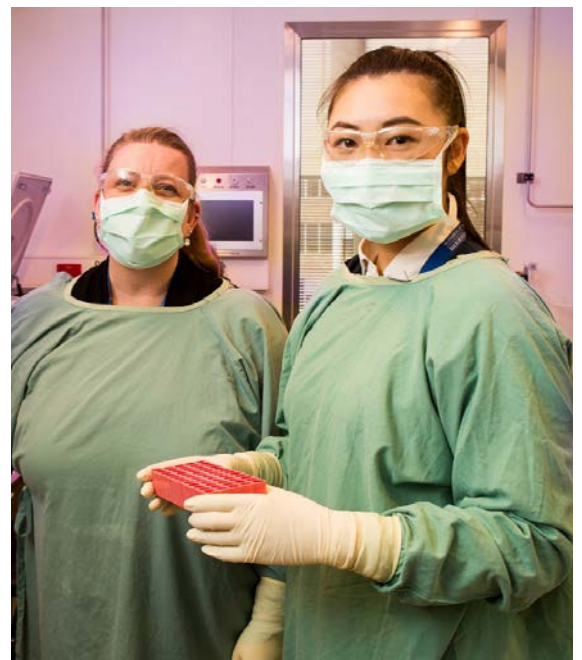
It is just one of the many stories that have helped map the path Nick has taken, and indicative of the drive and commitment that has made Australian Garlic Producers Australia's biggest supplier and a leader in garlic production globally.

Despite the obstacles Nick has had to overcome, he has also had his fair share of luck. An almost by chance meeting with French authorities delivered him the rights to a whole range of disease-free garlic - viruses are common in garlic - laying the foundations for his now thriving business.

But luck has played only a small part in this amazing story and it seems fitting that a bit of luck would fall his way after considering the adversity he and his family experienced in the establishment phase of their business.



NICK DIAMANTOPOULOS IN THE LABORATORY



JULIE MCAULEY WITH A COLLEAGUE FROM THE DOHERTY INSTITUTE



People who are closest to Nick know him as a simple man, whose generous nature and kind smile hide a determination to prove his theory that garlic is much more than a vegetable used in cooking.

Research and innovation, as well as clever business models, have enabled his company to be less exposed to weather variables by contracting growers in different climatic zones and sequencing the harvests with the least amount of equipment.

Looking for early maturing garlic he formed a relationship with an Indigenous community in the Northern Territory to grow garlic ready for harvest in late August, early September.

This has enabled him to fill the shelves of supermarkets when southern garlic

BUT ULTIMATELY, NICK THE SCIENTIST WAS DETERMINED TO DEMONSTRATE THE GOODNESS OF GARLIC FOR OUR HEALTH.

becomes scarce, obviating the need to import garlic from other countries such as China, Argentina and Mexico.

The scientist in him has developed a system of control that enables him to identify in which row a particular garlic bulb has come from -- important in food safety and traceability to protect consumers and prevent diseases.

But ultimately, Nick the scientist was

determined to demonstrate the goodness of garlic for our health.

Since time immemorial, popular opinion has always held on to the belief in the healing properties of garlic but this had never been scientifically proven.

After many years of research into different varieties – Nick’s garlic collection now numbers more than three hundred varieties of which only a handful have been commercialised.

Nick’s story is an example of what can be achieved with a bit of luck, a good business model and a family who shares his vision.

What the future holds for Nick and his company Australian Garlic Produces is unknowable. But, one thing for sure is that his love for garlic will remain no matter what happens.



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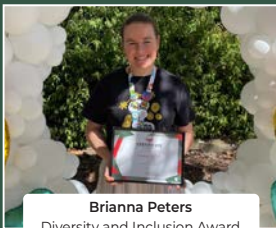
Emma Gallagher: HEART Star
Commitment to Patient Care



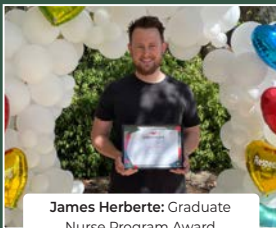
Dennis Villaneuve
Heart Values Aspire Award



Pauline Bird: The Coolamon
Patient Care Award



Brianna Peters
Diversity and Inclusion Award



James Herbert: Graduate
Nurse Program Award

Mildura Base Public Hospital has announced its 2023 HEART Hero awards.

The individual and team-based awards are recognition for the wonderful contribution individuals have made to our organisation through our values driven culture. Each individual award nominee and eventual winner was chosen by members of staff with over 200 nominees received.

Congratulations to all the winners and nominees and while we recognise the contribution of these great members of our staff, it is our whole team which makes MBPH the values driven organisation it has become.



Ward 4: Team Award



Steven Matulic: Champion for
Workplace Wellbeing and Safety



Dr Satya Hallewas
Medical Staff Award



David Tanner: Improvement and
Innovation Award



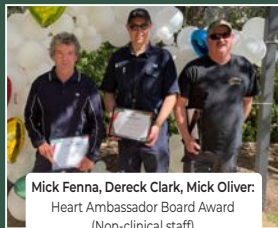
Jill Nihill: Improvement and
Innovation Award



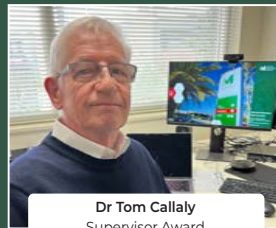
Jim Wilton
Volunteer Award



Larry Higgins: Highly
Commended - Volunteer Award



Mick Fenna, Dereck Clark, Mick Oliver:
Heart Ambassador Board Award
(Non-clinical staff)



Dr Tom Callaly
Supervisor Award



Emma Bath: Heart Ambassador
Board Award (clinical staff)

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REGIONAL COMMUNITY

PLATFORM STREAMLINES OUTPATIENT SERVICES

ON May 8th, Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) commenced its 'Go Live' with the Regional Community Platform (RCP). The RCP platform is a WEB based platform that consists of numerous Modules that will bring all the community services together under a central application. These Modules allow for the management of community-based clients, referrals, waitlists, care coordination, scheduling/appointments, progress notes, client documents, financials, and statutory reporting.

Starting with administration on day one, over the course of four weeks, MBPH transitioned over 17 different services within the Allied Health and Community Services departments. Members of the RCP project team were in attendance to

MBPH SUPPORT OFFICER, BREA GRENNAN SAID THE ROLL-OUT OF THE OUTPATIENT ELECTRONIC PATIENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM HAS STREAMLINED THE EFFICIENCY OF MANAGING OUTPATIENT'S SERVICES.

help with the changeover and all went off without a hitch. Staff were treated to a lunch by the hospital as a thank you for their hard work and dedication through the changes.

"From the patient's perspective, everything

we do is still the same, the system has all of our patient bookings and progress notes and allows us to send correspondence to external providers," Brea said.

Also, enthusiastically embracing the implementation of RCP, is MBPH Ambulatory Clinical Team Leader, Marianne Fiorillo who said it has increased the workplace efficiency enormously.

"The great thing about the system is the elimination of paper-based processes," she said. "Everything in regard to the patient is now in an electronic form on RCP and has replaced the previous TrakCare system allowing for modernised appointment coordination."

MBPH@Home Intake Co-ordinator and Physiotherapist, Jen Reid, has also found the system to be a great asset. On Monday she works as physiotherapist on the wards and her other duties during the week see her processing the intake administration for outpatients needing to access the hospital's MBPH@Home Programs.

"The implementation of the RCP system has really streamlined the work we do and has virtually replaced the paperwork we previously had to process. We still need to source the patient's files but not





having loads of paperwork is saving the trees which is fitting with MBPH sustainability programs,” Jen said.

“It is also nice from a ward perspective, as I can easily access discharge summaries and any other information that I need and can load that up into the system.

“I call the patients before they come onto the program, and I can do a home assessment over the phone with them using the E-Forms available in RCP. Being able to type notes on RCP and have it right in front of you has been fantastic.”

The following is a long list of MBPH services that are currently live with RCP include Audiology, Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Dietetics, Diabetes,

Exercise Physiology, Rehabilitation Groups, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Respiratory Clinic, Residential in Reach, Rehabilitation in the Home, Social Work, Speech Pathology, Stomal Therapy, Wound Clinic, and HARP.

The RCP Implementation Group and Ambulatory Services staff have done a fantastic job transitioning to this new program.

RCP’s Design and Discovery commenced in 2019 ahead of its first ‘Go Live’ in 2021 and its implementation is another example of MBPH efforts to continually enhance the efficiency of the organisation, benefitting both staff and patients.



MBPH AT HOWER COORDINATOR AND PHYSIOTHERAPIST JEN REID WITH PATIENT EVELYN HOSKING

DRIVING AMBITION TO SUCCEED

SON TAKES THE WHEEL TO BUILD ON LEGACY

THE Davison name is synonymous with Sunraysia's motor trade.

First it was Garry, and now it is his son, Reuben, with the latter building on the legacy of his father.

Garry Davison started his automotive industry career in the 1970s as a cadet car salesman for Mortimer Ford, a name that our more mature readers may well be familiar with. Soon after he went to work for Syd Mills – another storied Sunraysia motoring icon.

“At Mortimer’s I was employed on commission, and I had commitments... so I joined Syd Mills Motors and worked there for almost four years,” Garry reminisces.

“I then decided to move up to the Gold Coast where I worked in the car trade for about five years.

“I had a lease with business on the Gold Coast which was about to expire and so I decided to come back to Mildura.”

By that stage Garry’s father Ron had purchased the land under the Mildura water tower on the corner of Tenth Street and Orange Avenue -- formerly the Peter’s Ice Cream factory.

THAT WAS 1983, AND WHAT FOLLOWED DURING THE ENSUING NEXT DECADES EVENTUALLY LEAD TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DAVISON FORD.

“We both thought it would be a good location for a car used car yard and that’s how it all started,” Garry recalls.

“We bought the land across the road from the water tower and put another used car yard in there while we also opened a site in Fifteenth Street.

There was an opportunity to open a Toyota franchise but at that stage I felt that that was too big of a commitment to take that on.

“I then met with a dealer in Darwin, and he introduced me to the new Daewoo range and so I ended up taking a franchise on in Mildura, initially combining the Daewoo range within the used vehicles.

Then he added Land Rover to his stable. Garry was at a Land Rover dealer conference in Noosa, and someone rang

him and told him that the Mildura Ford dealer was closing.

“I went straight to Melbourne to talk to Ford and put in an expression of interest to take the franchise on,” Garry recalls.

He said that at the time he had already acquired the land where Davison Ford sits today, intending to build a service station.

“That was 1997 and there wasn’t much of anything else around us,” he said.

“I had said to Ford I am here (in Mildura), I have the land, and I am prepared to build a new facility.

“We went through the necessary procedures, and we were subsequently appointed the new Mildura Ford dealer.”

Garry didn’t waste any time once the documentation was signed, opening the new dealership opened its doors on the corner of Etiwanda Avenue in 1998.

A few years later the growing Davison Motors Group purchased Hutchison Motors and its Mitsubishi franchise, and in 2005 added a new showroom for the Volkswagen franchise on the same Deakin Avenue site.





Garry closed his original Orange Avenue caryards and relocated them to some land he had purchased adjacent to the Mildura Working Man's Club carpark.

The next major milestone in the group's expansion came when the long-time Holden dealership Stuart and Harrison closed.

Garry wanted to take the Holden franchise on, but already being a Ford dealer wasn't going to make that easy. Old rivalries die hard.

"That was a quite an exercise because we were a Ford dealer – effectively two major competitors," he said.

"Holden granted the franchise to us, but we operated under another name. At the time we were the only the second location in Australia to have both Ford and Holden."

For the record, the other than a dealer in the Northern Territory's Katherine.

"We had refurbished premises that the

Davidson Motor Group had acquired further along Fifteenth Street, just near Jayco," Garry said.

"Even though it wasn't a purpose-built building, we put the whole Holden livery in, right down to the same tiles.

"If you had of gone into any new Holden dealership it would have looked the same," he says proudly.

In later years, the motor Group acquired the land where Mildura Motor Holdings (MMH) now stands.

MMH has also acquired the remaining parcel of land next door where it has set aside a portion for a new showroom showcasing The Great Wall/Haval SUV range.

This is a relatively new addition to the already impressively long list of vehicle franchises that includes GMSV, Holden, HSV, Jeep, Kia, Mahindra, MG, Mitsubishi, Renault and Volkswagen.

The remaining land on the site has been

set aside for a complex of shopfronts for sale or lease, and some factory sites as well.

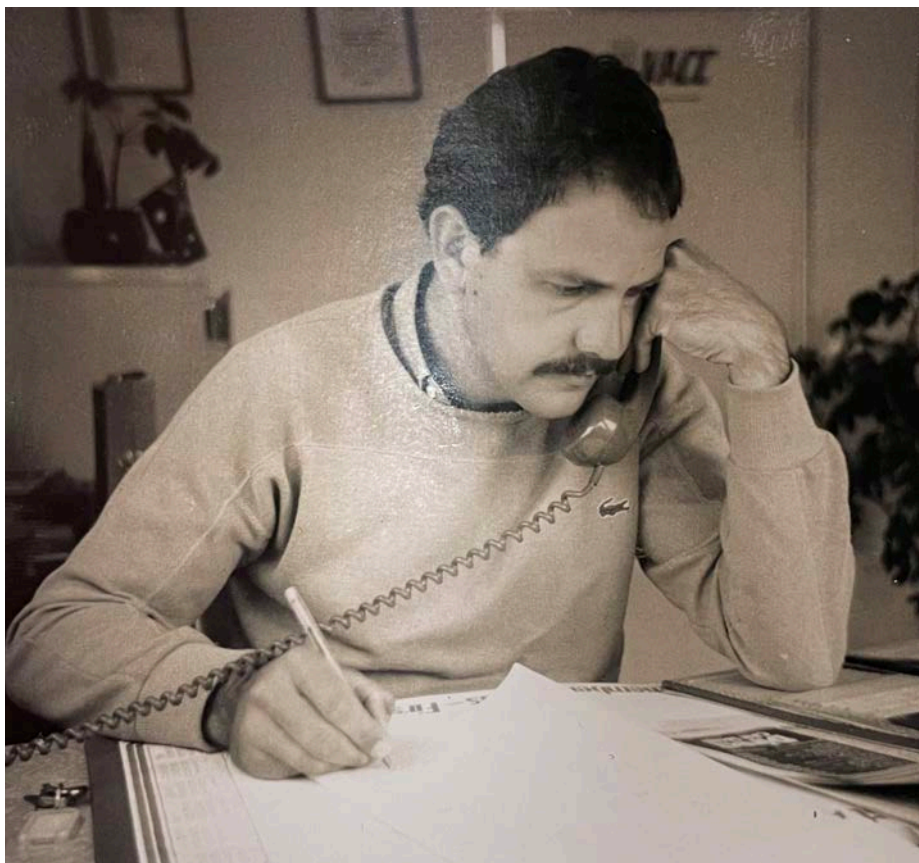
The Davison Motor Group and MMH between them employ 120 full-time staff, some of whom have been with the original Davison Motors from day one, or close to it.

Several employees have been with company for 20 or 30 years, and their longest serving employee has been with Davison Motors for 44 years!

Garry described the Davison motoring journey as "enjoyable", and he is delighted that his son Reuben had chosen to follow in his footsteps... although it was touch and go for a while when the younger had just left school.

"I thought he may have pursued another pathway after school," Garry recalled.

"Reuben went to Melbourne Grammar, as did his brother Riley, and I thought there may have been a doctor or a brain surgeon emerge from that!



“Instead, we had an artist and a motor mechanic and that’s fine,” Gary added with fatherly pride.

REUBEN DAVISON

Reuben grew up inside the motor trade and has fond recollections of travelling around the countryside with his father looking at cars.

“From a very young age I was always at the auctions and remember going down to Melbourne on the plane with dad every second week to go and look at cars or auctions,” he recalls.

“Dad didn’t really buy many cars at auctions though. It was usually from other car dealers, but it was a chance for him to get a feel for where that market was at.

“Those car wholesalers we met all felt like uncles to me.

“My first official role with the company was a school-based apprenticeship in spare parts – and I spent one day a week here and loved it.

“I then went off to boarding school and my grades did go up, but by then Year 12 was coming up and I decided I wanted to

come back to Mildura, and I finished my schooling at St Joseph’s College.”

Reuben started from the ground up working in almost every area of the dealership.

“Dad still wanted me to finish Year 12 before I was even allowed to become a detailer! I finished school in 2009 and then started at Davison Ford as just that – a detailer!

“The process for me was that I had to wash the cars, clean the yard and detail new and used cars for one year before I was allowed to commence an apprenticeship.”

In 2010 Reuben started his motor vehicle apprenticeship with Davison Motor Group but completed it at a Volkswagen dealership at Werribee.

“I worked down there for a while and became foreman of the workshop. I then did a stint as a motor mechanic in Brisbane where some mates had gone up to play football and I thought it would be a good opportunity to gain some more industry experience. I ended up workshop foreman there after a year,” he recalls.

Reuben then decided he was ready to return to Mildura permanently, and hoped he could get a job back at the dealership.

He did and undertook a trainee salesman’s cadetship. There were no shortcuts... offered or expected.

“I just had to work my way through,” he says ruefully.

“I spent time in used cars at the Holden dealership from 2015 to 2018, and then I came back up to Davison Ford as used car manager and then in October 2021 I became the general manager and dealer principal.

“It has been a bit of a whirlwind journey to be honest.

“I was thrown into the top position here, but not in normal times by any means having to come to terms with the COVID restrictions which saw lockdowns, stock shortages and a raft of difficult issues to navigate.

“But now the market is changing, and our position will go back to where we were, which I haven’t really experienced at this level.

“I expect it to be a steep learning curve over the next couple of years.”





THE DEATH OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAR MAKING INDUSTRY

The biggest challenge for the Davison group, and the wider Australian automotive industry, in recent years -- besides COVID -- were the announcements by The Ford Motor Company and General Motors Holden that they would cease manufacturing operations in Australia.

Both were iconic brands being sold by Reuben and his father.

“Dad and I were both sitting together when we got the news that they were leaving Australia for good,” Reuben recalls.

“We had just completed building a new Holden showroom at MMH and we both sat there in disbelief.

“Dad had just invested millions into a new showroom and bang, the brand’s gone! Actually, there were multiple dealers around Australia who had just completed showrooms or were in the completion stages.”

Reuben said as far as Ford is concerned there is an upside or two. The brand is still very much alive in Australia and although no vehicles are manufactured here, the company’s design team for the very

popular Ford Ranger is based in Australia. “Our biggest Ford product sellers are the Ranger and the Everest -- both designed in Melbourne,” he says.

“Ford still have a team of 2500 engineers and designers for local development of the Ford family, and they are designing vehicles for the world market.”

The suspension and climate endurance testing in the snow and desert for the Ranger and Everest was all done here in Australia, Reuben revealed.

“The vehicles are built in Thailand which is where all of the major manufacturers have relocated to, and all the factories are rated and they have to meet a high-calibre standard,” Reuben explained.

Ford also manufacture the same vehicles in South Africa, but they do not come to Australia.

“All designed here in Melbourne by Australian engineers and sold in 182 markets — pretty amazing.”

The Ford Ranger Ute is the number one selling 4x4 vehicle in Australia. The utes are set to have their biggest year in 10 years, and next year they are aiming for their biggest year since 2007.

Reuben is confident of Ford’s future in Australia.

“Ford is here to stay, and we were only at a meeting last week to celebrate being 25 years as a Ford dealer,” he told Heartbeat.

Speaking of here to stay, so is the Davison Motor Group.

“Every part of the group is 100 per cent owned by Garry – locally owned -- there isn’t anybody else which we are proud to say,” Reuben revealed with pride.

“This is a pretty big thing in our industry because most of the dealerships you’ll see now, and in small country towns particularly, are owned by corporates or publicly listed companies or even overseas entities.”

The Davison Motor Group is a Mildura Base Public Hospital Foundation as a Lifetime Partner and travels “below the radar” as Reuben puts it to support many other charities, causes and sporting organisations.

“We enjoy contributing to the community. In a town like Mildura, and a region like Sunraysia, it is important we give back and support the community that has supported and been good to us.”



THE DAWSON MOTORING EMPIRE WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY. IT HAS TAKEN HARD WORK, DEDICATION AND TWO GENERATIONS TO GET TO WHERE IT IS TODAY. THAT'S A YOUNG GARRY ABOVE. AT THE WHEEL OF ONE OF HIS EARLY USED CARS. BELOW, EVERYONE KNOWS THE RED ONES ARE FASTER. THIS 1980S FORD FALCON WILL BRING BACK MOTORING MEMORIES FOR SOME READERS.



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SERENDIPITY STRIKES

SIMONE TRANSPORTED TO MILDURA BY FATE

UNTIL very early this year Mildura Base Public Hospital was not on Dr Simone Zhang's radar.

Neither was a move to Mildura to take up a position as a first-year psychiatry registrar. Like so many important turning points in her life the move here, and the job, were not planned.

But as she explained: "Most of the best things that have happened in my life I haven't planned for."

That includes her marriage to artist Nicolas Chen, but more on that later!

Simone was born, raised and educated in Melbourne. A city girl through and through.

A native of the northeastern suburbs, she studied medicine at Melbourne University before going on to train and complete an internship at the Austin Hospital, the public teaching hospital at Heidelberg.

"The plan was to stay at the Austin," the 26-year-old said.

It was familiar territory -- both the hospital and the neighborhood -- plus her friends and family lived close by.

"My plan was to complete a residency year at The Austin to improve my medical skills before trying to get into psychiatry," she says.

During that year those around her, including fellow medical staff, encouraged

to apply as soon as possible, even if it was "just to go through the process".

"So, I ended up applying last year and got an offer from Mildura to interview (for a position here).

"Mildura wasn't really a preference, but then again I did not put any preference on my application."

Simone did not expect that application to go anywhere. After all, she was doing it more to go through the process than counting on any particular outcome.

When the offer came to interview for a position in Mildura, Simone was completing her first, full internship year.

"At that stage I felt a little steadier in my medical understanding and sure of my footing knowing that," she says.

"Not to say I know a lot about medicine -- there is so much to learn, but it was in stark contrast to the start of the year, when I had only been a doctor for two months and I knew I didn't want to be a registrar then!

"But when the offer came through to interview, I thought I would give it a go... and I did some research on Mildura as well. "I was thinking: "What's the worst that could happen?

"I should just give it a go... I have no children, and nothing is holding me back in Melbourne.

"And luckily my husband's job is quite flexible, so we thought: 'Let's go to Mildura and give it a go'.

"So that's how we ended up here.

"And now I am training to be a psychiatrist." The road to being a qualified psychiatrist is a long one. For those not in the know the steps go something like this:

Step One: Study medicine and complete a medical degree (4-6 years).

Step Two: Do on-the-job training in a hospital after your degree (1 year).

Step Three: Enrol and complete specialist training in psychiatry with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

The RANZCP training takes a minimum of 60 months (5 years) to complete, and it requires rotations in different areas of practice including child and adolescent, addiction, adult, forensic, Indigenous, old age and consultation-liaison psychiatry.

Supervised by a senior psychiatrist, the trainee psychiatrist is constantly assessed on their work performance and they need to pass five major assessments.





SIMONE AND NICOLAS ARE REGULARS AT THE MILDURA FARMERS MARKET.

As we stated earlier it is a long, hard road. A road Simone has only just started down. “I am quite junior (at present),” Simone acknowledges.

But the goal is that through her training Simone will eventually be able to function as a psychiatrist, working independently. Presently supervised by more experienced practitioners, she spends her days in the hospital’s Mental Health Unit 5 learning on-the-job.

“I take a lot of notes,” she confides, but she is heavily involved in day-to-day psychiatric practice.

In a nutshell what that involves is a combination of things.

“Patients are assessed and if an issue is identified, the staff will work up a diagnosis and make sure there is no organic or physical cause, like a hormone or electrolyte deficiencies, or other kind of imbalance that could be contributing to the patient’s presentation,” Simone explained.

“When you confirmed those issues are not the problem and a formulated a diagnosis like a psychosis or some mood problem like depression or anxiety, then you prescribe medication based on the patient profile and what they can tolerate.”

Psychiatrists can also prescribe supportive therapies and advice, like how to manage anxieties or situations.

It’s not quite like the Freudian idea of lying down on the couch and talking though something, Simone says.

“A lot more intensive, one-to-one talk therapy is what a psychologist would offer. Not to say a psychiatrist can’t or won’t, but we manage the more acute, day-to-day presentations.”

For the uninitiated, psychologists have different education and training than psychiatrists, and psychologists cannot prescribe medication. Only psychiatrists are medically trained doctors.

So, how is Simone finding living and working in Mildura?

“Nic and I are enjoying Mildura very much,” Simone said.

The couple arrived in Mildura in early February, immediately following their honeymoon, and Simone started work on February 13.

Simone is full of praise for her fellow hospital staffers, saying they have been very friendly and supportive.

“I think there is more support here than in Melbourne metro hospitals,” she said.

That may be a consequence, she hypothesizes, of the staff numbers being

smaller and “everyone here being closer knit”.

As for her social life since moving to the regions, Simone laughs when she admits outside work she and her husband are homebodies at heart.

“You won’t find me out at a club, or even eating out that often,” she says.

“I don’t miss the nightlife... I was never into that in Melbourne anyway.”

But she and Nic are regulars at the riverfront Sunraysia Farmers’ Market, striving to get there every fortnight. It has become a highlight of their life here.

Another aspect of living in Mildura the couple enjoys is our abundant scenery.

“The thing about being in Melbourne is that often have to go out of your way to find nice scenery, whereas here most pockets are picturesque,” Simone said.

“If you have been here all your life you may not appreciate it as much, but not being from here we are seeing things with fresh eyes and there is so much to see.”

Nic, she says, likes Sunraysia very much and at this stage of his career he is focusing on landscapes, so it suits him down to the ground. There is also talk of an exhibition next year to aid the Mildura Base Public Hospital Foundation. More about that in a later edition of Heartbeat.



ARTFUL JOB MOVE

NEW HORIZONS OPEN UP FOR PAINTER NICOLAS

MILDURA Base Public Hospital is playing its part in enriching the cultural tapestry of our city.

Case in point is the arrival in Mildura of professional artist Nicolas Chen. Painter Nicolas was formerly based in Melbourne and the catalyst for his move from the big smoke to regional Victoria was his wife, Dr Simone Zhang, or more correctly her job. Simone is a MBPH Ward 5 psychiatry registrar. (See story Page 18)

Nicolas' arrival is a serendipitous consequence of Simone's employment here and bolsters our region's burgeoning arts scene.

It is a win-win for the couple too. He is here to support his wife on her career path while Sunraysia for him is an interesting and exciting new environment to explore as an artist.

"Though I'm primarily an oil painter, I

also use a variety of other media such as watercolour, gouache, dry media and digital," the 35-year-old revealed during a recent chat.

"I like to explore all kinds of genres of painting including still life, portraiture and landscape. Often mixing multiple genres together.

"Through my painting I hope to share and celebrate life in all its myriad shapes and colours."

Since arriving in Sunraysia earlier this year Nicolas has found inspiration in our wide-open spaces, riverine environs and endless skies as well as subjects closer to home and more urbane in nature.

He acknowledges often finding inspiration in the most innocuous of subjects and places.

Born and raised in Melbourne, Nicolas took drawing classes as a child, and while he did not pursue art at high school, he went on to do so at a tertiary level inspired by the great Impressionists, both European and our homegrown talent including Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Fredrick

McCubbin. The latter two being principals of the famous Heidelberg School*.

Primarily an oil painter trained in tonal realism, he uses this style to explore various classical genres with a subtle contemporary edge. Layering of sheer oil paints and bold brush strokes give the works a translucent effect, as if the viewer were seeing each scene in a delicate and beautiful dreamlike state.

Nicolas' first serious 'dip into the arts pool' began with three years of formal training at Sydney's Julian Ashton Art School starting in 2007. He was between 18 and 19 at the time.

With that grounding under his belt, and his desire fixed on making his living from art he furthered his training at Italy's Florence Academy of Art from 2011 to 2014.

He returned home to continue to perfect his art and in 2018 enrolled as a student at the Victorian Artists Society (VAS) under the tutelage of the highly respected Paul McDonald Smith.

It was, Nicolas recalls, one of the highlights of his professional life and led to him

becoming a tutor at the same institution in 2019. He was working at VAS up until his move to Mildura.

With 150 years of history, the VAS is still one of Australia's preeminent art institutions. Established in 1870 by early impressionist painters, VAS is a society for art practitioners and lovers.

Its membership includes people ranging from new hobbyists right through to very accomplished and awarded artists and boasts a large and far-reaching network of like-minded people.

While he was tutoring others Nicolas continued to create for himself, with his art being described as 'reviving the Renaissance-like technical eye for detail, as he merges his oil paint training with a contemporary feel.'

His work has been well received in numerous art competitions in Australia. He was a finalist in Australia's only national Still Life Painting Award -- the EMSLA in 2019; a semi-finalist in the Doug Moran of 2015, and the winner of the prestigious A.M.E Bale travelling scholarship in 2018. More recent achievements include being a finalist in the 2020 and 2022 Lethbridge 20000 competition, and a finalist the 2022 iteration of 'The Doyles' and Winner of the 2022 'Rick Amor Self-portrait Prize' People's Choice award.

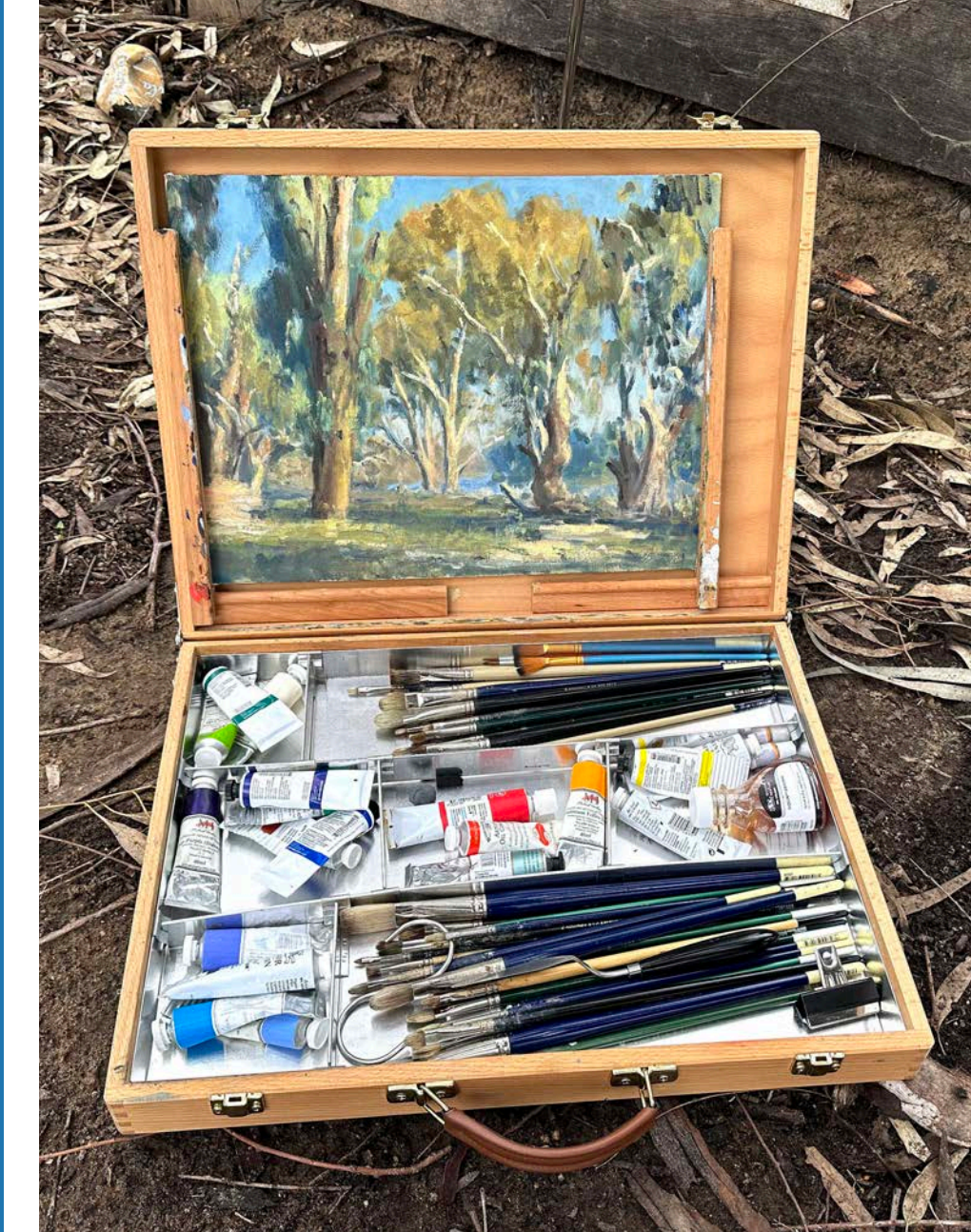
And, last month Nicolas was invited by the prestigious Twenty Melbourne Painters Society to exhibit some of his work, including some of his Sunraysia inspired works.

The TMPS is one of Australia's oldest and most prestigious arts organisations and celebrated its centenary in 2018. It occupies a unique position in Australian art in that membership is restricted to 20 and that is by invitation only.

Many distinguished artists have been members of the group and contributed to its colourful history. Those celebrated names have included founding members like Alice Bale and later members like Archibald Prize winner Sir William Dargie, Dorothy Whitehead Griffiths, Harley Griffiths, John Munro and Judith Wills.

For the record, Nicolas won the TMPS' A.M.E. Bale Traveling Scholarship in 2018. Named after founding member Alice Bale, it is a national art prize awarded biennially to an emerging Australian artist who has shown talent and achievement in traditional styles.

Winning was one of Nicolas' proudest



NICHOLAS' TOOLS OF HIS TRADE AND ONE OF HIS MILDURA-INSPIRED WORKS.

arts moments and allowed him to tour the many galleries and museums in Europe and America to study the works of the old masters in person and pursue further study in the form of a workshop with Studio Escalier**.

The A.M.E. Bale Art Awards are considered as highly prestigious prizes, perhaps the most esteemed in representational painting in Australia.

These awards include a traveling scholarship which enables Australian artists to study the works of the old masters abroad.

Members of the Twenty Melbourne Painters Society (TMPS) alone conduct the biennial judging, and it takes up to three days to consider the choice of works to be judged, and then to undertake the judging process.

"The Society keeps a strong commitment to the traditions of realist, tonal and

impressionist painting," it trumpets on its website.

The TMPS invitation to exhibit is an honour, Nicolas said, and he was enthusiastically looking forward to the exhibition when we spoke to him, and he was interested to see how his work was received by both his peers and the public.

The exhibition is traditionally staged in the Glen Eira City Council Gallery.

To see more of Nicolas' work log onto www.nicolaschen.com.au.

*The Heidelberg School was an Australian art movement of the late 19th century. It has been described as Australian impressionism.

** *Studio Escalier is a private art studio and international art colony in France. It was founded in 2001 and was designed and is directed by artists for artists. It is dedicated to the contemporary classical study of drawing and painting from life.*



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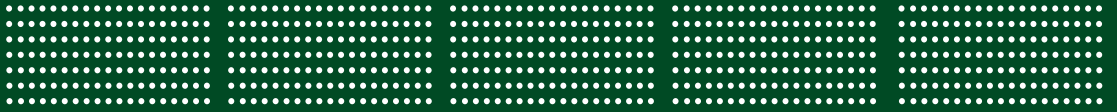
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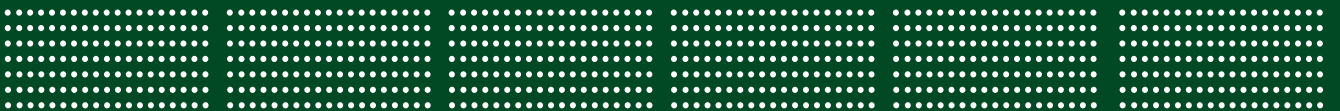
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MBPH VOLUNTEER TEAM

VOLUNTEERS

PERFORMING A VALUABLE ROLE AT MBPH

The Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) is fortunate to have a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers who visit the wards on a regular basis to spend time with patients talking to them and their families and performing a range of entertaining activities that greatly benefit the patients. They are very much representative of the Heart Values that are at the core of the MBPH workplace culture.

MBPH Rehab and Palliative Care Unit Nurse Manager Tracey Tonkin said that having volunteers spending time in Ward 4 is an important component of the care they provide for their patients.

“We are fortunate to have four volunteers in Ward 4, three of whom have been with use for some time and another who has recently joined us,” Tracey said.

“It’s been great because they all actually have a background in health care and also in end of life care.

I have found that these wonderful volunteers have just blended in like they are part of the staff.

In their roles they communicate quite freely with families and that’s great because they actually have the time to sit and do that.

In our roles from a nursing perspective, we are often very task orientated, going from one thing to another and so we often don’t have that time where we would really like to sit down and have a chat.

Not only is what the volunteers do is a great thing, but it is also a wonderful skill. They are able to provide feed-back to us and let us know if there something we need to action.

With our rehab patients in our care a lot of patients don’t have visitors all the time, people are busy and working. That’s where it’s great that the volunteers can come in and play cards or paint nails or other activities and half the time I don’t know what they are doing because they just blend in and do their job performing a valuable role for our patients.

The MBPH volunteers will spend on average four hours in the ward, two or three days a week and that extends to other wards in the hospital as well.

The MBPH is actively seeking volunteers to work across the hospital’s wards and if you have some time to spare we would love to speak with you.

For more information: Contact Volunteer Coordinator: Jack Madafferi e. jmadafferi@mbph.org.au or m. 0401 649 950.

MARY LEAVES LASTING LEGACY

AFTER ALMOST THREE YEARS AS MILDURA BASE PUBLIC HOSPITAL (MBPH) BOARD CHAIR, MARY RYDBERG IS STEPPING DOWN AND SHE LEAVES THE TOP POST SATISFIED WITH THE DIRECTION THE ORGANISATION IS HEADING.

Mary took the MBPH reins at a critical and historic time, leading the organisation through not only the COVID pandemic, but also as the hospital worked to re-establish its identity as a publicly managed healthcare service.
“I am happy with my legacy.

However, I think we tend to all be our own worst critics and so I reflect on a few things that I could have done better or that we haven't quite accomplished yet,” Mary told Heartbeat.
“But overall, I think our oversight has meant that we have a good



workplace and importantly we are providing a quality service for our patients. And, when we don't meet those standards, we are the first ones to put our hands up," she said.

"I think that level of transparency and honesty, with people being brave enough to put their hand up and say, "Hey we need to do this better," flows from our board-backed values, and I am very proud of that."

Mary's connection with healthcare in the northern Mallee can be traced back to the 1970s when she moved to the region with her husband, Richard from Green Bay, Wisconsin, in the United States.

"I started at the Mildura Base Hospital in 1974, working there part-time in administration while we were raising our children," she said.

"While at the Base I was also secretary/treasurer of the Men's Auxiliary for six years which, because I was a woman was somewhat of a unique role in that era.

"For me the hospital in those days played a major role in our lives, not just because I was employed there, but we were also new to Australia and it was an important part of our existence here."

In 1981 Mary and her family left the region, moving to Melbourne but, in 2017, after retiring she and Richard decided Mildura would be a good place to spend their autumn years.

But it wasn't long before she was back in the fold, convinced by Bendigo Health chair Bob Cameron -- who led the hospital's transition from private to public management -- that she would be the "perfect" person to chair the new MBPH board.

"We had maintained our links to Mildura. Keeping in contact with many close friends and, of course, our children were born here."

Mr Cameron conducted the interviews for the board during the transition period, that was doubly challenging because it was at the start of the COVID pandemic.

"The hospital had a new board and we hired the CEO Terry Welch, as well as several new executives and this was all undertaken during COVID," Mary recalls.

"Initially the board was meeting online due to face-to-face restrictions, and so it was hard for a while to build a personal rapport with fellow board members and executive staff.

"The board had and still has a performance

MILDURA BASE HOSPITAL MARY RYDBERG



and a compliance role and Terry, and the team, needed to put a lot of things in place to meet the board's requirements.

"I like to think that one of the things that we have done well is establishing the transparency that exists between the board and senior staff.

"Having previously worked for the state government, I felt a degree of pressure to make sure it all worked. There was a lot riding on it... not only locally, but certainly for the state government that had made the decision to move the hospital back into public hands.

"The MBPH CEO and executive team wanted to ensure that the workplace culture and environment was a happy, safe and inclusive."

To that end, a set values known as 'HEART' was developed and they remain central to everything that happens in the hospital daily. HEART is an acronym for the words 'happy', 'empathetic', 'accountable', 'respectful' and 'team'.

The HEART values are central to the culture at MBPH, but Mary said that culture must be led "from the top".

"As far as the board is concerned those are our values. And they are an amazing set of values and behaviours. And I am delighted by what I see from the staff. They are living these values every day.

"I love coming in and having people smiling

and saying hello to you."

The other challenge for the new board and executive was the formulation of a strategic plan going forward.

Mary is very happy with the result, the product of much hard work.

"I think the board and the executive can be very proud of the Strategic Plan," she says. "COVID has never gone away so everything we've accomplished during the past three years has been done with that overlay.

"And to a certain extent we have only been able to control what we could control.

"So, being able to put together a strategic plan and to have some vision while you are still trying to deal day-to-day with the myriad operational challenges is amazing.

"I am very proud of all the staff at the MBPH because we are all on the same team."

Asked about her personal legacy, Mary reflected on the role she has played at the MBPH while board chair.

"The Northern Mallee Integrated Partnership I think is one of the things from a strategic point of view that I am the proudest of," she confides.

"Mildura hospital doesn't just look after Mildura. And if we can't offer services in Ouyen and Robinvale then that has an impact on the hospital because people must come here.

"We have made a great start, but we are



nowhere near finished. The goal is to have people be able to access more services locally."

Mary described the board she has led as "cohesive" and the good news is that she is not leaving altogether.

"The board has a good succession plan. Frank Pisconeri will seamlessly take over as chair and I will remain on the board," she said.

Mary was also keen to make a quick mention of the hospital's reinvigorated foundation.

"That has been the other really big thing that got off the ground far quicker than I thought it would," she said.

"It is delightful how the community has embraced it. It's just stunning really."



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A FRESH APPROACH

TO LAUNDRY SERVICES



WHEN NEWU HOME OPENED ITS DOORS FOR BUSINESS IN APRIL LAST YEAR, MILDURA WAS ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE A WHOLE NEW APPROACH TO TRADITIONAL DRY CLEANING.

newU Home is a 'wet cleaning' service and which also incorporates a Nordic inspired boutique gift shop, which has a beautiful range of eclectic gift and homeware accessories.

newU Home co-owner Graeme Campbell explained the difference between dry and wet cleaning.

"This is the dry cleaning alternative," Graeme said.

"This new technology is designed to take care of all of your clothing, which was previously for 'dry clean only'. Wet cleaning uses water and eco-friendly, gentle detergents which naturally respect the integrity of fabrics.

"The wet cleaning process doesn't use petro-chemicals and so we don't use perchloroethylene, which is what a traditional dry cleaner would use.

"We still use detergent, because if you are getting grease and dirt out of clothes you need to use detergent, but it's a much more environmentally friendly process, which doesn't have all of the regulatory requirements around that."

Wet cleaning is very popular in places like Melbourne, but it wasn't in existence in Mildura.

"We saw a gap in the market, which is why we have brought this new technology in," Graeme said.

"newU Home has state-of-the-art, Italian made washing machines which do a lot of the work for us and it's all about less water and better outcomes."

The laundry has large and small washing machines that wash that clothes in a similar way to what you would do at home, but because of their unique range of cycles, they are also used for newU Home's wet cleaning - dry cleaning equivalent process.

"We can put a silk wedding dress into a washing machine which you wouldn't do at home and that indicates the gentleness of

the cycles these machines can operate at," Graeme said.

"A lot of our cleaning work is done before we put an item of clothing into a machine, but nonetheless, the machine does do a lot of the work for us."

Among its services, newU Home is able to launder large bedding items like blankets, doonas and toppers.

"We can clean duck down doonas, which are probably one of the hardest things to launder," Graeme said.

"The trick to that is drying it. We will use a large dryer and do it over a number of days drying it at a very low temperature, six to eight times before it's done and so if you have a doona you need cleaned and rejuvenated, we certainly can do those."

newU Home also specialises in cleaning wedding dresses, suits and even offers sneaker rejuvenation!

newU Home offers a wash and fold service for busy people wanting to save time and is charged by the kilogram.

"It's a great service for people who don't want to do their washing themselves or if they have someone in care," Graeme said.



newU HOME MANAGER SHARON LAVERY FOLDING TOWELS



“Someone may have an older parent for example who needs their washing done and they can simply you drop it off to us and we will wash and dry it and fold it, ready for quick turn-around pick up.”

newU Home is centrally located near the corner of Pine Avenue, opposite the old Cottee’s factory in Tenth Street.

“We identified what was an ideal location in Tenth Street and prior to the opening of the business, there was an 18-month lead-up, during which time the property was purchased and the premises refurbished and fitted out with the new equipment,” Graeme said.

“In addition to the laundry, we have a Nordic inspired gift store, stocked with homewares and speciality items, for people looking for something different.

“We have bought some of our favourite products from around the world into the shop. We also stock products from local artists, who we are happy to promote.

“Our largest shop front window is our

artist’s window and we support local artists and we normally have one artist a month featured there. We support them by displaying their art and we will sell their work commission free.

“If an artist doesn’t have a space where they can exhibit their work we are happy to do that and we are always looking for new artists to come and feature their work here.”

newU Home engages with the community on a number of benevolent levels.

“We proudly support the Mildura Base Public Hospital Foundation and a number of other local charities in Mildura,” Graeme said.

“The Mildura Writer’s Festival is another event we are delighted to support. We are very proud of that and we’re enormously grateful for the support that people give us too.”

Graeme said that newU Home is also pleased to be involved the hospital’s blue towel recycling program in association with the Christie Centre’s Life Skills social enterprise.





“I think that is one of those great community projects where you have a situation where the hospital is involved, you have a cleaner involved, the Christie Centre and their social enterprise—that makes all of the community go around. It’s great for sustainability, ensuring those towels don’t go into landfill,” he said.

Located on the level above the laundry, is ‘newU Studio’, a gown and dress hire service.

“Were delighted to have Zoe Burnett’s newU Studio in the upstairs space above us,” Graeme said.

“She is looking to have ball gowns and exquisite dresses for hire for people who might have a special function and it’s a one-off hire which is something different.

“Zoe has done an incredible job in doing her market research and she is going to broaden her market and I think that it will do really well.”

newU Home is located at 160 Tenth Street, Mildura. Open from 7.30am Monday to Friday - 10am Saturday. Ph: 0409 160 160



FLYING HIGH!

THERE'S A LOT HAPPENING AT MILDURA AIRPORT

HAVING lived through the disastrous impact to the aviation industry during covid in 2020 and then having to navigate the sporadic, gradual return to some level of normality, Mildura Airport has weathered the storm to bounce back to its best.

A lot of changes have occurred to the airport and its services in the last 12 months and recent times.

The number of passengers are now back to pre-covid levels, with three airlines serving Mildura-Qantas, Rex and Bonza.

Between them, the airlines operate more than 22 commercial passenger flights per day, flying to Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and the Sunshine and Gold Coasts.

The big news came when Bonza commenced its flights to and from Mildura this year and despite a few operational

issues, more than 8000 Bonza passengers are passing through the airport every two months.

In August, Bonza announced that it was also going to operate flights to the Gold Coast adding to its Melbourne and Maroochydore flights, something that had delighted the travellers.

Bonza operates 737 jet aircraft flying directly to their destinations. The airline now has two flights per week to the Sunshine and Gold Coast and two per week to Melbourne.

Bonza's ticket prices are very competitive, which is helping to drive Qantas and Rex prices down.

Mildura Airport CEO, Trevor Willcock said the passenger numbers are good for the local economy and it was refreshing to see people flying again.

"Since 2020, it has been a challenging time and now we are seeing passenger numbers returning to normal and this will increase with the added services, which can only benefit the local economy," Mr Willcock said.

"There have been some major upgrades to infrastructure, including the installation of the Instrument Landing System-ILS and an upgrade of all airport lighting on aprons, runways and taxiways being converted to LED lighting.

"Resealing of our secondary runway, along with associated taxiways and aprons has been undertaken and our main entrance road into the airport has been resealed and re-marked.

"And the Pilot Training Academy is re-opening with 60 students this year followed by another 140 next year from six Chinese airlines."

Users of the airport's car parks will also have experienced the new 'tap and go' car park system, designed to speed up the parking process and extra car parking spaces have been added to both long term and short-term parking areas.

Some time back, the airport opened its outside caravan café, which has proven





to be very popular with passengers and visitors to the airport. Open six days a week, the café offers a range of hot snacks, sandwiches, cakes and slices, together with great coffee and other hot and cold beverages.

A soon to be built viewing deck near the cafe, will enable people to see the aircraft arriving and wave to their friends and family disembarking the aircraft.

Another exciting addition to the airport lounge will be a Wine Bar, highlighting local wines. Passengers will be able to take sealed bottles with them on the aircraft after having sampled some of our finest local product.

The Wine Bar will be situated off to the side of the departure lounge cafe, in the old Qantas VIP lounge, and will be operated by cafe staff.



MBPH FOUNDATION CHARITY GOLF DAY

Tee up for the 2023 MBPH Foundation Golf Day with Special Guest AFL Legend Dermott Brereton at the picturesque Coomealla Golf Club.

\$800 per group (Limited Spots)

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Friday, November 17, 2023 | 2-person Ambrose (group of 4)

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Registration 9.30am | Shotgun start 10am

www.mbphfoundation.org.au/event/register/charity-golf-day2023/

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PARTNERSHIP BUILDS BETTER HEALTHCARE

UNIVERSITY & HOSPITAL COLLABORATE TO EDUCATE DOCTORS

Monash University Rural Health Regional Manager, Kendall Livingstone said that the community at large wouldn't be aware of the close educational, working relationship between Monash Rural Health and the Mildura Base Public Hospital, in relation to the upskilling of the doctors in the hospital.

"Despite the fact that we do have quite a bit of media coverage around the work we do here, many people are still surprised that we do have medical students here in our community," Kendall said.

"These days students are able to undertake GP, psychiatry, and paediatric training locally and efforts are there to expand those specialty training options, which would enable students to spend the majority of their time here.

"Initially, a student wishing to study medicine will still go to Melbourne to commence their training, but we are applying for funding at the moment from the federal government who have a Commonwealth Supported Places for medical students program, which we hope we are successful in being granted."

The program Kendall is referring to, provides a place within a higher education

course where the Australian Government pays a part of the student's university fees.

"In addition, that would mean students would do the three-year Biomedical Sciences degree at La Trobe University and then go onto complete their medical degree at Monash for four more years," Kendall said.

"If that happens we would have up to 116 medical students here at any given time from secondary school through to final year medicine.

"If we are successful in our endeavour that will be a great thing for Mildura to have home-grown medical students studying here and that would include young people from the broader northern Mallee region, the Riverland and Broken Hill.

"We would hope that they would be more likely to stay here to work here in Mildura or go back to their regional home centre."

When Heartbeat visited to observe a training session, the simulated scenario for the session was based around a patient being transported to the Emergency Department (ED) by ambulance. The nature of the patient's problem was

unknown, but en route to the ED the student Lead Doctor (LD) received a call on the 'Bat' phone in the ED resuscitation room, from the attending paramedic who relayed some key information to the doctor prior to the patient arriving.

Dr Travis Taggart, who is a general practitioner at Ontario Family Practice assists with the training of medical students at Monash Rural Health School of Medicine. In this instance, he is acting in the role of a paramedic in full-uniform and delivering the 'patient'

"I'll do a handover, just would happen in a real-life scenario and in the control room we have someone operating 'SimMan' acting as the patient and speaking to the medical team," Dr Taggart said.

"The students are in their third year of medicine and today they are undertaking an acute medical scenario called 'DKA' - Diabetic Ketoacidosis - which is a semi-common presentation to ED, and one which can be of significant consequences if the diagnosis is missed.

"Our students today don't know what the scenario is. They are in a team of four and at the start of the simulation, which is set in the MBPH Emergency Department."



MONASH THIRD YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT STEVEN BOWES



DR TRAVIS TAGGERT LECTURING MONASH MEDICAL STUDENTS



Diabetic Ketoacidosis is a serious complication of diabetes. The condition develops when the body can't produce enough insulin. Insulin plays a key role in helping sugar — a major source of energy for muscles and other tissues — enter cells in the body. Without enough insulin, the body begins to break down fat as fuel.

The team is broken down into two doctors and two nurses, whose roles are medical team leader and another doctor and a nursing team leader and another nurse.

“Our team will get that call and be given a pre-ambule — a snap shot of how many minutes away they are and what the condition of the patient is and the observations they have made along the way.”

Today however, the students are not given all of the information over the phone, because the patient's diagnosis is to be identified by the students as part of their learning process. Their role will be to work through the situation once the patients presents to the ED.

The scenario then ensued.

In advance of the female patient arriving in ED, the LD briefed his assisting medical team with the information he has learned from the inbound ambulance.

“Paramedics were wondering if it was an acute neurological or behavioural crisis or

“THE SCENARIO WILL START WITH THE ‘BAT’ PHONE GOING OFF JUST AS IT WOULD IN REAL-LIFE, WHEN AMBULANCE VICTORIA ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A PATIENT OR THEY ARE CRITICALLY ILL, WILL GIVE THE LOCAL ED THE HEADS-UP AND CALL THE RED PHONE,” DR TAGGERT SAID.

a drug induced state. The patient would generally present in an erratic, irritable and confused state which seems to be consistent with their current state,” LD said.

Following the call from the inbound paramedic, the student acting as the LD who had made notes on a white board during the phone conversation, briefs the other three team members on what he has learnt about the patient's condition

“Does she have any history of diabetes,” the other doctor asks? “We don't know,” the LD says.

The Lead Nurse asks if the patient has any history of seizures. The answers to this question is yes, and this will be further explored once the patient arrives.

The second doctor in the team says: “If I may submit Serotonin Syndrome as an option?”

Serotonin Syndrome is a serious drug reaction. It is caused by medications that build up high levels of serotonin in the body. Serotonin is a chemical that the body produces naturally. It's needed for the nerve cells and brain to function. But too much serotonin causes signs and symptoms that can range from mild (shivering and diarrhea) to severe (muscle rigidity, fever and seizures). Severe serotonin syndrome can cause death if not treated.

Serotonin Syndrome can occur when you increase the dose of certain medications or start taking a new drug. It's most often caused by combining medications that contain serotonin, such as a migraine medication and an antidepressant. Some illicit drugs and dietary supplements are associated with serotonin syndrome.

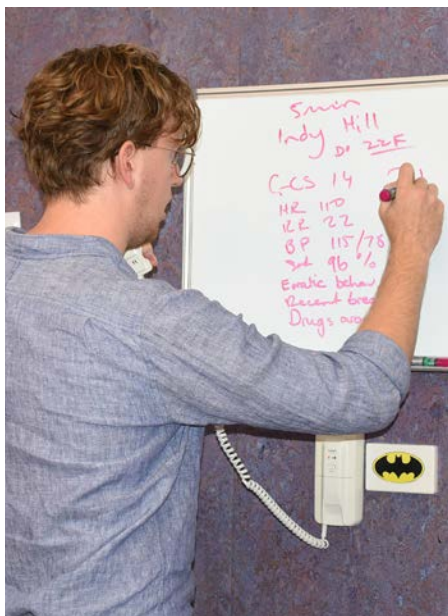
The nurse asks about any medication the patient may be taking — that will be a question to the patient when she arrives.

In response to the ‘Bat’ phone briefing, the LD asks the team to generate a list of ‘differentials’ based on what is already known about inbound the patient.

“Let's make a list of dot points of things that we need to do,” the LD said.

“Number one, get a med list, secondly try to ascertain if she is on any substances.

“Take a blood sample for analysis and check her arms for signs of injections.”



The patient arrives in ED and the team is further briefed by the supervising paramedic, who then leaves the patient in the medical team's care.

The 'patient' is 'SimMan' - is a computerised mannequin, a durable patient simulator created for high-quality simulation training in a multitude of different medical procedures and patient cases. SimMan talks, cries, can be a man or woman and students can give CPR, take temperatures, administer medicine and can be made to look like a road trauma victim and create a variety of other real-life medical scenarios for the students to experience and deliver treatment. The mannequin injects realism into scenario-based training to further enhance and contextualize learning objectives in preparation for real patient encounters in a safe and risk-free environment.

Once the patient presents, it becomes apparent that they have several issues at play. Low blood sugar being one, the others would appear to be related to recent drug usage.

The patient is asking for a drink of Coca Cola, which suggests she is wanting a sugar-hit (to raise her glucose levels) that would come with that as well as quenching an apparent thirst.

The resultant diagnosis is that the patient was experiencing an episode of Diabetic Ketoacidosis, which required the stabilising of her blood sugar levels, and evidence of illicit drugs were present.

MEDICAL STUDENT'S ROUTINE AT MONASH

The teaching routine at Monash Rural Health, will vary depending on the student's year level. The level three students for example will generally spend time in the MBPH wards in the morning and then in the afternoon go over to the Monash campus for teaching sessions.

Fourth year student's routines are similar and final year students who are intern ready, spend most of their time in the hospital working in all of the different clinical areas gaining experience in general medicine, theatre, midwifery, ED and aged care.

They then choose a specialist subject for example, anaesthesiology or cardiology the latter would see them spending time at Mildura Cardiology or following a cardiologist in the hospital.

Heartbeat spoke to third-year medical student Steven Bowes who was the second doctor in the ED scenario. Steven is originally from Melbourne and arrived in Mildura in February this year to commence his studies at Monash Rural Health.

"I was sent to Mildura as part of my rotation and to undertake the end-to-end medical program Monash University runs in north west Victoria," Steven said.

"I have an undergraduate degree in Biomed, which I did in Melbourne at Monash University and that was a pathway into the post-graduate entrance into the medical degree, the first year of which, I completed in Gippsland and am now continuing in Mildura."

Steven said he will be on rotation again next year, possibly in another part of north west Victoria, which could still be Mildura or possibly Bendigo.

"The first six months will be either Bendigo or Mildura and the other six months will be in north west towns in a GP clinic setting, which could be Swan Hill through to Gisborne or any towns in between," he said.

Steven said he enjoys the interaction in the MBPH environment, working in different areas.

"It's very good and generally the way you start each day," he said.

"You might commence doing ward rounds and being exposed to a variety of new and exciting situations.

"In the second half of the day, we go to Monash to do our classes where it ties it all together for you.

"Having the opportunity to interact with patients is something that we are fortunate to have.

Steven said he is enjoying on the job training at MBPH which he said has a hard-working dedicated team.

"Everyone works very hard, because it is a relatively small hospital, everybody has to go those extra yards and you can see that.

"Within the program we rotate through different specialities whether that's surgery, general medicine or ED and you generally start the morning joining teams for whatever that specialty is and from their you shadow that team and try to make space in that to find learning opportunities.

Steven hasn't completely decided what he intends to do once he graduates but declares he has an interest in working in an Emergency Department.

"Currently I'm interested in ED. I have found that I enjoy the one-on-one patient interactions some may be quick cases but other times you are able to direct patients in regard to the treatment required. It's a good mix of patient direction, while also keeping your hands busy.

I can definitely see myself ending up in a place like Mildura. It's a very nice town and everyone I have met has been really nice and I've made a few mates outside of medicine as well and so I enjoy being here.

MOBILE KIDNEY TREATMENT A GAME CHANGER

INTRODUCED IN LATE 2014, KIDNEY HEATH AUSTRALIA'S 'BIG RED BUS' HAS BEEN A GAME CHANGER FOR PEOPLE REQUIRING REGULAR KIDNEY DIALYSIS TREATMENT. THE BIG RED KIDNEY BUS TRAVELS TO AMAZING LOCATIONS ACROSS NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA SO THAT PEOPLE CAN ENJOY A WELL-DESERVED HOLIDAY WHILST STILL RECEIVING HAEMODIALYSIS.





The Red Bus, which is the size of a luxury coach, was in Mildura for six weeks during June and July this year, located at the Big 4 Holiday Park in Deakin Avenue. After leaving Mildura the bus was bound for the Victorian coastal town of Torquay.

When Heartbeat visited the Kidney Health Australia Red Bus at the Big 4 Holiday Park, Registered Nurse, Anna Flynn, who has more than 30 years' experience in Dialysis treatment, was the supervising clinician. Anna is actually employed through Monash Health in Melbourne and works on a casual basis, travelling wherever the bus goes throughout Victoria.

While it is a remunerated role, this doesn't completely cover all of their expenses while they are away from home and so to a large extent her role, like that of other Red Bus nurses, is voluntary.

"For people requiring dialysis treatment while they are on holiday, the Kidney Health Australia bus provides a convenient solution for people while they are away from home," Anna said.

"We can treat six patients a day and we operate six days a week and so it provides a great opportunity for those people staying the park to have their dialysis treatment while they are holidaying. Each patient will spend between four or five hours on the machine at each session.

"Given we are in a holiday park, I can allow the patient to cut back the time a little bit, because they can easily access the treatment if they need to."

Anna said that since COVID, the bus hadn't been operating at full capacity, with the demand for treatments falling in most of the places they visit throughout Victoria. "People are still a little bit anxious about going away but that is changing and it is starting to pick up," she said.

"Prior to that, we were flat-out wherever we went. We were full all of the time, operating double shifts every day.

"We have people from across Australia accessing our service and even some from New Zealand.

"But generally, when we are in Mildura we have a large number of South Australians. When we are over on the west side of Victoria we see a lot of South Australians and when we are in the east, in Lakes Entrance for example, we will see a lot of people from NSW book in for treatment."

People can follow the whereabouts of the Red Bus by going to the Kidney Health Australia website and most dialysis units

also have information about the bus.

“We find that the majority of people find out about us from other patients, who are the best advocates for our service. People might have heard of us, but are not sure about it,” Anna said.

“But once someone whose been with is says to them “It’s great come on the bus” they do.

“For any patients who are anxious about coming on the bus, which some are, we’d just to like to let them know that all of our staff on the bus have at least five years’ experience, probably a lot longer.

“I say a lot longer, because many of us are semi-retired. And so we have upwards of 20 or 30 years experience and the patients can rest assured that we can deal with any issues they may have.”

“If a patient presents for their treatment and they don’t seem well we will monitor their situation and that is where having very experienced staff is important.

“The staff on the bus are able to conduct a number of tests and observations on the patients while they are having their treatment, including measuring heart rate, blood sugars, oxygen levels and if we have any other issue of concern we call 000,” When the Red Bus isn’t on the road it is located in a carpark in the Melbourne suburb of Moorabbin.

“Every year we go to Warrnambool, almost always to Halls Gap and Lakes Entrance.” The Red Bus has dedicated driver named Doug, who looks after the bus, keeps it polished up and drives it to each of its destinations.

Anna said that when the bus arrives at a new destination, technicians from Monash Health are deployed to set up the dialysis machines and ensure that they are all working correctly – testing them with water and making sure they are clean and operating as they should.

“The bus carries supplies for two weeks of treatment which are replenished and delivered to wherever they are located,” Anna said.

“The nurses then come on board and configure everything they way that we like it to be set up.

“The nurses can come from anywhere, I have even had one fly from Launceston to work with us.”

Adelaide resident Bob Veitch was one of the patients receiving his dialysis treatment aboard the Red Bus when Heartbeat visited.



“This is about the fifth time I have been here and it is excellent to be able to have my treatment while away from home,” Bob said.

“The whole family is out shopping I think, so that gives the local economy a shot in the arm too!”

Bob said the convenience the service provides is just outstanding.

“I’ve been to Echuca, Coffs Harbour and we love coming to Mildura.”

The other patient receiving treatment was Eddie Hunter who was visiting from Rosebud.

“We have nine chairs (dialysis) in the Rosebud Hospital,” Eddie explained.

“TO BE ABLE TO HAVE YOUR TREATMENT WHILE YOU ARE AWAY FROM HOME AND ON HOLIDAY, IS JUST WONDERFUL.

“You couldn’t go on holidays without it. I don’t really want to do home dialysis, I prefer the hospital chair dialysis.

“We were recently down at Halls Gap and I was able to have my weekly treatments while we were staying in the park there until it came up to Mildura.”

Both Bob and Eddie agreed the Red Bus was “a brilliant idea and the nurses all wonderful”. Anna said the nurses only need to be registered through Monash to work on the bus and they welcome any newcomers.

It was at the suggestion of MBPH Nurse Unit Manager for Renal Dialysis Services Edson Avisado, that Heartbeat visited the Kidney Health Red Bus, a service he is keen to promote to the Mildura Community.

The Red Bus is equipped with three dialysis chairs- the latest equipment – well maintained and supplied with stock of products required. The bus also has a hoist to enable wheel chair bound patients to come onto the bus for treatment and is also used to bring stock up into the bus. Edson said the fit out and facilities of the red bus were amazing.

“Everyone should come and experience the service provided on the bus and it is an opportunity to meet and chat will other people who are on holiday,” he said.

“It has been a pleasure to meet Anna, who along with her colleagues, do a wonderful job looking after their kidney patients.

“From my point of view, it is spreading the news that the Kidney Health Australia Red Bus is here every year in Mildura. “Not just for those staying in the holiday park, but kidney patients from Robinvale for example could book in to come here for treatment - it is open to all users.

“The Mildura Base Public Hospital is running at full capacity and while we don’t like to decline access to dialysis for people from out of the region, the reality is we can’t and so for people travelling to be able to plan ahead and book their treatment on the bus is a great thing.

“It is a wonderful service which enable families to go away on a break, which is good for all concerned.”

Anna agreed. “I can tell you that almost all of the patients who come on the bus say that it’s not about them it is about their partners and families having a holiday,” she said.

“And the beautiful thing is that a lot of our patients who come on the bus are home patients and so they might have spouse or family member who sets up a cannula and so when they are here they can go off on a



holiday and go shopping out for a coffee and have some respite.

"It's funny, the men sit here and say "There goes my wife-there goes my wallet, off shopping!" It's about giving my family and my carers a holiday and that makes those of us providing the service feel proud of our contribution."

Anna said that when the Red Bus service began in 2014, they started a visitor's book.

"There were some comments that brought tears to your eyes," she said.

"There were children writing in the book that it was the first holiday they were able to have since their mum or dad had got sick.

"Bob, who you spoke to, has his entire family here from Adelaide, including grandchildren and so it creates a wonderful opportunity from that point of view."

Anna said that is really the essence of why the bus was set up in the first place.

"Patients were having trouble getting treatment in holiday spots anywhere unless they had private health cover and even then, there were limited spots available," she said.

"As a result, a couple of patients in Gippsland came up with the idea and took it to Kidney Health Australia and a local bus line donated a bus for them to get



started and that's how it all began and it has just grown since then into a wonderful concept.

"It meant that people who would otherwise not be able to go away to a variety of popular holiday spots could now do it the comfort of the knowledge that they could still receive their dialysis treatment while away."

Anna said that the Red Bus has a lot of repeat patients how regularly use the service.

"It becomes like real family. It's so exciting. You pull-up at the new spot and you meet people you saw a year ago," she said.

"Sometimes they come to two or three different spots and so the staff and the patients on the bus become like family and you greet them like old family members and catch up on what's gone under the

bridge since then and hear about all the grandchildren who have been born."

The fact is, the Red Bus staff all stay at the same caravan park as their patients and often socialise with each other.

"Pre-COVID, we used to have very social times where the staff and patients and their families would often go out to dinner together or the BIG4 Park would put on their pizza oven for us and do pizzas and we have a kidney education talk," Anna said.

"BIG 4 have been great supporters particularly here in Mildura and we thank them for that."

For more information about Kidney Health Australia's Red Bus dialysis service and to book a treatment at one of its holiday locations, visit their website: www.kidney.org.au.



POWER TO THE PEOPLE

PRESTIGE STAFFING MAKES A REAL IMPACT

**FOR MORE THAN
THREE DECADES
MILDURA'S PRESTIGE
STAFFING HAS BEEN
HELPING PEOPLE.**

Directly by matching jobseekers with employers, and more quietly by empowering and enhancing the wider Sunraysia

community through a range of ongoing engagement and investment initiatives. The Prestige team, headed by Grant Beggs since 2016, is incredibly proud of its contribution to the Mildura Base Public Hospital Foundation as a Lifetime Partner. At the same time, it is also heavily involved in many other organisations, including local sporting clubs, charities and schools, providing expertise and monetary support. By doing so, the staff aims to have a lasting impact in our community.

Prestige Staffing has always believed that the heart of any thriving business is its people. That belief forms the foundation of its operations as it works together with local jobseekers and businesses, "creating a place where great people and great companies meet," managing director Grant told Heartbeat. "Prestige Staffing has become a symbol of empowerment, where each person's unique potential is unlocked, and every



business is strengthened by the power of its employees," he said.

"With an unwavering commitment to excellence, Prestige Staffing stands tall as the embodiment of genuine care and support within the community we serve."

PERMANENT RECRUITMENT

Prestige Staffing's Permanent Recruitment service is a gateway to exciting career opportunities for jobseekers in Mildura.

Through this service, potential employees have the chance to be directly hired by reputable businesses into permanent positions. This presents numerous benefits, such as job stability, long-term career growth, and comprehensive employee benefits.

Prestige's recruitment consultants take the time to understand the unique skills

and aspirations of candidates, ensuring a perfect match with employers seeking top talent.

"By entrusting their job search to Prestige Staffing, jobseekers gain a competitive edge in the job market and increase their chances of securing their dream role in an organisation," Grant says.

TEMPORARY LABOUR HIRE

For jobseekers looking for flexibility and varied experiences, Prestige Staffing's temporary placements and labour service is an ideal choice.

This casual employment arrangement allows employees to be hired by the agency and placed on assignments with host employers.

The service offers a dynamic work environment, where individuals can work for a single day or continue in ongoing arrangements based on their preferences and availability.

The benefits are two-fold, Grant explained. "First, employees gain exposure to diverse industries and job roles, enhancing their skill set and versatility," he said.

"And second, temporary labour hire offers a valuable steppingstone to permanent positions, as it allows employees to showcase their abilities to potential employers while building professional connections.

"Embracing temporary labour hire through Prestige Staffing opens doors to an array of opportunities and empowers jobseekers with a pathway to their ideal career."

GRADUATE PROGRAM

Prestige Staffing's Graduate Program stands as a beacon of support and guidance for recent Sunraysia school leavers starting out on their academic journey.

Through this program, the agency establishes a lasting partnership with students, the end goal being to place them full time at the end of their studies, but also offering flexible casual work opportunities during their holiday periods.

"This thoughtful approach not only helps students earn money to support their education but also provides them with invaluable work experience and the opportunity to refine their skills," Grant says.

"The Graduate Program ensures that young talents are well-prepared for their

professional futures. Upon receiving their qualifications, the team at Prestige Staffing plays a pivotal role in assisting graduates to return to Sunraysia and find a rewarding job aligned with their area of expertise.

"This personalised and nurturing approach equips graduates with the confidence and resources needed to enter the job market seamlessly."

The Graduate Program is a testament to Prestige Staffing's commitment to fostering local talent and contributing to the growth and prosperity of the Sunraysia community.

APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Prestige Staffing team works closely with another local recruitment agency -- Workforce Partners Australia -- that specialises in apprenticeships and traineeship.

Through that partnership, Workforce Partners Australia works with people looking to learn new skills whilst working in an apprenticeship or traineeship then, once qualified, the Prestige Staffing team works with the employee to secure employment in their chosen field.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSULTING

Prestige Staffing prides itself on 'being there' to support its employees at all stages of their career journeys.

With a focus on onboarding, retention, and employee engagement, this service is tailor-made to address the unique needs of each business, Grant explains.

"For employers, the HR Consulting Service streamlines the hiring process, ensuring the right talent is brought on board, reducing turnover rates, and fostering a positive work culture.

"By leveraging their expertise, businesses can create a workplace environment that nurtures and empowers employees, leading to increased job satisfaction, productivity, and ultimately happier staff.

"Simultaneously, employees benefit from personalised support and development opportunities, resulting in enhanced job satisfaction, job security, and professional growth.

"The HR Consulting Service becomes the cornerstone of a successful employer-employee relationship, ensuring a win-win scenario for businesses and their valuable workforce in Sunraysia."

THE BOOMERANG NURSE

PAM RETURNS TO BASE TIME & TIME AGAIN

NURSING sister Pam Van Kempen gave herself the ultimate 74th birthday present recently – she retired!

After a 57-year career she reckoned it was time to call it a day.

It wasn't an easy decision – Pam has always loved her job – but as she ruefully admitted: "You have to give it away sometime."

Pam now calls Kavina home but retains strong links to Mildura. She was born and grew up here, has family here and began her long nursing career at what was then Mildura Base Hospital.

She was born at the hospital, returning 16 and a half years later to start a nursing career.

In between she attended Mildura South Primary School and Mildura High School, attaining her Intermediate Certificate before joining the hospital as a cadet nurse in 1965.

"I was too young to start formal nursing training – you had to be 17 – but the hospital had the cadet program that I joined," Pam recalls.

That program was an innovation that was to prove itself time and time again as a great steppingstone towards a nursing career.

Pam vividly recalls trailing behind the older nurses from ward to ward and being a general dogsbody, but the on-the-job

glimpse she got of nursing during that time, and the rudimentary training she received, was to prove invaluable in the years to come.

"By the time I began my formal training the next year (1966) I knew the hospital well and had spent time on many of the wards," she said.

THE WARDS IN THOSE DAYS INCLUDED THE CHILDREN'S WARD, THE THEATRE WARD, A COUPLE OF SURGICAL AND MEDICAL WARDS, AN AGED CARE WARD, AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE WARD AS WELL AS CASUALTY AND OUTPATIENTS.

Pam began her formal nursing training as a 17-year-old in 1966 and the first six weeks of training were spent in Bendigo at the Northern District School of Nursing, the Mildura Hospital being part of Victoria's Northern Districts health zone. Also included in that designated area were the hospitals at Swan Hill, Echuca, Castlemaine and Bendigo.

Young nurses from all five hospitals were lumped to become the class of 1966, a group about 50-strong.

"There were girls from all five hospitals and plenty of new friendships were struck up," Pam said.

The new nurses were housed in residences; a fancy word for old houses Pam quipped, and the girls sleep three or four to a room. That closeness fostered some great friendships, and more than a few of them have endured to this day with a goodly number of Pam's peers still getting together at least once a year.

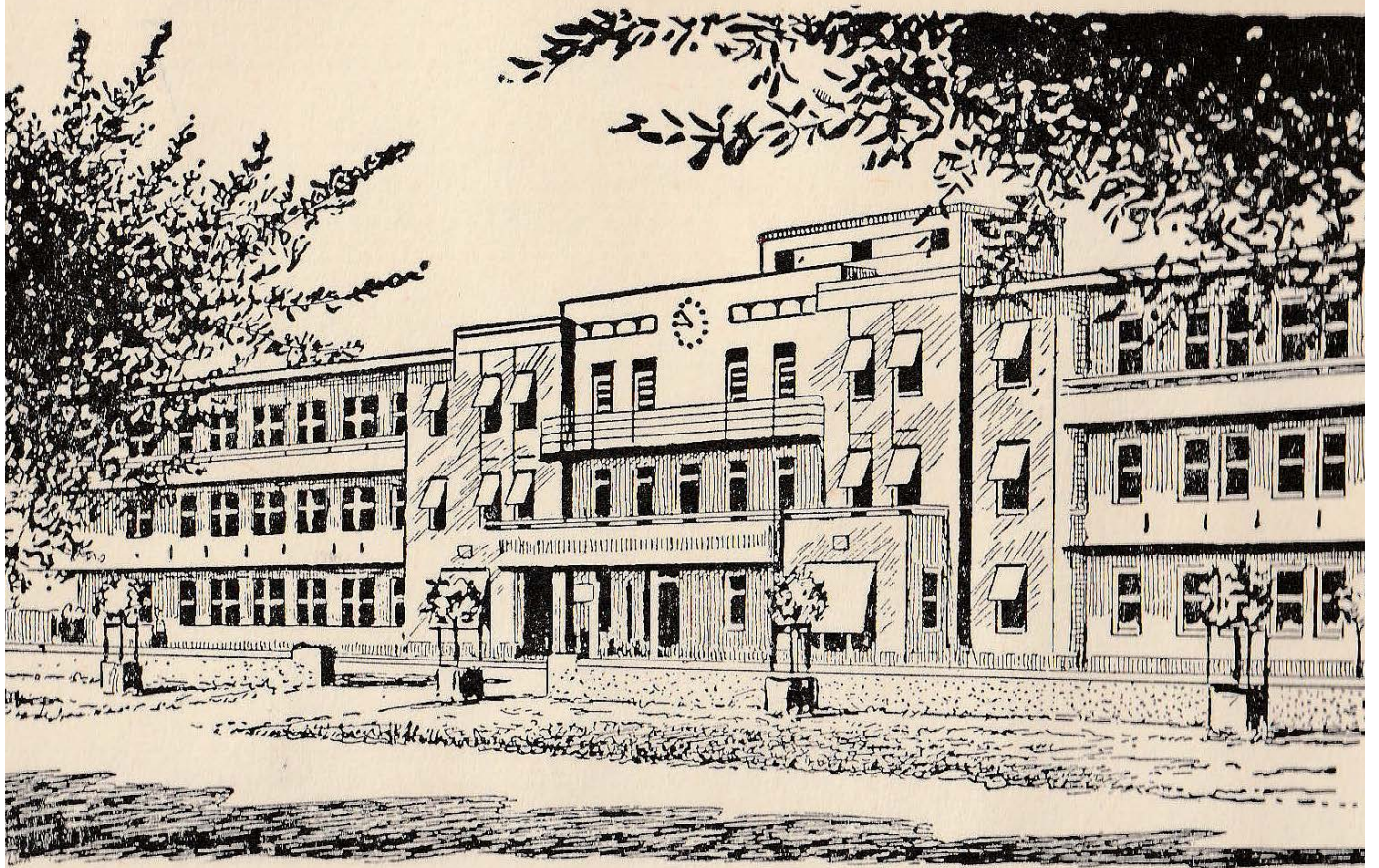
The formal training was akin to going back to school, Pam said, but as soon as it was over the girls returned to their respective hospitals to begin the real work and still more learning, albeit this time 'on-the-job'.

Part of the training included one day every week of classroom lessons hosted by the hospital's own training department headed by lecturer Sid Browne.

Sid was figure prominently in Pam's career, but more on that later.

At the end of the first 12 months, Pam and her cohort returned to Bendigo for more classroom training and the all-important end-of-year exam.

Fail that exam and you were out, Pam says. "No ifs or buts."



MILDURA BASE HOSPITAL



THE CLASS OF 1966-1969. PAM IS EIGHTH FROM THE LEFT IN THE TOP ROW. THERE MIGHT ALSO BE SOME OTHER FACES OUR READERS RECOGNISE.



Of the 50-odd that started out in 1966, just 30 made it back to resume training in 1967. For the next two years Pam's life followed a well-worn learning trail. Early each year the nurses would be back in Bendigo for classroom training, and then return to their respective hospitals for more on-the-job training, both formal and on the wards watched over by the hospital's teaching staff, older nurses and, of course, Matron. Pam passed her second-year exams, and then her third and final exam in 1969 attaining the status of Registered Nurse and henceforth being addressed as 'Sister Gray'.

During those three years of training Pam clearly recalls the pride she took in the visible signs of her achievements, notably the changes to her uniform – the little pleat on her cap that indicated a second-year nurse and the blue stripe of the third-year nurse.

Then, as a graduate and sister, the triangulated 'veil'.

With each addition came the respect due to someone rising through the ranks. Respect, Pam recalls, was the order of the day.

"You would never walk through a door

ahead of senior staff," she cited as an example.

"It was a mark of respect... and not a bad thing in my view."

And the matron was a top of the pile. Nursing in her younger days was very structured Pam recalled, but the times, as Bob Dylan sang, 'they are a changin'.

By the time Pam had completed her training the rules for young nurses had been eased somewhat.

When Pam started, an aspiring nurse had to be 17 years old at least and single. Once she started training a nurse was required to live in the nurse's home and remain single until her training was complete.

However, by 1970 that rule had been relaxed so that a nurse could marry and live at home with their husband. The reasoning being from the Matron of the time was that a young, married woman in a stable relationship was more likely to be a steady student and less likely to be out on the town socialising.

Socialising, it seems, was a favoured nurse's pastime... at least according to Pam.

She enjoyed the social life nursing afforded her during her three years in the nurse's home immensely.



Once she graduated, however, Pam returned home to live with her parents and commuted to the hospital for work in her Austin A30.

As a sister, Pam's first year was spent in casualty/outpatients. It was also the year she got married.

In 1970 she and her then husband went on the road, heading north and ending up in Nambour, Queensland.

There she "walked into a job" as a midwifery student.

12 months later she was out of a job again as her student tenure expired to make room for the next intake.

But the couple was missing Mildura and they headed home. It was back to the Base for Pam. It was to be the first of many happy returns.



Pam spent the next four to five years in the midwifery ward. So, if you were born at Mildura Base Hospital between 1970 and 1975 there is a good chance Pam was there to lend a hand.

In 1975 she was offered a tutoring role for first year nurses in the hospital's teaching department thanks to her old lecturer and friend Sid Browne.

She did that for 12 months before leaving the Mildura Base and Mildura itself once again, this time bound for England where she found nursing work thanks to her connections with the Northern District School of Nursing that was able to open some doors for her.

But by the end of 1976 she was homesick for Mildura again and her marriage was ending so she returned to the bosom of the base hospital for two months of midwifery ward night duty.

Marriage over, Pam decided to head back to England and based herself in Nottingham. From there she undertook a range of agency work in hospitals and aged care homes for six months before landing one of her all-time favourite positions in a convent hospital.

"I loved working with the nuns," Pam said.

By 1978 Pam was homesick once more.

"I just wanted to get back to Mildura and some sunshine," she recalls.

She also got back to the Base, landing a full-time, night duty, second-in-charge position to Sister Mary Ryan.

Nine months later she was offered another

clinical tutoring role which she took up enthusiastically. She continued in that role for the next two years.

By 1980 she had remarried, this time to horse enthusiast Marty Van Kempen and her life became a whirlwind of work, 'domestic management' and horses.

In 1981 Pam headed back to England with Marty and the couple based themselves in Kent. Pam spent four months working in a surgical ward at Benenden Hospital while Marty undertook a horse-related training course.

This was followed by a welcome holiday break travelling throughout Europe.

It's 1982 now and the couple is back in Mildura and Pam rejoins the staff at Mildura Base Hospital once more, spending the next two years working part-time in the midwifery ward at night.

At the same time, she and her husband were running a business and fostering twins.

By the time 1984 rolled around, Pam had left the Base once more put her hand up to become the co-ordinator for the Mildura arm of the Bendigo-based repat agency looking after World War 1 and 2 veterans in their own homes.

As well as running the agency Pam returned to the Base three days a week in 1986, this time in the children's ward.

A busy life for sure!

"Looking back, I am not sure how I fitted everything in," she says ruefully.

But as they say all good things must come

to an end, and Pam left the Base for the final time in 1992 when husband Marty took a horse-related job in South Australia. That is the end of Pam's Mildura Base Hospital story, nearly three decades after it began.

However, it was not the end of her nursing career and Pam moved onto many nursing, health care and health education roles in regional South Australia and rural Victoria up until her retirement earlier this year.

Pam retired on April 30 -- her 74th birthday -- 57 years after taking her first steps into nursing at Mildura Base Hospital.

She returns regularly to our region, having family here and for an annual nursing back-to that she attends with unabashed enthusiasm.

One of the positive changes Pam noticed in her decades-long nursing career is the relaxing of the hierarchy between clinicians.

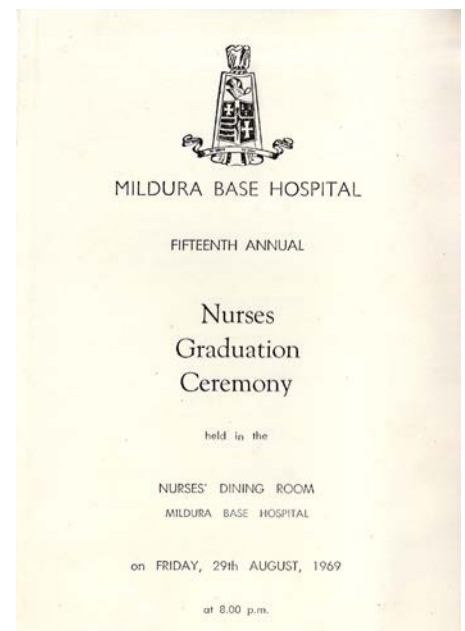
"The relationship between doctors and nurses is much more respectful now. Doctors seem to value our opinions more.

When I first started my career, there was also a hierarchy between nurses. We could easily be distinguished by what we wore -- RNs and ENs had very different uniforms, whereas nowadays, everyone is a valued team member regardless of their level of training -- we all respect each other."

And Pam's answer to overcoming the worrying nurse shortage?

"Offer traineeships to locals who want to stay in the area," she says.

"Traineeships are perfect, and they are delivered in much the same way I was trained. It gives young people a foot in the door and the opportunity to see what nursing is really like."



MBPH PLAYS A ROLE

INTEGRATED PRACTICAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM

MILDURA Base Public Hospital (MBPH) recently hosted three students from SuniTAFE taking part in the first roll-out of the Integrated Practical Placement (IPP) Program between SuniTAFE and MBPH.

At first, all three of the students, who are studying the Work Education Certificate I, were extremely nervous to be coming into a large and busy organisation.

However, Tulisha Williams in Environmental Services, Cody Farthing in Supply Services and Nathan Herrington in Food Services, all soon settled into their roles and enjoyed the experience during the course of the term.

Tulisha said she had been deployed to do

a lot of cleaning services in all areas of the hospital in her Environmental Services role.

"It has actually been a really good experience and I have enjoyed working with the other staff," she said.

The MBPH staff she worked were very complimentary about Tulisha's work ethic and enthusiasm.

Cody, who was working in Supply Services said he didn't expect to be doing as well as he was.

"I thought it would be a bit more challenging, although it is still challenging, but in a good way," he said.

"I have learned a lot and one of the jobs

that has kept me busy is working through the picking slips, gathering various stock required for the different wards.

"I have really enjoyed working at the hospital,"

Nathan Herrington, whose work placement in Food Services, saw him undertaking a variety of jobs in the hospital's kitchen said he too had really enjoyed his placement at the MBPH.

"I love the work in the kitchen. You're on your feet and busy and it has been a great experience," he said.

"I hope that I may be able to work here in the future or somewhere in a hospitality or food services related industry - I think it's one of those top jobs now."

MBPH CEO Terry Welch thanked all of those taking part in the first roll-out of the IPP Program between SunTAFE and MBPH.

"I spoke to the students, who despite being a little apprehensive at first, all said they had settled in and were enjoying their placements," Mr Welch said.

"Well done to all staff for being such a welcoming and supportive team. This is a great program and another example of how working in collaboration with other organisations delivers such positive outcomes."

SuniTAFE Foundation Studies Cert I in Work Education teacher, Renee Scholz SuniTAFE has been delivering Cert I Work Education for a number of years supporting learners with permanent cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities to explore work options and how to access pathways to specific vocational education and training "This SuniTAFE year has implemented the IPP, which is a three-pronged placement program between SuniTAFE, a host industry organisation and an employment service provider," Renee said.

"The IPP is about developing student skills for the world of work by enhancing their employability skills and helping to position them for future employment."

Renee said that after traveling to Melbourne, investigating and seeing the program in action she was instantly inspired and driven to provide this same opportunity to our students in the Mallee.

"I also had the opportunity to interview students undertaking the program to ask how they felt the program supported them.

"Students identified the significant



CODY FARTHING IN STORES



impact on the development of their confidence, initiative, maturity, trust, reliability, independence and motivation. "It was also mentioned, that having the opportunity to complete rotations of the different departments within the organisation, gave them broader understanding of a range of different vocational areas within the organisation." Renee said that partnering with MBPH to implement this program had been a pleasing experience, guiding students to gain valuable workplace skills, confidence, job seeking and employability skills and knowledge, personal management, teamwork, communication and applying strategies to support workplace participation.

"The staff involved in the program have been extremely supportive and heavily involved in guiding the students into work placement and providing them with the real-life experiences of the employment journey," she said.

"The students have intergraded extremely well and thriving in the program.

The confidence that the students are showing confirms that this program is exactly what our community needs so special needs students can integrate and successfully find employment.

"I am excited to see the program develop to a wider range of departments and organisations to broaden student opportunities within the working environments."



PROFESSOR'S RURAL CONNECTION

HE MAY LIVE IN MELBOURNE AND REVEL IN THE BIG CITY LIFESTYLE, BUT MILDURA IS WEAVING ITS IRRESISTIBLE SPELL ON HAEMATOLOGIST PROFESSOR HARSHAL NANDURKAR.

The good professor has found himself developing a strong connection with our city, its people and the wider region during regular professional visits here over the past few years.

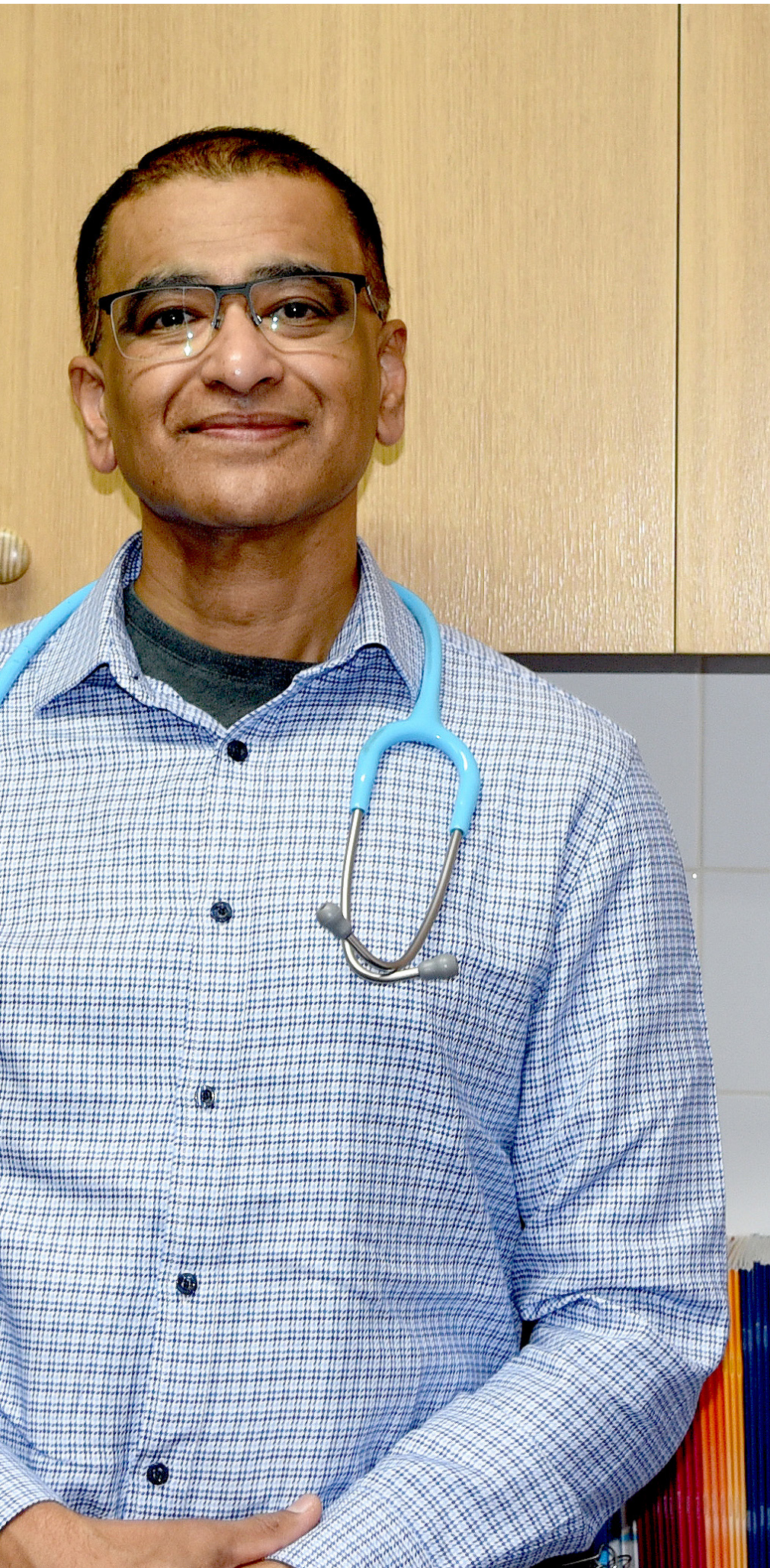
He first came here “to cover for a colleague” and almost at once began falling for Sunraysia’s charms.

While Professor Nandurkar

maintains that he prefers the hustle and bustle of city life, he has let slip that his two or three days a month here is something he really looks forward to.

And Mildura is lucky to have him. Professor Nandurkar has an impressive professional CV and is currently director of Clinical Haematology at Melbourne’s Alfred Hospital and director of





the Cancer Program at Alfred Health which provides a comprehensive range of healthcare services across Victoria through its three hospital campuses, a large network of community programs and 16 statewide services.

Professor Nandurkar is also professor of Haematology at Monash University, the director of its Australian Centre for Blood Diseases while also heading up the university's 'Nandurkar Group', conducting and guiding research in vascular biology.

He was recently recognised for his hard work being appointed Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in this year's King's Birthday Honours.

"I'm elated that I've been recognised with the AM," Dr Nandurkar told Heartbeat.

"I'm grateful that members of my executive group at the Alfred Hospital thought that I deserved this and nominated me for the award.

"It's a great honour. You don't work towards this. It is a recognition that is given to you, and you humbly accept it.

"In my situation the honour reflects more about the circumstances of the environment that has allowed me to thrive and prosper.

"Right from my 15 years at St Vincents Hospital and Melbourne University through to the past eight years at the Alfred Hospital and Monash University.

And prior to that during my PhD and post doctorate studies people I have encounter always have been very supportive and that has enabled me to achieve more than I otherwise may have.

"The AM honour is really reflecting on the environment that has enabled me to achieve. I consider myself to be just a humble worker."

And Mildura's environment has left its own indelible impression.

"I am a city man and content amongst the crowds in Melbourne's busy shopping centres... it's where I choose to live," the Professor says.

"When I had an opportunity to come to Mildura in 2017 to cover for one of my junior colleagues who was providing a part-time service here, I was actually taken aback by the environment here."

There are a few things that have endeared Mildura to the professor.

"The first is the genuineness of people," he says. "Friendly people. The friendliness bunch of people that I have met and who

really support Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) and in particular Dr Krishna Rachakonda.

“He is director of the cancer program here and has been pivotal in allowing us to deliver the type of care that we do in Mildura.

“The second thing I realised is that there is that healthcare can be a lottery of postcodes, which is intrinsically unfair.

“If you are in South Yarra or Toorak where the Alfred is situated, then you have access to the best and the latest, the most equipment and clinical trials.

“I felt that inequity had to be addressed in some way and I realised that I was able to do my little part.

“And so, I have been coming here for two to three days a month for the past six or seven years and I have two of my other colleagues come up and join me and we provide almost a weekly haematology specialist service to Mildura.”

“MBPH is keen to expand this to an inpatient service and it has reached out and we have a plan we hope to implement soon.”

Born and raised in Mumbai, India, Dr Nandurkar came to Australia in 1986 with a medicine degree.

His first port of call was Sydney’s Concord Hospital where he undertook his physician’s training before moving onto Westmead Hospital for specialised study in haematology and pathology.

He then spent the next four years completing a PhD in blood cancer at Melbourne’s Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Australia’s leading medical research institute.

Not satisfied with those achievements he signed on for another four years to complete his post-doctoral studies at Monash University.

“I then worked for almost three years in a post-doctoral capacity as a scientist with the Department of Biochemistry at Monash University

“So, following about seven years of full-time research I managed to ‘re-invent’ myself as a clinician at St Vincents Hospital in Melbourne... as a clinical haematologist but also as a scientist and I had a lab funded by the National Health and Chemical Research Council.”

Professor Nandurkar spent 15 years at the University of Melbourne as a professor and Head of Department of Haematology until 2015, when he moved to The Alfred.

“Monash University and The Alfred



PROFESSOR HARSHAL NANDURKAR'S ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL. AN HONOUR HE IS RIGHTLY AND HUMBLYProud OF.

Hospital had approached me, and I took up an offer that enabled me to set up a bigger research lab in the role of Head of Clinical Haematology at The Alfred and the Head of the Australian Centre for Blood Diseases, a department within Monash University.

“A few years later, the Alfred administration asked me take on a job as director of the Cancer Program and I now try to combine all three jobs which keeps me busy!

“One of my colleagues will come here and administer chemotherapy at the MBPH, together with Krishna Rachakonda and that completes the loop.

“At the Alfred, we pride ourselves on the access to clinical trials for human medicine and now in its wisdom the MBPH has established a Clinical Trials and Research Unit that the Alfred has worked collaboratively to support.

“We have a duty to work here and I would like to see every metropolitan specialist have a small role in it to bring specialist

care to rural and regional centres.

“I am happy that I have a great partnership with the MBPH executive who all share the same vision and together we are the enablers.”

Another attraction of Mildura for the professor is the ease with which he can practice here.

“I initially thought it would be logistically difficult setting up a clinic, but it works very smoothly and it’s easy to come to Mildura. And the people want you here. It’s a perfect combination for the Alfred and we look forward to consolidating this relationship,” he said.

As a working physician with his doctor’s hat on, Professor Nandurkar operates out of rooms at Mildura Cardiology.

“They approached me and said they had the capacity to do it and it has worked well. They have the infrastructure and the centre is closely linked to the hospital both professionally and geographically,” he said.



“Most of Mildura’s GPs now have my mobile number and I encourage them to contact me or my other colleagues. That way we can provide a prompt service.

“My junior doctors from the Alfred are on call for Mildura and we have a protocol in place so that regional patients have a preferred access to the Alfred.

“We do this for Mildura and other regions too so that what we cannot manage here -- which is quite a lot -- we can go straight to the Alfred with for treatment.

“We provide accommodation arranged through the Alfred and at our cost whereby patients can stay at a hotel near the hospital while undergoing their treatment and until they are fit enough to come back to Mildura.”

The Nandurkar family all work, or are training to work, in the health sector.

“My wife is a radiologist; my son is training to be a radiologist, and my daughter is in her third year of medicine at Monash University,” he says with pride.

“I hope that they may take emulate the example that I and my colleagues have set. After all, a lot more is expected of people

who have been given a lot,” the Professor mused.

“I welcome coming to Mildura and I hope I can continue to do my little part in providing health care for the good citizens of Mildura.

“I love the restaurants and it is a vibrant, honest and hard-working community.”

In his role as a physician, Dr Nandurkar treats a variety of benign non-malignant conditions, such as thrombosis DVTs, lung clots, to inflamatic conditions and that extends to leukemia and lymphoma that chemotherapy.

“We have been privileged to do more complicated procedures for people from Mildura, such as bone marrow transplants. Dr Nandurkar said that enormous progress in blood cancer research is being made.

“Blood cancer research is expanding at logarithmic scale,” he says.

“A big growth area is a new treatment procedure called CART T-cell therapy.”

CAR T-cell therapies are a specialised kind of immunotherapy in which the patient’s own immune system is ‘retrained’ to identify and attack cancer cells.

In use since 2017, CAR T-cell therapies have been successfully employed in the treatment of blood cancers such as lymphomas, leukemia, and multiple myeloma.

Professor Harshal Nandurkar speaks passionately about haematology and the advances we can expect to see in the coming decade.

“With treatment options changing so fast that it is really a great time to be a haematologist,” he says.

“Clinical work is an important part of what I do, and my own research is continuing alongside that.

“I’m currently researching the design of new drugs for blood clotting.”

Haematology is at the forefront of innovation according to Dr Nandurkar.

He predicts biological therapeutics, referred to simply as ‘biologicals’, are set to impact treatment procedures in a major way.

“These are medicines that are proteins purified from living culture systems or from blood and plasma, and could include vaccines, immune modulators or monoclonal antibodies,” Dr Nandurkar explained.

And he is grateful for the research and clinical opportunities that have been afforded him since arriving in Australia.

“Moving to Australia was the best thing I’ve done,” he observed.

“Of course, I have a deep sense of gratitude for India and the grounding it gave, no question about it. But I’ve felt enormously supported here.”

He acknowledged however, that “the US and Europe have a great tradition of research, as well as greater funding, but Australia is catching up”.

“I like to advise younger doctors to go spend a couple of years outside of Australia to get experience,” he said.

Returning to his AM briefly, Professor Nandurkar says that the recognition that comes with the honour has the potential to stimulate early-career doctors further.

“Hopefully this will encourage young medical students, and young doctors especially those that have come from other countries, to do great things, and to recognise that Australia is a fair and equitable place to work,” he said.

“The infrastructure is there to support you. If you apply yourself and work hard, success will come. Australia is a wonderful place to be a doctor.”

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

AT THE HEART OF MBPH DIPLOMA COURSE

A GROUP of 13 MBPH staff from across the organisation, recently graduated and received their dual diplomas in Leadership and Management and Competitive Systems and Practices.

MBPH Learning and Organisational Development Manager, Andrea Pahek said that the hospital has engaged Vative Healthcare to conduct the dual Diploma courses.

“Vative’s training has given staff from all areas of the organisation the opportunity to gain really valuable learning and practical tools to use in the workplace to improve internal processes, but also leadership capabilities and it is making

a huge impact on them professionally, personally and it is adding value to the organisation as a whole,” Andrea said.

“Being from all areas of the organisation, they have had the opportunity to network, which they may otherwise not have had, and in doing so learn from each other. This has the effect of giving support to organisational learning and growth across the board.

“And through this we see continuous improvement in people’s performance and the projects that were detailed at the graduation ceremony today, will have an impact on our end user- our patients – our consumers.

“Staff engagement has absolutely increased for the staff, but really, we are here to deliver exceptional patient care and this course will help them to do that.”

The next group of 26 MBPH staff commenced the next diploma course in July and just like their previous counterparts, they are from diverse parts of the organisation.

The students meet monthly, which maybe virtually or face-to-face when the trainers come up from Melbourne to run the sessions. Throughout the 12-month course, there is continuous work to do in between their group sessions, which is all applicable to the work place so that they can enhance their learning and also apply it to their real-life workplace.

Vative Healthcare Educator and course coordinator Simon Armstrong said it is a course designed through the TAFE system and accredited at the diploma level. “There are two diplomas that the students receive at the end of the course. One is in Leadership and Management and the other is in Competitive Systems and Practices, which is around lean principles of more efficient working processes in any environment,” he said. “In this case it is based on practices within the hospital.”

Mr Armstrong said that the MBPH staff had been a very enthusiastic group who he believed had taken a lot away from the experience in undertaking the course.

“They were a great group,” he said. “The leadership value is all about them sharing their leadership experience and then adding onto that some models and suggestions that other leaders have made to in turn make them better leaders.

“And so each person going on an individual journey to become the best leader that they can be, whether they have staff working for them or within a team.”

Mr Armstrong said the second part to it is a number of tools based around lean processes. “This is a process system that has been developed which actually started back in Japan backing in the 1960s and it uses a number of different processes to look at how you can improve the way things operate within the workplace environment to make them more efficient and cost effective,” he said.

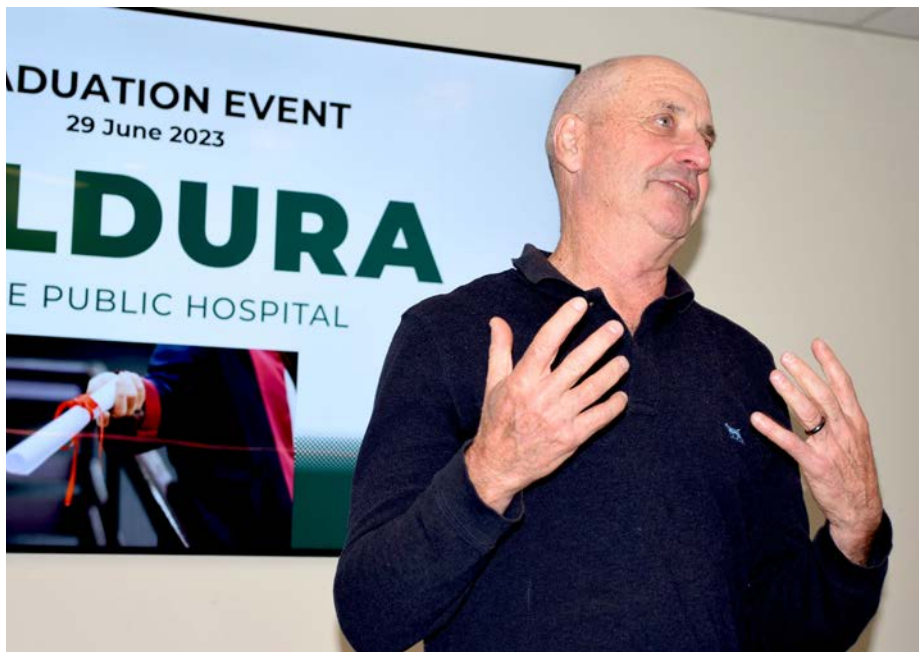
“We also aim to make the course as practical as we can with students putting



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the principles they are learning into practice in their jobs.” One MBPH staff to graduate was Executive Administrative Assistant to the CEO, Elaine Heinrich said she had benefitted greatly from the course. “I gained a lot of knowledge in the areas of management and leadership as well as the competitive services,” Elaine said. “Both Diplomas worked really well together. It was certainly about growth for me individually but also to be able to

further support the organisation through projects both clinical and non-clinical.” Elaine said that while undertaking the course, all of the participants were able to put their newly learned skills into practice in their respective workplaces. “Everything from how to communicate more effectively with people, through to the outcome with projects,” She said. “It has been a huge amount of information learnt right across the board, which has already proven to be invaluable.”

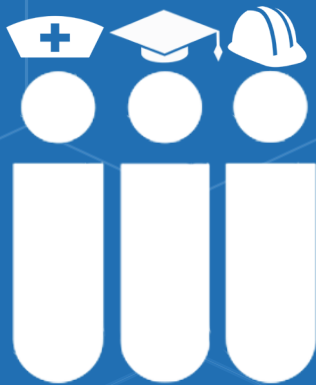


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