

# The Kilmore & District Hospital



**Pictured:** Staff raising awareness for Bowel Cancer Australia

## Local Access Saves Lives

Dr Nidham Oda has seen how the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP) saves lives. The Kilmore GP is rapt that he can now refer patients direct to The Kilmore & District Hospital (TKDH) for follow-up colonoscopies.

The initiative encourages people over 50 to screen themselves at home using a free kit, which is then sent off for testing.

If the screen reveals a positive result, a follow-up letter is sent to the patient and their GP advising the patient to undergo a colonoscopy procedure.

Dr Oda has had a number of patients who have required this further exploration.

"Luckily, the majority had benign bowel problems, and the few patients who were diagnosed with bowel cancer were at a very early stage. They had treatment and are now free of cancer because it was picked up early by screening and the colonoscopy."

Since March it has been possible for local doctors to refer NBCSP patients to the hospital for their colonoscopy. TKDH now provides a direct access service for these patients, and the investigative procedure is available with minimal waiting time.

To date TKDH has admitted almost 30 patients from the screening program, and each person received their colonoscopy within 30 days of the referral.

The rapid turnaround time means local patients spend less time in limbo waiting to see whether they need further treatment. There are no out of pocket costs to have the colonoscopy at TKDH, and it is convenient to be close to home with easy access to parking.

Bowel cancer is the leading cause of cancer for men and women in Australia. But early diagnosis improves treatment options and the chance of survival. So if there's any suspicion of cancer, it's imperative to get it seen to as quickly as possible.

Dr Oda considers bowel cancer screening to be one of the most important discussions GPs can have with their patients, especially those at risk or of screening age.

The TKDH team is aware just how important those conversations and preventative measures can be. In June, staff raised awareness and funds for Bowel Cancer Australia by hosting a Red Apple Day morning tea.

They're also getting set to boost the colonoscopy capacity to support more local patients in the months ahead.

The screening stool test is very easy to do at home, says Dr Oda.

"It is convenient, and non-invasive. Most importantly it is the best way of detecting bowel cancer early, because the disease often develops without symptoms. So when you receive your kit, it's important that you complete and return it to look after yourself."

For more information about the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program visit [www.cancerscreening.gov.au/](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/) or call 1800 118 868.



**Pictured:** Dr Oda



# CEO's Update

Welcome to winter. When we were putting the stories together for this edition of The Kilmore & District Hospital newsletter we realised there's a theme of reassurance.

You can read about how our care was given the thumbs up by the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS). Our Direct Access Colonoscopy Service is reducing worry time for local people who get positive bowel cancer screens. And TKDH's continuing medical education program is supporting local health services to become more comfortable places for conversations around family violence.

On top of this we're pleased to report that refurbishment works at Caladenia Nursing Home are now complete. The word is that residents, family, staff and volunteers are all enjoying the new facilities.

Like a lot of organisations we're in the midst of reviewing the year that's been and planning for the year ahead. Information about the hospital's budget will come to us soon so we can identify our priorities.

Our focus for the next three months includes:

- Finalising our 2018-19 Annual Report of Operations and identifying 2019-20 priorities
- Commencing consultation for the development of our strategic plan
- Implementing suggested improvements from our recent NSQHS assessment.

As always, I want to acknowledge the incredible team effort and support that keeps our community well cared for right around the clock. Thank you to everyone.

Regards,

*Sue*



# Flu Season

It's that time of year again, when the temperature drops and the coughs and colds increase.



Influenza is a highly contagious virus that can cause mild to severe illness in people across age groups, from young to elderly. Many people suffer serious secondary complications.

Prevention is an important strategy that includes:

- annual influenza vaccination
- thorough hand washing
- covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or forearm.

If staff or volunteers are unwell, we encourage them to stay at home to keep the virus, or any bacteria, from spreading to patients or residents.

We're asking that you adopt the same practice. If you have a cough, cold or flu, it's a good idea to send a card or flowers, or phone your loved one rather than visit in person. It's only until you are well again, and it will protect your loved one (and all of our patients and residents) against illness and complications.

# What have we been up to?

Data from 1 April to 30 June 2019 included in these figures



**2270**

Urgent Care Presentations



**974**

Community Nurse Home Visits



**11**

New Staff Members



**4**

Dianella Resident Outings



**59**

Babies Born



**485**

Outpatient Clinic Visits



**476**

Procedures Performed



**3**

Birthdays Celebrated

# Big Thumbs Up

In April, TKDH successfully passed an important assessment that checked how we perform against national health standards.

The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) has eight compliance benchmarks in place to protect the public and improve the quality of health services.

External assessors came to town and over three days our team had to show and tell the assessors how we meet the standards whenever you're in our care.

The reassuring news is that TKDH complied with all eight standards and met all 148 actions. So we're fully accredited for the next three years. The summary report acknowledged the improvements we've made in the



**Pictured:** Thumbs up from our Staff, Volunteer Anne and Patient Ibrahim

areas of organisational culture, consumer involvement, credentialing, maternity and urgent care services, plus the family violence project.

# Supporting Responses to Family Violence

TKDH has taken important steps to ensure that the hospital and local health services are helpful places for people who are experiencing family violence.

In June, our inaugural Continuing Medical Education workshop brought together 56 doctors, nurses and project officers to build GP awareness and capacity to engage with instances of patient family violence.

TKDH Medical Director, Dr Martin Duffy, wants to assure people in the community that "our door is always open and that the hospital is actively supporting medical practitioners across our region to better identify and respond to family violence".

Mitchell Shire has the one of the highest incidences of family violence in Victoria, and hospitals and health care services are often the first port of call for someone experiencing family violence. So it's important that staff are well trained to identify, recognise, respond and refer people to resources and networks.

The successful event was coordinated through the Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence project and was well supported by local partner organisations.



**Pictured:** Strengthening Hospitals Response to Family Violence Team

Topics included things staff should keep an eye out for, and ways to initiate conversations.

Dr Duffy acknowledged that these are difficult conversations to initiate and that it helps staff to have a few opening questions at the ready, and a professional framework to support them to make sensitive inquiries.

"At TKDH we've been doing a lot of work on this issue, so now when people present to our health service, if they are having a family violence issue, they can trust that they're going to be supported sensitively, and that we have people specially trained to help and respond."

# Take the Pressure Down

A generous grant from Kilmore Bendigo Bank has taken the pressure off for clients and staff from our District Nursing Service.

The community bank's donation of \$3204 enabled TKDH to purchase a Hadecco Smartdop machine to take blood pressure readings from a person's toes.

The information from the specialist equipment aids staff to apply best practice dressing techniques and optimise compression levels whenever they wrap a resident's foot or leg.

Having this equipment means that clients no longer have to worry about travelling further afield to get the support they need. The enhanced capacity to monitor clients' feet in their own homes means healing rates can be significantly improved.

A big thank you to our supporters at Bendigo Bank.



**Pictured:** District Nurse Veronica monitoring blood pressure

# Who are You?

**Dr Cecile Blanchot**

GP Anaesthetist

## What does your role include?

My role is varied, and that is what makes it interesting. Monday to Friday I look after perioperative patients. I ensure that they are well enough to undergo their surgery safely. I provide anaesthesia, put the patient to sleep, monitor vital signs, then wake them. After surgery I ensure that the patient is comfortable and I provide pain relief. If they are admitted to hospital I provide care until that person heads home. I also manage complications if they arise.

Out of hours I am on call. That means I am available to help out in the urgent care centre. I also cover obstetrics for women in labour who need epidural pain relief. If a caesarean section is needed, I'll take that patient into theatre, and also care for the baby as required.

## How did you find yourself at TKDH?

I came to Kilmore in 2009 on a rotation when I was a GP registrar working at Wallan Medical Centre. The exposure to the urgent care centre, anaesthetics and general practice influenced my move. Having grown up in country Victoria and Brittany in France, the country lifestyle was appealing to me.

## What is the best thing about working here?


The best thing about working in a small hospital is getting to know the staff you work with and the people you look after. The variety of work that I am exposed to is stimulating.

## What local activities do you enjoy on your days off?

I enjoy bike riding with my children. The close proximity of Tallarook and Heathcote rail trails is a bonus, and I hope they link up to Kilmore in the near future. I enjoy nature walks. The Tallarook state forest has beautiful rock formations. Mt Disappointment is a nice walk although not a great view. Monument Hill is also a great walk. And I should not forget to mention Mt Piper, which has an awesome view from the top.



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