

Consumer advice sought

Given the broad range of consumers of our services, in 2007 the RDNS Consumer Participation Advisory Committee was formed.

The committee's role is to advise on and support implementation of defined activities to incorporate consumer participation into RDNS; develop a communication strategy to support consumer participation implementation; advise on the integration of consumer participation practices into all strategic and operational activities; and evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of activities and identify future needs and improvements for consumer participation.

The RDNS Board of Directors endorsed the Consumer Participation Action Plan in 2007, which subsequently led to the establishment of the Consumer Participation Advisory Committee (CPAC). The committee members represent a broad range of stakeholders both internally and externally. RDNS was pleased to welcome Judith Mulcahy from Carers Victoria as the peak body representative for consumers. Her opinion and assistance will be very valuable as we implement different consumer participation activities that will actively contribute to the improvement of RDNS' service delivery.

Work undertaken by CPAC includes development of Terms of Reference; development of a Consumer Participation policy; development of a draft Consumer Participation Framework; development of Performance Indicators; and alignment with the Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program (EQulP) of the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.

The committee will continue to strengthen partnerships with consumers in recognition of the importance of their involvement in healthcare in 2008.

Demand for RDNS hits all time high

Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) has made more nursing visits to Melburnians in their homes than at any other time since the organisation began. As our 2007 Annual Report shows, the organisation made 1,572,558 visits to clients during the 2006-07 financial year. ('Visits' includes face-to-face visits and 'client-related contacts', that is, liaison with other health professionals on behalf of RDNS clients).

The figure represents an increase of over 5% on the previous year and is the largest number of client visits conducted in a single year since RDNS was established in 1885. Since 2004, the number of visits made by RDNS has increased by 19%.

Over 32,500 clients benefited from home-based nursing throughout the 06-07 period, with 538,445 hours of care provided by RDNS' 1,262 staff.

CEO Dan Romanis says that the increase is confirmation that people are now more reliant on community healthcare, such as home nursing, than ever before. "These figures are consistent with what we have been seeing for a number of years," he says.

"We have known for a long time that the implications of an ageing population in terms of healthcare cannot be understated and these figures simply confirm the changing healthcare needs of our society."

"RDNS has always played a vital role in the community but it's pretty clear when we are delivering well over 1.5 million visits to tens of thousands of people each year that the need for our service is becoming even more acute," Dan says.

"As we enter into a new year in which the delivery of effective healthcare will once again be a major challenge for governments and healthcare providers, there can be no doubt that demand will continue to rise for our services and others like ours."

Dan Romanis points to shorter hospital stays, increases in day surgery procedures, improvements in technology and greater complexity of medical conditions as reasons for the increase in care.

"But perhaps the most important point to acknowledge is that people want to receive healthcare at home as much as possible. At home, people are happier, healthier, more in control and more independent. This is what RDNS helps them achieve," he says.

Executives on the move

In October 2007, Mark Smith, General Manager of the RDNS Helen Macpherson Smith Institute of Community Health, took up a 12 month position as General Manager - External Relations. Over the coming year, Mark will assist CEO Dan Romanis in managing strategic external relations, establishing new alliances, partnerships and relationships that will strengthen RDNS' position as the leading provider of home nursing and healthcare services in Victoria and further develop RDNS' position as a key opinion leader in home healthcare.

As a result of Mark taking up this new role, Dr Lisa Donohue was appointed Acting General Manager of the RDNS Helen Macpherson Smith Institute of Community Health. Lisa has worked in a variety of clinical positions including Accident and Emergency, Maternal and Child Health, Midwifery, Women's Health, Community Health and Disaster Management. Lisa's background covers both nursing leadership and management roles and academic affiliations. Her most recent appointment was as Manager, Nursing and Midwifery Education with Western

Health and she has held Lecturer and Research Fellow positions with the University of Melbourne and LaTrobe University.

Also joining the Executive Team is Anthony Boffa, who has been appointed as General Manager - Finance and Assets. Anthony began in his new role in November 2007 and joins us from Interact Australia where he was General Manager, Corporate Services. His background includes both commercial and not-for-profit sector experience, having held roles with Orix Lease Management, STA Travel and National Bus Company.



Mark Smith



Lisa Donohue



Anthony Boffa





Honouring our past, building our future

In late October 2007, the RDNS Annual Community Meeting was held. The meeting saw a variety of activities, presentations and speakers, including an entertaining keynote speech from Beth Wilson, Victorian Health Services Commissioner. In his speech, CEO Dan Romanis officially launched the 2007 Annual Report and emphasised the major achievements of RDNS over the 2006-07 financial year. He also strongly indicated that on-going change is necessary for progress. The following is a summary of his speech.

"I always appreciate this time of the year, as it gives me an opportunity to reflect on the trials, the challenges, the hurdles and most importantly the achievements of the previous twelve months.

One of the things that has kept me at RDNS for almost thirteen years is the fact that it is always changing. Certainly, it is true that at our core, our charge remains the same: to provide the most professional and most compassionate nursing and healthcare that we are able to the people of Greater Melbourne. That has been our mission since our inception in 1885 and I am immensely proud to be the CEO of an organisation that is universally recognised as having achieved its mission from day one.

Certainly, like all organisations, there are many things over the years that we have trialled; there are things that we could have done better;

but it is without question that we have consistently delivered on our promise to compassionately provide the highest standard of care to literally millions of people over the last 122 years.

But while this core has solidly remained, change has also been a mark of RDNS and, over the last decade particularly, more rapid and distinctive changes have been achieved within RDNS than at any other time: sometimes motivated by the changes that have been occurring in healthcare and in society in general, but also due to our own deliberate intention to evolve and progress. And the past twelve months have seen us achieve further progress.

As outlined in our 2006-2008 Strategic Plan, our focus has been and will continue to be on four key areas: our people; the quality of our clinical care; growth and diversity; and our efficiencies and performance. It is very important to underscore the reality that RDNS is a business like any other: we are held accountable by those we care for, by those we do business with, by those who fund us and purchase from us, and ultimately, by the community at large. And this is exactly as it should be.

Once upon a time it may be true that it was assumed that we would perpetually retain the support of funders, purchasers, clients and the general public simply by virtue of our name and reputation. No doubt, that reputation was well-earned but it is now our job to respond to the present

reality to ensure that we maintain our good name, further enhance our reputation and continue to deliver all that we promise to our stakeholders.

Things are different from the way they were ten years ago, five years ago and even last year. For that reason, we continually review our operations, our priorities and our strategies to ensure that we are responding to the needs of those we care for, those we are accountable to, those we do business with and on behalf of and indeed, those we employ.

I mentioned that one of the motivating factors for me at this great organisation is that change is always occurring, as it must. The last twelve months is evidence of that change and I have no doubt that time will confirm that the changes that we have introduced in 2007 will have been worthwhile and will have contributed to our continued progress."

If you have not received a 2007 RDNS Annual Report and would like to, please call Marketing and Planning on (03) 9536 5222 or download from www.rdns.com.au

Star performers shine

Another year, another round of outstanding RDNS staff performances. RDNS recognised the nominees and winners of our Star Performer Awards at the annual Staff Christmas Party in December 2007.

Now in its fourth year, the awards scheme encourages staff to recognise outstanding performance by their peers. The scheme celebrates exceptional staff efforts via four award categories: the Outstanding Clinical Outcome Award, the Beyond the Call of Duty Award, the Leadership Award, and the Star Performer Award. Winners receive cash prizes, a perpetual trophy and a framed certificate.

The Outstanding Clinical Outcome Award recognised Leanne Quach from our Springvale Centre for her key role in the 'Go For You Life Pre-Diabetes Project', which screened family and friends of RDNS' diabetic clients to determine their risk of developing the disease. Leanne liaised with staff and external sources to facilitate this important project and was recognised by her peers for her drive, determination and lateral thinking.

The Beyond the Call of Duty Award acknowledged Denman Lombard from Information Services for the outstanding role he played in establishing telephony and information infrastructure at our Customer Service Centre, new Berwick Centre and Head Office.

Denman demonstrated extended commitment throughout each project by making himself available on weekends and after hours to meet deadlines and assist staff.

The Leadership Award, newly introduced in 2007, acknowledged Cultural Liaison Coordinator Jaklina Michael for her leadership skills in coordinating initiatives for clients and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Jaklina consistently demonstrated leadership to achieve an impressive number of outcomes and was recognised by her peers for her ability to liaise with staff, clients and external sources to improve the services RDNS provides to these client groups.

The major award, the Star Performer Award, recognised two staff for their consistent and sustained performance in their areas of expertise. Carmel Brown from RDNS' Lionsville centre has been a loyal and dedicated palliative care practitioner with RDNS for 18 years.

Carmel possesses exceptional knowledge and experience in her field, and consistently brings support, diplomacy, communications skills and negotiating abilities to her role.

Laura Hyndman, a Health Aide at our Rosebud Centre, also received the Star Performer Award having been described by her peers as the "embodiment of all that is RDNS". She consistently receives glowing feedback from her clients and fellow staff and was recognised for her committed practice of holistic client care, her exceptional ability for understanding client needs and her dedication to on-going education and training.

We would like to congratulate all nominees and category winners for 2007. They are the embodiment of hard work, dedication and expertise in varied fields of practice and shining examples of what RDNS is all about.



Winners are grinners! From left to right: Dan Romanis, Carmel Brown, Laura Hyndman, Denman Lombard, Leanne Quach, Jaklina Michael