

## A RETURN TO CACHAR CANCER CENTRE

Sarah Corfe and I decided to return to Cachar Cancer Centre, Silchar, Assam. We had enjoyed ourselves so much there and were both attending the APHC meeting in Bangkok. We thought that it was a shame to be so close and not go back! Sadly Oliver Haisken couldn't be with us this time, but gladly Ofra Fried, a palliative care physician from Townsville, agreed to join us. On the way to the airport we were a little anxious as we listened to reports of Cyclone Phailin thrashing the East coast of India. We needn't have worried: the worst we experienced was a windy night in Calcutta.

But there is always anxiety when returning to a place where you've previously enjoyed yourself. Will it be the same this time? Am I remembering correctly? We need not have worried about that! We were once again met at the airport in the hospital ambulance, but this time we had arrived at the time of Kali Puja, a festival dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali. Since the festivity includes huge numbers of processions, bound for every bridge in a place of rivers, it was a happy, noisy and exciting drive to the hospital!

We met up once again with the Director Dr Ravi Kannan and his wife Seetha, and with Dr Iqbal Bahar, the palliative care physician at the hospital. They were as welcoming as ever, and we were cared for very well once again, with superb meals cooked by Seetha.

The hospital itself has grown. Last year the top of the hospital was sprouting steel rods, but this year they had been converted into more levels of hospital and will soon be occupied as new wards, operating theatres and accommodation.

The palliative care ward has benefitted by the ward manager and a senior nurse attending a training course in Trivandrum last year. They returned with new skills and ideas, and have been educating other staff since then.

The biggest new initiative in palliative care here is the development of the home care service. Very aware that the hospital cannot cope with all patients needing care, they have developed a home care service with Dr Iqbal and senior nursing staff traveling to patients. This is no mean feat in an area where roads are difficult and flooding frequent in the wet season. The staff have become aware of the problem that we face here too: that the costs in time and transport are very high. All three of us enjoyed a day out on house calls with nursing staff. We were interested to see the interest in teleconferencing and perhaps videoconferencing to reduce travel costs, and look forward to sharing more ideas about that.

### **Dr David Brumley**

*Palliative Care Physician*

*Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team*

---

## PALLIATIVE CARE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR OVERSEAS TRAINED NURSES

We have received funding through the palliative care consortium to conduct a second palliative care orientation program for overseas trained nurses in the Grampians.

I am wondering if you may have nurses who were trained overseas and would like to learn more about the death and dying experience in regional Australia. This program involves a self-directed learning package, support from the palliative care consult team, additional resources and a communication skills training day.

If you do and they would be interested in participating in the program, please contact me by 28<sup>th</sup> April. The Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team will then distribute the packages in early May.

### **Aim:**

Key learning objectives include:

- Cultural awareness of death and dying in a regional area
- Palliative care symptom management and
- Supports available to deliver palliative care in the region

### **Eligibility and target groups:**

Registered and Enrolled Nurses who:

- Are employed by health services within the Grampians region; and
- Completed their nursing training overseas.

### **Program:**

There are two parts to this program:

#### **1. Orientation and self-directed learning package**

Each participant will receive a learning package including DVD of podcasts and orientation/self-directed learning manual. The manual has been written specifically for this program. Nurses will have 4 weeks to complete. A member from the palliative care team will be available by phone and to visit your health service to assist nurses completing this package.

#### **2. Cancer Council of Victoria workshop "Responding to Emotional Cues"**

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014, Horsham

Lunch provided

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2014, Ballarat

This 4 hour workshop will provide nurses with evidence-based communication skills to respond to psychological distress. Each workshop is limited to 10 participants and will be tailored to meet the group's need. A trained actor is utilised to practice skills in a safe environment resembling real life situations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

*Jade Odgers*

*Manager*

*Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team*

*Ph: 5320 3535; Fax: 5320 6493; Mobile: 0407 501 292. Email: [jadeo@bhs.org.au](mailto:jadeo@bhs.org.au)*

*[www.grpct.com.au](http://www.grpct.com.au) Work Days are Monday – Thursday*

---

## **WELCOME - DR PENNY COTTON**



My name is Penny Cotton and I am excited to be back in the Grampians Region now as a Palliative Medicine physician. I previously trained as a GP, working in Daylesford and an Aboriginal Health Service in Bendigo. Four years ago I decided to make the plunge and pursue my passion for palliative care. I have spent the last three years doing the long commute to Melbourne to complete advanced palliative medicine training. I am glad to be back working with such a fabulous team across the region. Currently I am working part time for the Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team with the rest of the time spent teaching through Melbourne University, completing my masters in clinical education and the never ending renovations to our five acre property just outside Ballarat. When not up a ladder painting or at work you can find us hiking in the Grampians, scaling a cliff somewhere or sitting by a river fishing. I look forward to working with everyone across the region.

---

## **CONTACTS**

### **Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team**

Ph 5320 3553

Fax 5320 6493

Dr David Brumley

[davidb@bhs.org.au](mailto:davidb@bhs.org.au)

Dr Greg Mewett

[gregm@bhs.org.au](mailto:gregm@bhs.org.au)

Dr Penny Cotton

[pennyco@bhs.org.au](mailto:pennyco@bhs.org.au)

Dr 'Buddy' Mudugamuwa

[buddhikam@bhs.org.au](mailto:buddhikam@bhs.org.au)

Jade Odgers

[jadeo@bhs.org.au](mailto:jadeo@bhs.org.au)

Regina Kendall

[reginak@bhs.org.au](mailto:reginak@bhs.org.au)

Lawrence Habegger

[lawrenceh@bhs.org.au](mailto:lawrenceh@bhs.org.au)

Bernadette Matthews

[bernadettem@bhs.org.au](mailto:bernadettem@bhs.org.au)

### **Ballarat Hospice Care Inc**

Ph 5333 1118

Fax 5333 1119

Carita Potts

[eo@ballarathospice.com](mailto:eo@ballarathospice.com)

### **Wimmera Hospice Care**

Ph 5381 9363

Fax 5381 9170

Melanie Hahne

[mhahne@whcg.org.au](mailto:mhahne@whcg.org.au)

Jennifer Noonan

[jnoonan@whcg.org.au](mailto:jnoonan@whcg.org.au)

[hospice@whcg.org.au](mailto:hospice@whcg.org.au)

### **Djerriwarrh Palliative Care**

Ph 5367 2000

Fax 5367 9641

Pam Ryan

[pamr@djhs.org.au](mailto:pamr@djhs.org.au)

Jane Cape

[janec@djhs.org.au](mailto:janec@djhs.org.au)

### **Gandarra Palliative Care Unit**

Ph 5320 3895

Fax 5320 3763

Dr David Brumley

[davidb@bhs.org.au](mailto:davidb@bhs.org.au)

Dr Greg Mewett

[gregm@bhs.org.au](mailto:gregm@bhs.org.au)

Maree Kewish

[mareek@bhs.org.au](mailto:mareek@bhs.org.au)

### **Central Grampians Palliative Care**

Ph 5352 9328

Fax 5352 9425

Jane Bourman

[jane.bourman@eghs.net.au](mailto:jane.bourman@eghs.net.au)

### **Grampians Region Palliative Care Consortium**

Peter Marshall

[gpalcareconsort@gmail.com](mailto:gpalcareconsort@gmail.com)

MARCH/APRIL 2014