

## *Weemala....more than a building*

Things are certainly moving pretty quickly in regard to the new Weemala building, now that most of the external works are finished. New gas mains and meters have been installed, as well as new water and sewerage pipes. We have encountered a few technical and administrative issues in regard to the upgrade of the electricity power supply, but this will be resolved with Integral Energy before the building is completed.

All of the external brick work is fully completed, and once the scaffolding is removed and the bricks washed, we will all be able to get a much better view of just how the building complex will look! It is hard to visualise with all of the scaffolding surrounding it. All of the windows and frames are being manufactured and should be installed in the next week (early July), and the painters will commence painting the external exposed metalwork before moving inside.

Inside, the air conditioning ducts, fire sprinkler pipes and ceiling grids are being installed this week ready for the ceiling gyprock to be erected. Building 1 (high care) is slightly ahead of Building 2 with some of the gyprock walls ready for installation. The wet areas in both buildings have been sealed and tiling will commence in the next week or so. Painting of the walls is almost then the last thing to occur, before installation of the cabinetry and joinery.

Of course, as with any project undertaking of this size, there have been a few things to work out as we go – hand wash basins from a Food Safety aspect being one of them! We will have more hand wash basins than we have residents and staff together, but at least we will comply with all of the new Standards! But

all furniture orders for the dining and common living areas, and the bedroom furniture have all been placed and will be delivered in time for our scheduled “practical completion date” of the 26th August!



we see the whole on-going care and support programs working in practice so as to assist everyone settle in as quickly and smoothly as possible to their new home.

At some stage soon, we would like also to have an “official” opening ceremony. I recognise that there are some sensitivities around the history of this development, but there are also some strategic and some political objectives from Royal Rehab’s perspective in regard to this milestone, which I believe are also in the longer term benefit of our Weemala residents. I would like to work with the Weemala residents and their families to ensure that this can be done without causing offense or unnecessary disruption to residents, and whilst we can arrange for an opening of just a building, Weemala is obviously much more than just a building. I trust with everyone’s good will that we can make this a great celebratory occasion for everyone to move forward from, whilst gently reminding those who need to be reminded that the health care costs of our Weemala residents remain, beyond their need for decent accommodation.

But nonetheless, the reality of our new Weemala residence is getting ever-closer to reality, and I look forward to the next exciting phase as we prepare to introduce residents to their new homes.

Denise McCall and Ralph Forbes and the team are now working with residents and their families to plan for our transition to the new Weemala. I think it would be most beneficial to have a pre-move orientation tour of the new building, to demonstrate how

**Stephen Lowndes**  
Chief Executive Officer

## *Speech Pathology.... Communication Profiles*

The Disability Services Directorate (DSD) and Speech Pathology Department at the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney have introduced a new position dedicated to a new graduate speech pathologist.

The position provides an opportunity for recent graduates of speech pathology to work in a supported environment for their first year of clinical practice. A senior clinician is available to offer clinical guidance and facilitate career development. It is one of only very few new-graduate positions in the region, and attracts graduates with accomplished

student backgrounds. Tennille Thomasz was welcomed into the role in 2010 as the first new graduate into the program.

The first year has seen significant achievements for DSD clients as a result. One major achievement was the introduction of communication profiles for all residents within DSD to facilitate carer interactions with individuals with complex communication needs. This project was accepted for a national conference poster-presentation at the 2011 Biennial AGOSCI Conference held in Adelaide. Tennille now has a new position in brain injury rehabilitation and we

now welcome Molly Barnhart to this position.

Molly completed a clinical placement in DSD as part of her final year qualifications and entered the position having already worked with many of the clients and the DSD team. She has recently received a Dean's Scholar Award for her outstanding performance as a student. We look forward to her up to date knowledge and the new ideas she brings to the position

## *In focus*

### **ANDREW ELLIS AND THE WORK OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Advisory Council meets quarterly and has been representing the issues of the community-based clients for many years.

The Advisory Council aims to provide a consultative forum that represents the interests of clients and their families in major service decisions and strategic directions for the community-based disability service. The council is comprised of clients or family members and last year we invited Julie Loblinzk, who is the Executive Officer of Self Advocacy Sydney, to attend each meeting to ensure the meetings remain client focused. Where the council needs management to

provide a report or feedback, Denise McCall, Operations Manager, regularly attends the meetings.

The council members include Janice Miller, Marina Willetts, William Feely and Owen Butt all people who have been part of the service for a long time. The chairperson is Andrew Ellis.

Andrew is a long time resident of the service. He came to Weemala in 1983 and was one of the pioneer group to leave Weemala and move to the community.

Andrew shares a house with other residents at Abbotsford, loves

football and is a devoted fan of Manchester United. Andrew is also a "people person" and was an official volunteer at the Olympic Games in Sydney, where he met and talked with many interesting celebrities. He was a volunteer at the Maritime Museum for many years.

The Council welcomes all community-based clients, their families and advocates to raise issues for the Advisory Council's attention. Andrew encourages you to let him know of any client issues and may be contacted directly on (02) 9712 0642.

### **DIARY DATES**

**BBQ:** Weemala Courtyard - Saturday 13 August 12.00pm - 2.00pm  
The Advisory Council extends an invitation to all clients and family  
**RSVP:** Elaine Teh (02) 9808 9600 by 5 August

**FAMILY FORUM:** Wednesday 17 August 11.30am  
**TRANSITION COMMITTEE:** Every Tuesday

## *Smooth & safe transition to new Weemala*

A smooth and safe transition for all clients, staff, equipment and services into the new Weemala Building is the primary objective of the newly formed Transition Committee.

The Transition Committee which meets weekly, includes representatives from the Royal Rehab executive, ECS management, therapists and social work areas, with residents and family members also invited to attend.

The formation of the Committee was outlined on June 29 at the bi-monthly Weemala ECS Families and Friends Forum. At the Forum, Delia Gray Director Allied Health and Community Services updated the group on the progress of the New Weemala: including the final sign off for items such as furniture, equipment and food delivery requirements which is happening weekly with details of other items being 'fine tuned'.

Denise McCall, Operations Manager, ECS said that new bedside lockers, ceiling hoists, beds and mattresses were being trialed. The bed frames are wooden, giving a homely feel. She added that all equipment is long lasting and approved by the Occupational Therapists.

## *Ken Kirk.....moving on after 25 years*

Residents and staff farewelled Ken Kirk after 25 years as a resident of Weemala. A lunch was held, providing Ken with the opportunity to say farewell to his many friends, and to cut a cake in his honour, to share with everyone. Ken has moved to a facility close to his family.

Although Ken Kirk was a man of few words he was very involved in the life of Weemala. He liked to laugh and joke with the "boys" on outings, go fishing and enjoyed art. He was involved in the many special activities offered to our residents: sailing with Sailability, surfing with Surfing for the Disabled and riding a motor bike with the Wheelchair Warriors.

Jesse Gunner had the honour of speaking at the farewell to Ken. Jesse had been at Weemala as a Registered Nurse for much of the twenty five years that Ken had been a resident.

Jesse has now announced her retirement, and a farewell will be held on Monday 18 July.

Both Ken and Jesse have our best wishes for the future



*In Memory*  
**Darry Pagett**

A memorial service was held for Darry earlier this year. The service was lead by Murray Paton, assisted by other members of our Chaplaincy team and attended by our Weemala community, residents, family members and staff. Darry's niece Narelle Brien represented his family.

Darrant Mansfield Pagett, or "Darry" as he was known, grew up in the country and then came to the city and shared home and work with his brother Ivan and his family. He was intelligent and independent, with a touch of the "Aussie larrikin". He liked to bet on the horses, was good at "fixing things", had a great sense of humour and liked to write stories, mostly from his own life experience. He had worked at many things from cane cutting to plumbing and told some colourful stories. Some of his stories have been printed in the Weemala newsletter.

He came to Weemala on the 23 May 1978, thirty two years ago and passed away peacefully on 20 February 2011. Darry Pagett was 80 years old.

He will be warmly remembered.

*In Memory*  
**Vicki Day**

Vicki Day had a long association with Weemala, visiting residents and being part of the "Weemala Community" for over fifteen years. Vicki spent time with residents who had no one to visit them, both at Weemala and more recently in the community.

Vicki Day would also volunteer to accompany them on outings where 'extra hands' were needed, such as when they went sailing. Vicki chatted to all who crossed her path and shared lunch and stories about her much loved children and grandchildren.

Vicki will be remembered for her warmth, sense of fun and generosity of spirit. She had a wonderful ability to connect with people and will be sadly missed by residents, families, staff and all who knew her. Vicki Day died on 22 February 2011 after a short illness.

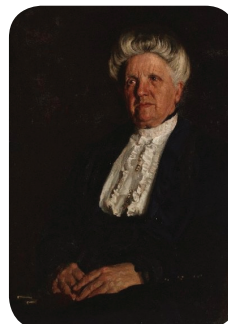
## *100 Years of Nursing Services at Weemala*

100 Years of Nursing Services at Weemala is celebrated in 2011, recognising a service that owes its beginnings to the support provided by Miss Margaret Harris, in 1911.

Margaret Harris (1844-1926) became an eminent figure in late 19th and early 20th century Sydney as a result of her generous contributions to the welfare of its citizens. Her long-standing support to the Home for Incurables (Weemala), led to an official recognition for her services on 4th March 1911.

When Miss Margaret Harris died in 1926, the Sydney Morning Herald reported:

For many years Miss Harris was an active member of the committee of the New South Wales Home for Incurables at Ryde. It was there I had the pleasure of knowing her best. The patients of that home, every one of whom she know personally, loved her. She visited them regularly, and anticipated many of their wants, and out of her kindness of heart saw that these were attended to. The patients were kept supplied in rugs and blankets for many years by Miss Harris and the home benefited in a hundred and one different ways through her kindness and generosity. The nursing service made it a home, not an institution.



The Home for Incurables, and many other Institutions, as well as the poor generally, have lost one of the best friends they ever had.

*Photo: Portrait of Margaret Harris, by distinguished artist E Phillips Fox, held by the Art Gallery of NSW.*

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