Welcome to new Chief Executive

Department of Health and Families’ new Chief Executive, Mr Jeff Moffet

Health Minister Kon Vatskalis has welcomed the Department of Health and Families’ new Chief Executive, Mr Jeff Moffet, who commenced in the role on 27 September.

“Mr Moffet is well-suited to his new role overseeing the distribution of health services in the Northern Territory, having managed one of the largest country health services in Australia, as acting Chief Executive of WA Country Health,” the Minister said.

“In his previous role, Mr Moffet oversaw the delivery of public health services in 57 hospitals, as well as multiple community-based population health, mental health, Indigenous health and aged care services across the vast Pilbara and Kimberley regions.

“He has extensive experience as a health administrator, having occupied senior leadership and management roles in the rural and remote health sector for the past ten years.

“Amongst his duties will be helping to steer the National Health Reform rollout in the Northern Territory and working with the community to improve Indigenous health outcomes and child health outcomes.

The two facilities will provide short-term accommodation for people from rural and remote areas who require extended treatment at RDH.

Construction of a 12-15 bed hostel specifically designed for expectant Indigenous mothers is scheduled for completion by mid-next year, with a 50-unit accommodation complex for patients from rural and remote areas to follow soon after.

“These projects will be vital for those people living in remote and rural communities who need to travel hundreds of kilometres to Royal Darwin Hospital for treatment or birthing, and need appropriate and affordable accommodation close by,” Minister Vatskalis said.

Menzies researchers take top honours at Conference

CDN conference organiser, Dr Christine Connors, with three of her Menzies School of Health colleagues shared in a top national prize for best paper at the National Primary Health Care Research Conference.

Dr Connors, Dr Paul Burgess, Ross Bailie and Richard Chenhall, were recognised for their paper: “The contribution of the Adult Health Check to preventative care in a remote Aboriginal primary care service”.

Their work examined the impact of the Australian Government’s new health check on health outcomes in a challenging health care environment – a remote Aboriginal community in Arnhem Land.

The study shows that a simple intervention, such as Adult Health Checks, can make a significant contribution towards closing the health gap for Indigenous Australians.

New General Manager for ASH

October 2010
protection services,” Minister Vatskalis said. 

“I'd also like to thanks Ms Jenny Cleary for her fine leadership over the past three months as Acting Chief Executive,” the Minister added.

Mr Moffet has relocated to Darwin with his family, “I am delighted to be taking on the important responsibility of overseeing DHF, which provides an extensive range of health and family support services to Territorians,” Mr Moffet said.

Top Prize Shared at Chronic Diseases Conference

Estrella Munoz with her award

The 14th annual Chronic Disease Network (CDN) conference in Darwin on 9 September provided the perfect opportunity for Health Minister Kon Vatskalis to recognise Northern Territory health professionals for exceptional work in the field of Chronic Disease.

Estrella Munoz, a preventable chronic disease educator from Alice Springs, and Hilary Bloomfield, a health practitioner at Danila Dilba Health Service, were jointly awarded for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Chronic Disease.

Ms Munoz was recognised for leadership in chronic disease management and excellence in providing an evidence base to inform health practice.

Ms Bloomfield was honoured for her leadership in developing and implementing a multidisciplinary chronic disease management program.

Other category winners were:

The Asthma Foundation NT

New GM of Alice Springs Hospital, Mike Melino

Alice Springs Hospital has welcomed its new General Manager, Mike Melino. Mr Melino took the helm at the end of September, following two years as Executive Director of Mental Health for Country Health in South Australia (SA).

In his former role, Mr Melino oversaw significant reforms in mental health services, including the development of a new model of care for mental health and the planning, development and implementation of integrated service delivery for mental health throughout SA.

As a key member of the Country Health Executive, Mr Melino has been charged with the task of establishing Country Health SA as a single health region from July 2008.

“I have been working in health-related disciplines for more than 20 years and during that time I have endeavoured to accelerate the progress and service delivery of the organisations for which I have been responsible,” Mr. Melino said.

“I grew up in the bush, in Queensland and the south east of South Australia, and I believe this background has helped me to understand the importance and challenges of rural health. It has also assisted me in relating to how our Doctors, Nurses and Allied Health staff can best meet the needs of patients.

“Alice Springs Hospital is a renowned health care facility with strong links to the local community. I intend to further strengthen this important relationship,” Mr Melino said.

Cooking Classes at Alice Springs Hospital Mental Health Unit

The Asthma Foundation NT
ASH Welcomes New ENT Surgeon

A highly-regarded ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgeon experienced in working in remote communities in Africa has joined the team at Alice Springs Hospital (ASH) as a full-time specialist.

Otolaryngologist Dr Jacques de Haan has broad experience as a surgeon in both the public and private sectors, and as an educator.

He trained in South Africa and has worked in locations across Africa so his background in remote health is well suited to conditions in central Australia.

Dr de Haan has an impressive list of credentials having trained at the University of Cape Town and Groote Schuur Hospital and later did his specialist general surgery training at Tygerberg Hospital and the University of Stellenbosch Medical School in South Africa. He then joined the faculty of these training hospitals.

Dr de Haan’s work in remote areas of the African continent includes more than 20 years working in Malawi, mostly at the Blantyre Adventist Hospital. For many years he was the only ENT practitioner delivering service to a population in excess of 14 million. He also trained medical officers and medical assistants.

Since his arrival at ASH Dr de Haan says “the hospital has been kind to me. I am happy to be here.”

$26 million patient accommodation for Royal Darwin Hospital

There is something cooking every Wednesday in the Mental Health Unit at the Alice Springs Hospital.

This is the day Francoise Builder creates culinary magic through a cooking class for the clients and staff, and any visitors who may be around.

While she folds and stirs her eager chef’s helpers wash and peel celery, onions and other ingredients for the day’s fare.

She said: “I love cooking and most of the time I do it out of my head so to share this with others is a joy.

“These cooking classes inspire everyone who participates whether they are washing and preparing or just eating the end result.”

The culinary program is an initiative of the hospital’s volunteer group, The Drovers, who pay for the ingredients and often help out with the preparation.

Mrs Builder is a Drover and said: “We are very imaginative with our different food themes for Wednesdays. “We’ve had Chinese stirfries, a traditional dish from Pakistan and kangaroo for our Indigenous clients, but the new stove will mean we can be even more inventive.”

The unit’s Clinical Nurse Manager Peter Thornton said the Wednesday lunches attract quite a crowd.

He said, “This cooking is very sociable and we all mix together – the clients, doctors, nurses and visitors.”

“Every week we have something different and every week it’s beautiful, but more importantly the cooking classes promote wellbeing and help the people staying in the unit reconnect with the community.”
Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Warren Snowdon with Health Minister Kon Vatskalis and Royal Darwin Hospital General Manager Liz Stackhouse turns the first sod on the new accommodation facility

Work to build two short-term patient accommodation facilities at Royal Darwin Hospital is underway, with NT Minister for Health Kon Vatskalis and Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Warren Snowdon sharing in turning the first sod on the $26 million upgrade.

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