Tributes have poured for Elizabeth Martin, a midwife who has retired after 48 years of service delivering and caring for babies at the Birthing Unit of Canterbury Hospital.

In recognition of her service, a morning tea was held with the Birthing Unit — a team akin to family. While an emotional day, it was also one to celebrate all that Liz has given to the hospital and the community, and her tremendous contribution and achievements over the years.

The Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services at Canterbury Hospital, Claire Harris, has estimated that during her career, Liz delivered about 10,000 babies — even delivering the babies of babies she once brought into the world.

"Your reputation is exemplary, your colleagues and peers spoke of you, not only with deep affection, but also with enormous respect for your knowledge, your patience as both a teacher and a clinician," Ms Harris said.

"You are in a word, extraordinary, and you will be profoundly missed." Continue story on page 7…
Message from the Chief Executive

It has been another very busy and interesting month in Sydney Local Health District.

Firstly, it was a pleasure to see Concord Hospital’s Fracture Liaison Service awarded the 2012 Premier’s Award for public service in the category of Delivering Quality Customer Service, after winning an award at the NSW Ministry of Health Power of Innovation Symposium.

The service, run by Professor Markus Seibel, is a cost effective and innovative model of care aimed at reducing refractures for patients with osteoporosis and I commend the team for this prestigious honour.

In a bid to increase the number of staff signed up for salary packaging, the District is embarking on its own episode of Donald Trump’s The Apprentice, where our graduate management trainees will be pitted against each other to increase the numbers of those signed up.

The two teams, Hannah Barrington and Debbie Masters (District, RPA, Balmain and Sydney Dental Hospital) versus Hannah Storey and Simon Ferguson (Canterbury, Concord, Mental Health and Community Health) have been asked to pull out all stops to get more staff signed up and will be assessed on their project plan, communications strategy, budgeting ability, working relationships and outcome.

Salary packaging is a simple way to reduce your taxable income, putting more cash in your pocket – a particular bonus before Christmas. The meal entertainment scheme also allows staff to save money while enjoying a meal with family or friends.

Salary packaging works by packaging pre-tax income against ‘non-cash benefits’. Staff can choose up to five benefits such as a home mortgage, personal loan, rent payments, HECS fees, utility fees, private health insurance or aged care expenses. Staff can package up to $9,094 and could potentially receive up to $100 extra in their take home pay each fortnight.

The after-tax savings that employees make are shared with Sydney Local Health District on a 50/50 basis, benefitting our hospitals and health care facilities. With more staff involved in both salary packaging and the meal entertainment scheme, we can achieve more than $3 million to go towards patient care.

Currently, about 55 per cent of staff have signed up so I urge you to get behind the teams representing your facilities and help them sign up as many staff as possible to this worthwhile scheme.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for your hard work and dedication throughout 2012. It has been a busy and fruitful year. I wish you all a very merry and safe Christmas, and I look forward to an exciting 2013.

Message from the Chair, District Board

I would like to thank all staff involved in the complex introduction of activity based funding across the District. It has been an exciting new era for health reform in NSW and one that has been embraced across the District.

I am very pleased that Sydney Local Health District has been chosen as the state model and will be featured in the media to show the people of NSW both its complexities and effectiveness. There is no doubt that it will help the District sustain excellence and provide an important budgeting tool to take us into the future.

Senior staff from the District and the Ministry of Health held a community consultation with the Redfern community last month in relation to the proposed installation of an automatic syringe dispensing machine at the Redfern Health Centre.

The availability and use of illicit drugs in the Redfern community continues to pose significant public health risks in respect to HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and non-fatal opioid overdoses. Access to 24-hour sterile injecting equipment is a NSW Health strategy to reduce the spread of blood borne viruses among injecting drug users. The District has proposed that the machine be available outside of business hours. Those requiring syringes during business hours will still need to consult with staff at the centre, ensuring contact between users and health workers.

As a result of the consultation meeting, the District will form a working party of staff, key stakeholders and members of the community to develop a management plan that will aim to maximise the positive health impacts while minimising the negative impacts of the automatic dispensing machine upon the local community.

The Board is looking forward to the District’s Annual General Meeting, to be held on December 6 at the Centre for Education and Workforce Development at Rozelle. Guests are invited to arrive at 4.30pm to meet the board members before the meeting starts at 5.30pm.

The NSW Minister for Health will also be in attendance and I encourage as many staff as possible to join us to celebrate the people of our District and play a role in our future endeavours.

May I wish you all a very merry Christmas and extend my gratitude for your hard work during 2012. As we all know, it is the highly-trained, dedicated and friendly staff of Sydney Local Health District that make it such a wonderful place to work.
A simple form to put more pay in your pocket

By simply filing out a form staff can unlock hundreds of dollars in take-home pay and it doesn’t cost a thing.

Staff are encouraged to sign up to the Sydney Local Health District’s salary packaging scheme and meal entertainment. Salary packaging is a simple way for you to reduce income tax and increase spending power. That means more cash in your pocket. Meal entertainment allows you to save money while enjoying a meal out with your family or friends.

The after-tax savings that employees make are shared with the SLHD on a 50/50 basis. About 55 per cent of staff have signed up. With more staff involved in both salary packaging and meal entertainment the SLHD could unlock over $3 million. This would go a long way for our staff, facilities and our patients.

Salary packaging works by packaging pre-tax income against ‘non-cash benefits’. Staff can choose up to five benefits such as your home mortgage, personal loan, rent payments, HECS fees, utility fees, private health insurance or aged care expenses. Staff can package up to $9,094 and could potentially receive up to $100 extra in take home pay a fortnight.

With nothing to lose and more money to make for you and for our District – what are you waiting for?

Salary packaging is available to permanent full-time and part-time employees and those under grants or funds for periods in excess of 3 months. It is recommended that you meet with a financial adviser to design a package that takes account of your individual personal and financial needs.


For more information, please contact the salary packaging hotline (02) 9767 5081 or email slhd.salaryPackaging@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

The RPA Named Wards

Six magnificent metal plaques were recently hung in the atrium at the Level 3 Gloucester House entrance. These plaques, as well as plaster work, tiles and stained-glass windows, were saved 30 years ago by heritage-minded individuals demolition of C and D Blocks in the 1980s.

Hospital funding in the 19th and early 20th centuries was ad-hoc. These Named Wards plaques were erected in honour of RPA’s most munificent benefactors. By 1918, with the growth of the hospital, it was found that the Named Wards and the system of distinguishing them was often bewildering. They were renamed by location and floor. However, the plaques remained.

Mary Roberts, George Atherden, Thomas Walker, George Frederick Todman, John Thomas Neale and William Garrard Robinson are just names to most of us now, but behind every name on these plaques there is a story, and this small exhibition brings to life some of them.

Submission by Dr Vanessa Witton, Research Assistant, RPA Museum and Archives.

The Apprentice – Sydney Local Health District style

To spread the message the SLHD’s four graduate trainees will embark on an ‘Apprentice’ style challenge. With a budget of $3,000 each and a timeframe of three weeks, the two teams will pull out all the stops to recruit staff to sign-up to the scheme. Keep a look out for team challenges around your facility and please get involved.

Get behind your team: Debbie Masters and Hannah Barrington (District, RPA, Balmain and Sydney Dental Hospital) versus Hannah Storey and Simon Ferguson (Canterbury, Concord, Mental Health and Community Health)

The challenge: Get as many staff signed up to salary packaging in three weeks

Judging panel: Headed by our own Donald Trump – chief executive of Sydney Local Health District Dr Teresa Anderson with Mike Wallace, Richard McKinnon and Steven Carr. Don’t worry no one will actually be fired.

Missenden Mental Health Unit

Construction of the Missenden Mental Health Unit has begun, with early works contractors, ADCO, taking possession of the site on 1 November.

Early works started on 8 November – including the demolition of building 11, services diversion and in ground excavation.

The relocation and upgrade of the unit is part of a $40 million agreement that sees NSW Health contribute $30 million towards the new building, including $5 million from the sale of the former Missenden Unit site to the University of Sydney. The University is also providing $10 million funding for seven research beds as part of the Brain and Mind Institute.
The Head of the Molecular Cardiology group at the Centenary Institute Professor Chris Semsarian and his team have been awarded two National Health and Medical Research Council grants.

With a national success rate of 17 per cent, gaining two NHMRC grants is testament of the calibre of the team and importance of their work.

One of the grants will look at the link between genetically-based sudden cardiac death and epilepsy; the other continues work on the genetic basis in families with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Professor Semsarian said the overarching goal with both research pieces was to discover new gene faults in cases of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and sudden death in epilepsy.

"Using the latest technology the team will look into all 23,000 genes, in the hope of making life changing discoveries for patients and families living with these conditions," Professor Semsarian said.

"We’re fortunate to have two clinics at our doorstep – the Genetic Heart Disease and Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy clinic at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Having direct access to patients and families through our clinics strengthened our bid and will no doubt result in major breakthroughs."

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy is the most common genetic heart disorder. In about 50 per cent of cases the gene abnormality is unknown, and tragically in some cases the first sign of disease is sudden death.

"Through our research, we aim to identify gene faults and translate this into strategies where we can identify risk, treat patients accordingly, and most importantly prevent sudden death," Professor Semsarian said.

The cause of sudden death in epilepsy remains a mystery, and yet is the most common cause of epilepsy-related death.

"We’re basing our research on the notion that there is a gene which controls both electrical rhythms of the brain and heart, to find a link between heart disease and epilepsy. By delving deeper we hope to learn much more about the condition."

"The team and I are about to embark on breakthrough and internationally leading research, which is also a fantastic example of collaboration between the University of Sydney, RPA and the Centenary Institute.

"Working together I look forward to what we might discover in helping patients and families coping with these conditions. I am hopeful that we will make a life changing and lasting impact – at home and for the global community," Professor Semsarian said.

Professor Semsarian was the recipient of the RPA Foundation Medal for Excellence in Medical Research in 2009, and received the 2012 RT Hall Prize for Research, the highest award given by the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand each year. Both awards recognised his outstanding research into the clinical and genetic basis of heart disease in the young.

The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital’s Timothy Wand and Dr Jodie Ingles have been recognised for the Rita and John Cornforth Medal for PhD achievement.

Dr Jodie Ingles of the Centenary Institute was given the prestigious award for her significant contribution to the field of genetic heart disease and to the community. A humble recipient, Dr Ingles said she was shocked to even be shortlisted, and couldn’t believe her ears when her name was announced as the winner.

With a background in genetic counselling, Dr Ingles’ PhD looked at the psychosocial and management challenges around genetic heart disease families. She is the driving force behind the Australian Genetic Heart Disease Registry – the first of its kind in the world, and was instrumental in the establishment of RPA’s Genetic Heart Disease Clinic with Professor Chris Semsarian.

Honours are no stranger to Dr Ingles, awarded a co-funded NHMRC/National Heart Foundation early career fellowship, the CSANZ Affiliates Prize for research into the cost effectiveness of genetic testing, and the University of Sydney’s Peter Bancroft Prize for a thesis which passed without amendment.

Passionate advocate for the mental health needs of patients nurse practitioner Timothy Wand was recognised as a finalist for the Medal for his research into an emergency department-based outpatient service for people with a range of mental health problems.

For over a decade, Timothy has been working at RPA’s Emergency Department. A highly regarded and much published researcher, his work has been integral to the development of new models of care and streamlined mental health service delivery in emergency departments.

Congratulations to Jodie and Timothy for their outstanding achievement.
Health Matters

Dr Andrew Browning an Australian gynaecologist and obstetrician behind the Barbara May Foundation has been in Sydney this month presenting his inspirational work and personally thanking staff for their contribution through the Workplace Giving Program.

Through the program, staff have already raised and donated more than $300,000 ($13,000 a month) to help the Barbara May Foundation build a fully equipped, 20-bed maternity hospital in the Afar region of Ethiopia.

Sydney Local Health District’s Customer Service and Operational Revenue Manager John O’Grady said it was fantastic to hear first-hand from Dr Browning about how our donations were directly helping the women and children of Afar.

The Sydney Local Health District’s Workplace Giving Program invites staff to make a tax deductible donation of $1 a week to support the Barbara May Foundation.

“We almost 22 per cent of staff across the District are signed up to the program, and we are deeply grateful for their contribution. We still have a way to go and I encourage all staff to sign-up online,” Mr O’Grady said.

To join the Workplace Giving Program go to: http://intranet.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/SSWAHS/WGP/default.html

The children’s wards at Royal Prince Alfred and Canterbury hospitals turned into a playground of face painting, craft activities and party games to celebrate the United Nations’ Universal Children’s Day for 2012. Staff and parents joined in the fun with RPA’s team dressing up as sea creatures and Canterbury’s as sporting heroes, helping bring cheer to children recovering from recent illness and surgery. The general manager of Canterbury Hospital, Ann Kelly, said Children’s Day was a great opportunity for children to display their talents, skills and achievements and simply celebrate the earlier years of childhood.

Salary packaging can put more pay in your pocket for Christmas and New Year

Interested?

Then contact the Salary Packaging Team to find out how.

We are available from 8am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

We are located at Concord but can come to you.

Nathalie Costa is available for one on one consultations or group bookings.

Put some money in your bank account today call 9161 5081 to speak to our friendly team.

Redfern needle syringe Automatic Dispensing Machine consultation

As part of an ongoing consultation process, Sydney Local Health District, together with NSW Health and Drug Health Services, hosted a community forum to discuss the installation of a needle syringe ADM at Redfern. About 60 members of the Redfern community attended, with presentations made by senior drug health specialists, NSW chief health officer Dr Kerry Chant, and the chief executive of SLHD, Dr Teresa Anderson, facilitating a question and answer session.

Some of the main community issues raised included the management of the ADM and its location, disposal of syringes and street sweeps, and the perception it would increase drug use and crime in the area. SLHD will continue to consult with the community and human service providers.

New parking price scale at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

New car parking prices will come into effect at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as of the 3rd of December 2012.

The new parking price scale will be used for maintenance of hospital facilities including the car park.

The price scale will increase slightly to $5 for less than an hour; $10 for less than 2 hours; $15 for less than 3 hours; $20 for less than 5 hours. $25 will be the maximum daily rate.

A weekly rate of $15 will still be available for long term visitors. This rate has not increased in several years.

These changes will not affect renal dialysis and radiation oncology patients.
Farewell to the social heart of Haematology

The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Institute of Haematology’s social butterfly Edna Yuen has retired after 37 years of service.

Edna started her career as a medical technologist and research assistant for Professor Kevin Rickard in 1975. Her early career was marked by an interest in human bone marrow cell separation techniques, cell culture and the human haemopoietic mast cell colony. In more recent years, Edna has been involved in molecular haematology testing for certain mutations (factor V Leiden and Prothrombin G2) which carry a hereditary risk of recurrent thrombosis.

Alongside her exploratory work, Edna has always been involved in the social life of the department. In August 2010 she organised a haematology City to Surf team – ‘The Haem Team.’ It was a great day by all accounts with everyone making it to the finish line.

The head of department haematology at RPA’s Institute of Haematology, Professor Douglas Joshua, said Edna would be greatly missed for her long service, hard work and social commitment to the department.

Construction progress

The building progress continues to power along with the concrete pouring for the superstructure now complete and the screen dismantling around the building construction is now being dismantled. Structural steel erection for the roof has commenced as the lifts are installed and the façade is up to Level 5. Visit www.lifehouserpa.org.au for more information.

Life-saving screening

Women aged between 50 and 69 are encouraged to visit a BreastScreen service to receive a free mammogram for the early detection of breast cancer.

The Director of Sydney Local Health District’s BreastScreen service, Genevieve Wallace, said it only took 20 minutes to offer peace of mind to women and their families by completing a screening mammogram.

“A mammogram is the best method for the early detection of breast cancer and the best time to treat breast cancer is when it is very small,” Ms Wallace said.

Breast cancer survivor Adele English can testify to its benefits. Following a mammogram at Liverpool’s BreastScreen service, Ms English was recalled to have a biopsy at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital which saved her life.

BreastScreen is a quality screening service that ensures two specially trained doctors independently examine each woman’s x-rays.

To make an appointment at one of BreastScreen’s convenient locations, including Camperdown and Croydon, call 13 20 50.
Opera Night at Rivendell celebrated its 10th year to the theme of ‘Opera to Broadway’ last month. The annual event was held over two nights.

The first included a sold out black-tie fine dining experience in the chapel at Rivendell. The second night was also a huge success drawing a crowd of about 2000. The extravaganza was a fundraiser for the Concord Cancer Centre. The Director of the Cancer Centre, Professor Phillip Beale, thanked everyone who attended for their generous support and donations.

“The money raised will go towards the new survivorship centre, ongoing research and clinical trials, and improving facilities on site,” Professor Beale said.

Known for her unwavering devotion and dedication – no task was ever too tiresome, no ask left unanswered. Even in her down time, Liz would knit clothing for orphaned children, or blankets for recovering mothers.

The chief executive of Sydney Local Health District, Dr Teresa Anderson, said Liz had been an absolute asset to the staff at Canterbury Hospital and local families, and it had been an honour to have her as part of our district for so long.

“On behalf of the Sydney Local Health District, I want to express my sincere personal appreciation for the care, dedication, professionalism and commitment Liz has shown over her career. She is a true example of world class midwifery, making a real difference to the lives of those she has touched,” Dr Anderson said.

“She had been a teacher and friend to those fortunate to work with her, and mothers and babies were always in the best of hands with Liz.

“Liz, on behalf of the hospital staff, the mothers, babies and families of Canterbury, thank you for your incredible commitment, and a job very well done,” Ms Harris said.

In her honour, the Elizabeth Martin Award for Excellence in Midwifery has been established and will be annually presented on International Midwives Day.

Liz’s farewell was also featured on Channel 9 and Channel 10 news.

Fond farewell to a treasured midwife
- continued from page 1

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In the spotlight

Jo Duflou, Chief Forensic Pathologist, Department of Forensic Medicine

The best thing about my job is… The variety – I can never tell what will happen on any specific day, and every day is still different for me after almost 25 years at the Department of Forensic Medicine.

A typical day at work for me involves… Is there such a thing? Any combination of an early morning meeting with the Coroner, performing autopsies, histology, teaching medical students, writing expert opinion reports, giving evidence in court, attending patient audit meetings, and administrative work.

When I’m not at work I like to… Relax and spend quality time with my family.

When I was a child I wanted to be… A doctor and an astronaut, combined.

A little-known fact about me is… I’m a rabid James Bond fan.

The last book I read was… Bad Science by Ben Goldacre, on the pervasiveness of quackery and pseudoscience in medicine.

My top three movies are… Pulp Fiction, The Fifth Element and Blade Runner.

If I had to describe myself in three words or less they would be… Driven, compassionate, optimist.

My colleagues would describe me as… Probably something unprintable!

If I won the lottery I would… Keep on working as before, but spend big when on a holiday.

It’s not fashionable but I love… Getting into my pyjamas when I get home.

I’m at my happiest when… Cooking an adventurous family meal on a Sunday evening (and not having it fail spectacularly and resorting to ordering take-away pizza).

My guilty pleasure is… Chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate.

I’d love to learn… To play a musical instrument like the saxophone, but I’m too considerate to my neighbours, and I almost certainly don’t have the patience.

The best advice I’ve ever been given is… “I don’t think you should migrate to Zimbabwe. Have you considered applying for a job in Australia instead?”

Awards abound for Concord Hospital

Congratulations to Concord Hospital – the recipient of two prestigious awards at the NSW Ministry of Health Power of Innovation Symposium.

The Fracture Liaison Service at Concord Hospital and the S.H.A.R.E burns peer support program were both honoured at the ceremony.

The Fracture Liaison Service received the award for developing a cost effective and innovative model of care which can now be implemented across NSW. The S.H.A.R.E burns peer support program was honoured for developing a formalised peer support program, championed by volunteers who are burn survivors.

The Fracture Liaison Service also won the 2012 Premier’s Awards for Public Service in the category of Delivering Quality Customer Service.

Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson congratulated both teams on their awards.

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These unique and innovative programs both deliver models of care that place patient care at the forefront of service delivery. Congratulations to Professor Seibel and the team and the SHARE Peer Support Volunteers at Concord Hospital for their hard work on these very worthy awards,” Dr Anderson said.