



WHEELS GO ROUND FOR TEAM OUTPATIENTS IN THE MURRAY TO MOYNE

The popular annual Murray to Moyne bike ride raises funds for Victorian health services. Last weekend, Team Outpatients representing Rural Northwest Health's Hopetoun campus entered again to raise funds for their centre with 2023 being the 36th staging of the event. Three teams totalling fourteen riders entered the event that commenced at 9:00am on Saturday and finished at 11:00am the following day including an overnight stay in Hamilton. The riders are accompanied by a three-person support team.

Each year, Team Outpatients choose the 520 km Mildura to Port Fairy route that passes through Hopetoun to allow a visit to the health service campus. Ride organiser, Norma Decker, said that the highlight is always the enthusiastic reception, and the departure best wishes the teams are given by residents and staff members.

Apart from the sheer distance, the challenges are road conditions and weather, including gusting winds.

Each of the dedicated participants meet their own expenses and Norma Decker is anticipating the team will again raise in the vicinity of \$5,000 for a project at RNH Hopetoun campus.

"We're extremely proud of our staff and their endeavours to better health outcomes in the communities in which we operate," said RNH CEO Jenni Masters.





DEBUTANTES DANCE FOR YARRIAMBIACK LODGE RESIDENTS AND STAFF

Debutantes from Warracknabeal High School delighted residents and staff of Yarriambiack Lodge with a selection of dances from their recent Deb Ball. Dressed in their beautiful white gowns the girls evoked many memories for residents, reminded of weddings and dances long past.

Traditional reels accompanied by fresh modern songs gave a contemporary mix to the performance. Barbara Dickie gave a standing ovation at the finale, thanking the Debutantes for coming out and entertaining us all.



A SPECIAL VISITOR FOR LYLE COOK

An emotional reunion last night as Jo the miniature horse visited his old friend Lyle Cook at RNH's Acute Ward.

Pony Jo lives with our ward clerk Lisa Thomas who kindly fulfilled a special wish and arranged for Jo to make the journey in. Our special little visitor recognised his mate Lyle with a sniff and a whinny they were all smiles, and there was not a dry eye amongst the group.



GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAM IS MORE VITAL THAN EVER IN A POST COVID WORKFORCE.

Rural Northwest Health offers a Graduate Nurse program to grow individual and organisational capacity.

Manique Cox and Rachael James were both able to advance their careers by completing their Registered Nurse training through the Rural Northwest Health Graduate Nurse program and the support of their managers. Reflecting on the program, Clinical Support Nurses, Doug Matheson and Sarah Gavan identified leadership, skill development and the opportunities for rotations across the sector as significant benefits of the program offered at RNH. Generally, graduates are able to work across aged and acute care equally. Doug and Sarah are available to provide formal debriefing sessions as well as informal connections made via daily contact.

Manique Cox commenced her career at Rural Northwest Health as a PCA in 2016, whilst training as an Enrolled Nurse in Ballarat.

Feeling driven to contribute at another level was the impetus for Manique to apply for the Graduate Nurse program.

Manique will be involved in rotations, including a stint in acute care in Nhill and will also be looking to become involved in community nursing. With an interest in a holistic approach extending beyond the Western norm of care, Manique has an ambition for additional training that may include a Masters in Public Health, team leadership, nutrition and prevention.

Manique enthusiastically recommends RNH's Graduate Nursing program, particularly with ongoing shortage of on site medical professionals in rural and remote regions.

Rachael James applied for a Diploma of Nursing placement in acute care. Moving from Melbourne where few rotations were available, Rachael commenced at Yarriambiack Lodge. The decision to apply for the RNH Graduate Nursing program was a considered career move with the nursing placement as an ideal grounding. The support of her managers and other staff stand out as factors positively influencing Rachael's journey towards the initial goal of becoming a Registered Nurse.

Rachael is keen to pursue further study and plans to remain in the country, having already recommended RNH's Graduate Nurse program to colleagues.

"Our Graduate Nurse Program is more vital than ever in a post COVID workforce. We need well trained nurses to respond to the global nursing shortage.", said RNH CEO Jenni Masters



WHAT'S UP JUNIOR!

Rural Northwest Health operates a Junior Assistant Environmental Services staffing group at both Warracknabeal and Hopetoun campuses to support the delivery of cleaning, catering and laundry services across aged and acute care.

The cohort is largely comprised of secondary students 15 years of age and over, including an occasional gap year school leaver. Team members work three hour shifts across late afternoon and early evenings on weeknights and weekends, where possible.

Environmental Services Manager, Trent Crisp, notes that the assistant team alleviates much of the difficulties involved in maintaining a senior roster across evening meal sessions in a time of significant recruitment challenges. Sufficient senior staff are on hand to assist with supervision and task direction. Training requirements are minimal.

Yarriambiack Lodge Nurse Unit Manager, Allison Hondow, has a very positive outlook on the contribution of junior staff members in the environmental team. "Having the junior environmental team members involved in the care of our residents provides all with the opportunity to learn new skills, have meaningful engagement and foster friendships. Our residents relish seeing our junior team members reach their milestones and always report back about how respectful and polite they are to everyone. It is refreshing to see such a great bunch of younger people come into a facility and actively care about their community and our residents," Allison said.

The junior assistants are extremely popular with residents and patients eagerly awaiting the arrival of their new and established friends. The camaraderie is returned in equal measure by the assistants. Maggie, Aylah and Angus have each been working as environmental assistants for more than 12 months and all three unanimously agree that they anticipate their shifts with great excitement. They each comment that the best part of the work is the interaction with residents and patients where the genuine interest and friendship is reciprocal. Maggie states that the hands-on duties and work locations are shared amongst the assistants so that everyone is able to enjoy equal face-to-face time with the residents and patients.

The excitement exhibited by each of the assistants that contributed to this short summary was palpable. It is another great program managed well by the Warracknabeal and Hopetoun campuses.