

## Newsletter June 2009

### Editorial

Two thousand and nine got off to a good start and the year has turned out to be unusually exciting!

For the first time the School here in Coffs Harbour has students from Years Three through Six. In January, 14 new year five students arrived and began studies in



Orientation January 19th 2009

medicine or surgery. In March six new year four students arrived. (Two of them had done their ILPs here and so were not new to the area or campus.) At the same time 12 year six students returned from their elective terms and set about finishing their Phase Three courses. Almost overlooked in the rush, a pair of ILP students started their projects.

On March 30 we held a very successful Learning Management Committee meeting during which we told all of those who attended what a good job the School was doing. We obviously were guilty of hubris for on the very next day the so-called one in one hundred years event occurred and the School building was extensively flooded causing us to shut up shop for a few days during which time workmen were required to strip carpets, remove cabinets and generally turn the place upside down. Fortunately, this devastation happened a few days before the Mid Session break

which gave us all time to plan the next few weeks. At the time of writing, no repairs have taken place and we are now getting used to working in a space that resembles a furniture warehouse complete with concrete floors and piles of junk. Builders and engineers have visited and estimates are awaited as to the likely cost of restoring the school to its former glory. Watch this space!

A total of thirty four students certainly keeps the place popping and on some days every room is occupied by eager students and their learned instructors. It is all very inspiring. The students seem to be pleased with the diet of material they are receiving.

### Staff News

**Dr Gillian Gould** has accepted a senior research fellowship and will step down from her position as Head of Campus on July 31st. Dr David Amies will then take over as acting head for the next few months.

**Dr Jay Ruthnam**, who has provided invaluable instruction in clinical skills, has decided to resign in order to spend more time in his practice. He will be missed.

**Dr Karen Chia and Dr Alison Secull** will be leaving us shortly to take maternity leave.

**Ms Mandy Hubbard**, who was on the staff last year, has given birth to a little boy.

**Dr Janet McLachlan** joined the staff on June 1st and will be looking after the Phase 3 general practice rotation when Dr John Kramer is away.

### Research News:

Dr Ned Abraham, Senior Lecturer, is the only Australian surgeon to be invited to the World Cancer Congress in Beijing, June 20th to 25th. He has been invited to

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lecture on, 'We don't need randomised trials to assess cancer surgical procedures'. It was this topic that formed the basis of his recently completed PH.D. thesis. Congratulations are in order.

**Dr Gillian Gould**, Head of Campus, presented a paper at the 10<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health conference in Cairns recently. She was awarded a research grant to continue her work on research into smoking cessation in Aboriginal communities. This grant will assist Aboriginal Medical Services in recruiting people to the "Give Up The Smokes" programme, run collaboratively by Galambila Aboriginal Medical Service, Mid North Coast Division of General Practice and the UNSW Rural Clinical School.



Dr Gillian Gould accepting her cheque

### Relay For Life:

On the weekend of 30-31 May 2009 a group of students, staff and family members represented the Coffs Harbour Campus in the Coffs Harbour Relay for Life.

Relay for Life is a major fund raiser for the Cancer Council of NSW and we have helped to contribute to this fundraising along with the other 92 teams that registered to take part in the Coffs Harbour leg of the relay. Although the weekend was very tiring the cause we were supporting

was well worth the aching feet and the lack of sleep.

To raise more funds the students ran a "health check" station for a gold coin donation. Halli, Dan, Justine, Jodie, Amanda, Jessie, Tenelle and Tom were inundated with people wanting their blood pressure taken and their blood sugar levels tested. Justine came across a 15 year old girl with a blood sugar level of 11.2. She spoke to the girl's mother and suggested that further tests were in order.

In between health checks and walking around the relay track Dan, Amanda, Halli and Jessie were able to get in some line dancing classes.

Gillian was able to talk to the CEO of the Cancer Council NSW and promote her "Give Up the Smokes" and Quit Café. Let's hope that this contact bears fruit.

Jodie Bowden left her sick bed to come along with much needed supplies of wine and dips. Jenine brought her dog Lily and more. Dr Jelliffe dropped in to offer support.

### Student Electives:

The elective term is a chance to spread the wings, dip the toes into other clinical pools and cast the bread upon the waters - excuse the mixed metaphors. JP Favero did all of that big time.

He spent some in Katherine NT and then went to New York, New York. It would be hard to conceive of two more different towns and harder still to find two locations further apart and still to be on the same planet.

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Katherine has a population of 10,000 and its hospital has sixty beds. Its principal patient load comes from the local indigenous population.

The Hospital for Special Surgery in NYC overlooking the East River has three times as many beds as Katherine's but it operates on a yearly budget of half a billion \$US. It carries out many orthopaedic procedures for which it has a world wide reputation. JP sums up his elective thus, "The diversity the placements and broader experience beyond the hospital walls ensured the elective was a hugely enriching and memorable time. It will continue to provide motivation and perspective for the final year of university study." (That's putting it mildly. Ed)



JP in Central Park, NY, NY  
Above: the OR at Katherine

## Dermatology Weekend

Dr Liz Intong managed to dodge the second lot of floods and spend the weekend of May 22 & 23 at the School to provide some much needed instruction on skin diseases. There was a very good turn out even though the sessions went over a weekend! We had several patients for her to teach on as well. Many thanks to them and Doctors Ruthnam, Beck and Ladhani.



Dr Liz Intong and the attendees

**Finally**, exams are coming up and the pre-test temperature is rising. 2009 marks the first time that final exams for the new curriculum will be held. We shall be running part of the tests here. Let's all wish our 6th year candidates the very best of luck. They are all looking forward to clearing this last hurdle before they can take up practice and assume the title of, Doctor!