RDNS shakes hands with China

RDNS has signed a major joint venture agreement with China’s Zhongshan College to develop and operate an aged care facility in Jiangsu Province, north of Shanghai.

The Chair of the RDNS Board, Mr Paul Montgomery, and the President of Zhongshan College, Mr Chen Yi, formalised the partnership at a signing ceremony in Shanghai during the Australian Government’s largest ever trade mission.

Australian Minister for Trade and Investment, Mr Andrew Robb, who witnessed the deal’s signing, said the joint venture was testimony to the strong reputation both Australia and RDNS has for providing world-class aged care services.

“China is an ageing population and this will drive enormous growing demand for the types of services that RDNS delivers. This joint venture is an example of Australia leveraging our strengths,” Mr Robb said.

The Zhongshan aged care facility will include 1,500 integrated care places, a 400 bed hospital and links to the college’s education faculty.

RDNS will work with Zhongshan to develop, operate and manage the facility, which will include training, deployment and management of care staff – all with the aim of developing clinical care and support for the elderly.

Mr Montgomery, who led the 2013 healthcare contingent of the Victorian Government’s Trade Mission to China, said the joint venture contract would see both parties working together to establish a world class leading position in providing aged and healthcare in China.
“RDNS will use its knowledge, experience and expertise to inform the design of an integrated aged care facility on the Zhongshan College site as well as providing education and training to aged care workers,” Mr Montgomery said.

“Of particular importance will be the contribution of consulting services and management consulting services in aged care, healthcare, nursing, rehabilitation and training.”

Mr Montgomery said that it was particularly fitting that RDNS was establishing a relationship with Zhongshan, as Victoria had enjoyed a 34-year sister-state relationship with Jiangsu Province.

“This joint venture will allow both parties to share knowledge and ideas as we look to addressing the respective challenges associated with our ageing populations,” he said.

“Importantly, it will introduce quality care standards based on Australian best-practice into China, to the benefit of seniors, their families and the Jiangsu community,” Mr Montgomery said.

“The issue of ageing populations is a critical issue for all countries, especially in our region,” he said. “There are 200 million people over the age of 60 in China and this number is expected to increase to 440 million by 2050.

“Here in Australia, multiple factors are combining to increase the number of people aged over 65. By 2028, for the first time in Australia’s history, there will be more people aged over 60 than aged under 20.

“At RDNS, we are committed to sharing our expertise and capacity in developing and delivering high quality aged care and seniors living solutions through joint ventures such as this,” Mr Montgomery said.

“RDNS trial bridges a CALD dementia gap

A new RDNS nurse-led dementia trial to support people at risk of slipping through the health system because of language or cultural differences is underway across Melbourne.

“Too many people with dementia are tending to fall through the cracks simply because their first language is not English or because their cultural background – for whatever reason – is seen to be different,” said Dr Di Goeman, lead investigator of the trial.

Dr Goeman, an RDNS Institute senior researcher, said the key to the trial has been the recent appointment of an RDNS Specialist Dementia Nurse, Jordan King, to bridge a gap that is separating the current health system from people with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

“Sometimes we take it for granted that people with dementia will be diagnosed by a medical professional and then some form of treatment and care will commence. In reality it is not that simple, especially with people from CALD backgrounds.

“We are not only talking about the person with cognitive impairment – we are talking about their families and carers as well,” Dr Goeman said.

“The specialist dementia nurse, with unique skills in in-home screening, advocacy and support, is able to intervene, work with families, offer advice and put into place a raft of assistance that they may not have known was available.”

Dr Goeman said the nurse was already proving to be a “crucial linchpin”, especially in areas such as:

• Working with the family doctor to establish a primary diagnosis;

• Providing emotional support to clients and families;

• Assisting with tailored prompt cards for showering, shaving and other day-to-day activities;

• Referrals to Alzheimer’s Australia (Victoria) for education and counselling; and

• ACAS referrals.

The pilot program – Dementia Care in the Community – Access for CALD Communities Project – is funded by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation.

For further information, contact Jordan King, Specialist Dementia Nurse jking@rdns.com.au or Dr Di Goeman Tel: 03 9536 5318 or dgoeman@rdns.com.au
Nurse Zoe Sabri put icing on the RDNS cake for this year’s International Nurses Day by winning the Outstanding Graduate award at the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards in Sydney.

Based at RDNS Springvale, one of Melbourne’s most culturally diverse communities, Ms Sabri was recognised for her sensitivity and work in assisting elderly clients to live at home for as long as possible.

The Outstanding Graduate Award recognises a nurse or midwife who has provided exceptional patient care, enhanced quality care processes and improved their own skills while demonstrating their value as a team member throughout their graduate nursing year.

Client Services Manager at RDNS Springvale Paul Ryan said, “Zoe is wise beyond her years. She has a real knack for developing relationships with her elderly patients and their families.”

“What a wonderful way to commemorate International Nurses Day – Florence Nightingale’s birthday,” he said. “Zoe has every reason to be very proud – and I think Florence would be too.”

Zoe’s award came hard on the heels of RDNS wins, for the second consecutive year, at the prestigious Asia Eldercare Innovation awards in Singapore: RDNS won the Best Staff Capability Development Program category for its Manager’s Toolkit, a major program initiated to equip managers to lead organisational change.

RDNS was also awarded two finalist trophies which included recognition of its Skin Awareness Program, a major research activity being undertaken by the RDNS Institute.

The awards were presented at a special international dinner at the Ageing Asia Investment Forum in Singapore. (Last year RDNS won the Outstanding ‘ICT’ Innovation award for its telehealth project and also picked up the finalist trophy for the RDNS Leg Ulcer Prevention Program).

This year’s winning program – the Manager’s Toolkit – uses five identified competence areas, allowing RDNS managers to systematically lead staff and manage processes in a cultural change environment. The program – aligned to Health Workforce Australia’s LEADS framework and introduced to RDNS by Chief Executive Officer Adjunct Professor Stephen Muggleton – is run across the organisation bi-monthly.

Mr Muggleton began using the LEADS framework after studying the program at Canada’s Royal Roads University with its founder Dr Graham Dickinson seven years ago.

“I was impressed by the way it captures elements like stakeholder engagement, system design and self management that are missing from so many other clinical and management programs,” Mr Muggleton said.

“We’ve then added different modules or ‘tools’ that are now essential in an environment of rapid change and stress. Examples include modules on resilience, emotional intelligence, effective change management and crucial conversations,” he said.

The program is part of the leadership strategy that has steered RDNS towards rapid growth and strategic diversification over the past three years.

– RDNS Institute director Dr Susan Koch was a special guest on Singapore radio during the Ageing Asia Investment Forum. See story: Page 5.
RDNS – traditionally known as the industry leader in mobile technology – is on the move with a new MCD rollout for its staff, remaining one of the principal pacesetters in embedding new technology into health and home care.

The new Lenovo ThinkPad Helix convertible ultrabook, replaces the traditional tablet which has been used for the past three years.

The mobile computing device (MCD) was chosen for its convertible form factor which allows the screen to be detached from the keyboard base so that it operates independently as a tablet – much like an iPad...but with full Windows functionality which the majority of clinical applications require.

The new MCDs are lighter, have improved battery life, better connectivity and have won the praise of nurses and support workers who are using them across the organisation.

“Ease of use and integrity of the hardware is crucial to our organisation,” said RDNS project manager Owen Smith. “We are in the era now when patient data needs to be uploaded in a nanosecond whilst in a client’s home. “The importance of privacy and security of the client’s care information is paramount. It’s all about accurate and timely access to information on which clinical decision-making is critically dependent. “This greatly enhances our ability to provide quality of care for which we are known. “Our technology mantra has to be best available, simply because constant and continual improvement underpins our clinical care.”

The decision to move to the new MCD was prompted by RDNS’ central philosophy of client care and also the need to respond to emerging changes in the health sector, particularly Consumer Directed Care (CDC).

“From a technology viewpoint, we are only limited by the availability of a mobile network – for example 3G and 4G technologies,” Mr Smith said. “The new devices have brought a significant improvement in connectivity – especially at the edge of the network or in known black spot areas.

“We are working towards delivering our clinical systems on any platform – for example Android, Apple, Chrome and so on. This allows the flexibility to respond to the fast-changing world of technology.”

Mr Smith said there were many benefits to clients and staff.

“Our nurses and support staff will make nearly 2.5 million visits to clients this year,” he said. “When you consider the amount of patient information that needs to be collected and collated, we are talking about enormous amounts of data...to that end RDNS operates a data warehouse.

“Therefore we are investing heavily in technology which will allow us to leverage and utilise that data warehouse to achieve improved outcomes for our clients. “Excellence in technology is directly proportional to timely clinical decision-making – and importantly the client or patient can have the peace of mind that his or her data is constantly up-to-date on the system.”
RDNS on the air in Singapore

RDNS Institute Director Dr Susan Koch was a special guest recently on MediaCorp’s 938LIVE – Singapore’s only English news-talk station. Hosted by Michelle Martin, Dr Koch discussed the challenges of dementia, RDNS Institute’s nurse-led research projects, RDNS telehealth activities, district nursing, issues associated with ageing populations and her role as chair of the Australian Government’s Minister’s Dementia Advisory Group.

Dr Koch was in Singapore to lead a workshop on dementia at the annual international Ageing Asia Investment Forum (AAIF).

This year, the theme of the forum was ‘Future of Ageing in Asia Pacific: Enabling Ageing-in-Place’.

It attracted delegates from more than 20 countries who are interested in investment and partnership opportunities in Asia Pacific’s US$3 Trillion ageing market.

The event showcased the world’s most innovative ageing operational models and fostered discussion on how the region can create ageing friendly healthcare infrastructure systems in its communities.

RDNS also presented a paper at the forum on RDNS telehealth trials which have been underway in Australia for the past 18 months.
Looking after Bert and his mates who looked after us in the horrors of war

Bert Stobart smiled, turned to RDNS Case Manager Megan Spencer and, just for a moment, seemed to be lost in a swirl of poignant memories.

“You know,” the former tail gunner said eventually, the cheeky grin broadening, “I think it was the only time I copped any sort of motion sickness. I bailed out of the Lancaster, the parachute opened and I swayed from left to right for a long time.

“But it was OK,” he said matter-of-factly. “I landed in a field, the Germans captured me and that was that, I guess.”

It was an evening of memories and just four days before his 93rd birthday, when RDNS took Mr Stobart to the Shrine of Remembrance for a pre-ANZAC Day quiet moment. He stared into the Eternal Flame for a minute or two as he remembered his mates who did not make it home.

For more than half-an-hour Megan and Mr Stobart linked arms while the decorated war hero reflected on the time he was a 22-year-old RAAF pilot warrant officer, attached to Bomber Command during World War II, flying sorties over Europe and dropping bombs on strategic German positions. Silently, he also remembered Stalag Luft IV-B, just outside Mühlberg. One of the largest POW camps in Germany, this bleak place became his home for 18 months.

Today Mr Stobart is a proud member of the exclusive Caterpillar Club, evidenced by his distinctive tie pin. The name refers to the silk threads that made the original parachutes, recognising the debt owed to the silk worm. “Life depends on a silken thread” is the club’s motto.

After the war Mr Stobart married Noel, his sweetheart from high school days in the 30s and joined a fledgling airline that was to become known as TAA. He remained there in management until he retired at 65, enjoying an active family life and being second in command to Bruce Ruxton as deputy national president of the RSL. He was president of the Elwood (Melbourne) branch of the RSL and was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 1988 for service to the welfare of veterans and to community welfare.

Today Mr Stobart receives an RDNS Home Care Package funded by the Commonwealth Government, allowing him to stay at home – and taking the pressure off his main care support, daughter Pam who is a full time teacher in country Victoria. Noel is in residential aged care. RDNS takes him to visit her most days of the week.

In the case management role, Megan (who is also an occupational
therapist) facilitates the provision of various types of supports to enable Bert to remain happily at home. These often include regular visits by care workers and the case manager, home care, transport to his medical appointments if required, transport to see Noel, carer support and supervision and organisation of meals.

Mr Stobart is determined to remain in the home that he and his family have lived in for 65 years. He admits he probably could not do this without RDNS support – and supporting Mr Stobart is something that Megan regards as a privilege.

“It is often very humbling and heart-warming to hear the life experiences of some of the people we work with, such as those who have risked their lives during war times, those who struggle with chronic health conditions and those who have very poor support living in their home and community,” said Megan.

“Mr Stobart’s family have a great understanding and respect for their father and his wishes to remain at home, despite his declining memory and age. His family do not live close by, are unable to visit as often as they would like or at short notice and even with these challenges they have respected Mr Stobart’s wishes.

So Bert remains happily living at home alone with the support we provide.

“Actually witnessing this respect and love for their father is absolutely heart-warming and inspirational.

“It’s a joy to be able to make a difference to someone’s life,” said Megan.

As well as providing aged care for more than 40,000 clients every year, RDNS supports more than 6,500 veterans around Australia through its many programs. Mr Stobart is one of the many returned servicemen who receive RDNS services to enable them to remain at home.

RDNS Home Care Packages are an allocation of money provided by the government enabling older Australians to receive support services and remain at home for as long as possible.

These packages are tailored to meet individual needs. The services available through HomeCare Packages are broad and vary significantly from person to person. The services may include – but are not limited to – services such as personal care, support services like cleaning, assistance with laundry, transport, home maintenance, meal preparation, accessing community and carer support services.

Read more about the RDNS Packaged Care Program on page 11.
New partnership: spotlight on skin

RDNS has established a partnership with Trajan Scientific and Medical (Trajan) for a new and important skin health project.

Funded by Trajan, the Council of the Ageing (COTA) and RDNS are collaborating to develop a volunteer peer education program: the Skin Health Toolkit.

The toolkit is designed to highlight the importance of skin care and recognising danger signs as people age.

Key evidence based messages will be used to educate community members on the topic of skin health in a low-technology, highly interactive way.

The Skin Health Toolkit will enable peer educators to aid adult interactive learning by using flash cards and take-home reminder pamphlets to reinforce key messages.

In line with RDNS’ commitment to improving the accessibility of healthcare for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, five different cultural communities will be among those to receive access to the Skin Health Toolkit when it is distributed to centres around Victoria.

In May a special CALD community consultation on the skin project was held at Trajan’s Ringwood offices to brief representatives from the Australian Greek Welfare Society, the Chinese Community Social Services Centre, the Australian Vietnamese Women’s Association and Co.As.It.

RDNS Institute Senior Research Fellow Dr Rajna Ogrin (who presented at this special forum along with RDNS Diversity Manager Jaklina Michael and RDNS Diversity Coordinator Lawrence Walsh) said skin health was a particularly important area of healthcare.

“We’re grateful for Trajan’s funding to implement this project. Our research team is progressing well, gathering input from expert clinicians and peer educators to help shape the Skin Health Toolkit,” Dr Ogrin said.

Trajan’s CEO Stephen Tomisich said that with a diverse workforce around the world, Trajan was eager to support the project.

“This project is a great fit for Trajan as it involves RDNS, COTA and volunteers to improve skin healthcare in the wider community,” Mr Tomisich said.

Trajan Scientific and Medical is an Australian-owned company specialising in pathology supplies and the manufacturing of high-precision complex components used in analytical science and for diagnostic applications.

www.trajanscimed.com

Empowering with a workshop of knowledge

For those caring for someone with continence issues and dementia, or living with those conditions, it is often a challenge to fully understand the support services or information sources that are accessible or what kind of financial support they may be eligible for.

Funding by the Continence Foundation of Australia enabled RDNS to hold a continence and dementia workshop in June for people with continence issues and dementia or those caring for a person with continence issues and dementia.

‘Continence and Dementia: a community workshop’ was held at RDNS Education and Learning Centre in St Kilda with the aim of increasing knowledge and awareness of community services and information available to those who need it.

RDNS nurses specialising in the fields of continence and dementia care ran three educational sessions throughout the day.

Topics included: continence issues, caring for a person with incontinence and what products and funding are available to help make continence manageable at home.

Attendees also discussed their requirements and support options with representatives from Alzheimer’s Australia Vic and Carers Victoria.
When Mrs Eileen Naylor’s husband died of cancer nearly two years ago, she was determined to do something to recognise the palliative care “angels on wheels” who looked after him at their Rye home.

“These nurses were simply fabulous,” said Mrs Naylor. “In the four months that Martin had after being discharged from hospital, they could not have done enough for him – everything from medicine management and being the contact point with the GP through to organising all the equipment, like pressure mattresses at our home.

“They were there 24/7 – even in the middle of the night we received instant phone advice from the RDNS team – and this was followed up immediately with a visit the next morning.

“I simply could not have done it without them.”

When Mrs Naylor, who is a Director and member of the sponsorship committee of the Rye, Dromana and recently opened Rosebud Community Bank branches of the Bendigo Bank heard that the Rosebud RDNS site needed extra cars for their rounds, she obtained unanimous Board approval to approach RDNS with a proposal for the bank’s support.

She introduced into the discussions senior branch manager Gary Sanford who worked out a special lease sponsorship which has resulted in four new Toyota Corollas for the RDNS Rosebud nurses.

“This is the best possible tribute to Martin,” said Mrs Naylor. “He would be beaming with pride now.”

The cars will be based at the RDNS Rosebud site, covering areas from Olivers Hill in Frankston South through Mount Eliza, Mornington and Dromana to Portsea, and the Westernport region from Somerville to Flinders.

The Customer Service Manager for RDNS Rosebud, Ms Glenda Valentine, said the arrival of the four cars was “particularly valued by the nurses and support staff because they are delivering client care in such a broad geographical area”.

“This gesture by the bank just underscores the community spirit that we have here on the Peninsula,” Ms Valentine said. “We are just so grateful to everyone who has worked together to make this happen – especially Eileen and Gary.

“The people who will reap the benefits are the clients we care for – those in palliative care, people needing acute care at home after hospital stays and, of course, the elderly who depend on our district nursing visits.”

Mr Sanford said he was delighted to have had the opportunity to work with one of Australia’s most revered healthcare organisations.

“There is a kind of synergy with this relationship,” Mr Sanford said. “We both take enormous pride in helping to make people’s lives better – RDNS in the home health arena and the Bendigo Bank in the community financial management area.

“Although RDNS has a national and international reach, it remains a not-for-profit and a registered charity. It gives me absolute pleasure to think that we can respond in the best traditions of good corporate citizenship,” Mr Sanford said.

The complementary partnership continues to develop, with Seddon Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank now sponsoring two new cars for RDNS Altona to operate in the Seddon area.

RDNS has 16 sites in Melbourne. It is Australia’s oldest home nursing and aged care provider. It is arguably the country’s most innovative and progressive with services across the continent and in New Zealand, a joint venture in China, a world-class health call centre, a collaborative research institute and a suite of tailored education and consultancy services.

Last year RDNS Rosebud nurses travelled more than half a million kilometres to make 73,838 home visits. Across the organisation RDNS nurses drove 10 million kilometres making 2.2 million client visits.
The RDNS Homeless Persons’ Program (HPP) – a dedicated service where specialist community nurses provide healthcare and support to people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness throughout Melbourne – has started a three-year trial for the Frankston region.

The Frankston service will be modelled on the well-established RDNS HPP service response where RDNS HPP nurses take their expert care and support daily to precisely where it is needed – the streets, squats and rooming houses of Melbourne. This now includes Frankston.

The nurses provide a range of services including first aid, clinical care, counselling, health education and promotion, and active support to homeless people.

The manager of the RDNS Homeless Persons’ Program, Theresa Swanborough, OAM, said community demographics had shifted and the number of people in outlying suburbs experiencing homelessness had grown dramatically in recent years, with the municipality of Frankston being of particular concern.

“RDNS HPP does not see itself as a stand-alone response and is committed to working in collaboration with existing services in Frankston – collectively I believe we can make a difference to the lives of people, who often find themselves on the fringe.”

“We felt it was vitally important to bring our model of service to Frankston,” Ms Swanborough said.

“Without the significant support of Gandel Philanthropy, which has provided funding to enable the employment of a community health nurse for three years, as well as funding to undertake detailed evaluation, RDNS HPP would not have had the resources to respond to the very real needs of marginalised people in Frankston. We are also grateful to John T Reid Charitable Trusts which has provided funding for a car, enabling the service to be mobile so nurses can reach out to homeless and at-risk people exactly where they live and gather.”

The new RDNS HPP office is located at the not-for-profit charity, City Life, which has been providing assistance for people in need for more than 25 years.

Vedran Drakulic, CEO of Gandel Philanthropy said: “The RDNS research showed that there was prevalence of people ‘sleeping rough’ and intergenerational homelessness in Frankston, which was further exacerbated by acute lack of affordable accommodation. This project appealed to the Board of Gandel Philanthropy exactly because it was evidence-based, and also because it was proposing to deliver a well-established and validated model of care, tailored to the specific needs of people at risk in Frankston.”

The new service was marked by a special barbecue event at City Life.
Bert Stobart’s story in the centre pages of this issue of Inside is just one of thousands of examples of how RDNS supports clients under the Packaged Care Program. This is how the program works:

RDNS receives funding from the Commonwealth Government as an Approved Provider to provide support and services to clients receiving a Home Care Package (HCP). RDNS currently has 140 HCPs in Melbourne and the NSW Illawarra region.

Clients are eligible for an HCP after assessment from an Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) team and referral to an Approved Provider. The RDNS Packaged Care Program Case Manager assists the client to identify goals and services that will support them and maximise their quality of life whilst helping them to stay at home as independently as possible, for as long as possible.

The Commonwealth Government is currently preparing for the 2014 ACAR (Aged Care Approval Round) which provides Approved Providers with the opportunity to seek further funding for more HCPs to support people in their communities.

HomeCare Packages are offered to clients on a Consumer Directed Care (CDC) basis. This means clients can identify their wishes, goals and needs as well as preferences for the services that they want.

CDC is a way of delivering services that allow consumers to have greater control over their own lives by allowing them to make choices about the types of care and services they access and the delivery of those services, including who will deliver the services and when.

CDC is not a type of package by itself. In the Home Care Packages Program, CDC is an approach to providing home care services which provides greater flexibility and choice to consumers.

With an HCP delivered under Consumer Directed Care:

- The consumer is encouraged to identify goals which could include independence, wellness and re-ablement. The goals will form the basis of the consumer’s care plan, along with the consumer’s assessed care needs.

- The consumer can decide the level of involvement they wish to have in managing their package. This could range from involvement in all aspects of the package, including co-ordination of care and services, to a less active role in decision-making and management of the package.

- The consumer is able to exercise choice in the way that services are offered and delivered. The consumer will receive an individualised budget and a monthly statement of income and expenditure to provide transparency about what funding is available under the package and how the funds are being spent.

- There will be ongoing monitoring and review, and a formal re-assessment by the home care provider to ensure that the package continues to be appropriate for the consumer.

– Deidre McGill
Program Manager, Packaged Care

Packaged Care Program manager Deidre McGill, left, at a case managers’ briefing session.
RDNS has recently welcomed 23 Graduate Registered and Enrolled Nurses.

The Graduate RN and EN – Transition to Practice program focuses on supporting new graduates to transition from student into professional nursing practice, with the support and advice of a preceptor until they are ready to work independently and autonomously.

Onboarding and Support Specialist at RDNS’ Education and Learning Centre, Van Hung, coordinates both programs to ensure the graduate nurses’ role is focused on patient safety and outcomes.

“Emphasis is on the importance of teamwork, clinical leadership and structuring study days to target critical thinking and judgment,” Ms Hung said. “We are delighted with the way they have all settled in at their various sites. “They are now three months into their programs and they are beginning to become independent in their roles.”