

# Message from the Executive Director Community and Oral Health

Glynis Schultz



Dear team,

As I moved around the facilities in Community and Oral Health, I was sorry to learn that some staff had endured infrastructure damage, power loss and flooding during the recent extreme weather event.

I sincerely hope that as much as possible, things have returned to normal for each of you.

Following my message to all staff, I wanted the opportunity to thank each of you personally for your response to the recent severe weather events across the period of preparation, response, and recovery.

Because of YOU :

- patients in our bedded services were assessed and reviewed in preparation for possible road closures and there were safe clinical staffing levels on each and every shift. To achieve this, people worked at new sites, worked longer hours or additional shifts with some staff sleeping over in facilities, so they were available for the next shift. Some staff navigated multiple detours in strong winds and rain to make their shift;
- administration staff and facility managers kept facilities running , phones answered, switchboards staffed, and administration functions completed.
- meals were available to both patients and the staff staying over despite being on generator power in some facilities;
- waste was managed appropriately despite the challenges.
- linen supplies were maintained, and new supplies secured quickly;
- each patient in our home care services had an individualised care plan and patients who were at risk of deteriorating were identified and alternative plans made. Services rapidly increased the use of telehealth. Scripts were processed and medication and pain relief were in place in case access became a problem. Adhoc case conferences were held to confirm and assess treatment plans as the weather event unfolded. Multiple steps were taken to maximise communication and access to the patient information to support care.
- modelling was done to assess the risk and preparedness and facilities were secured and made ready to face the extreme weather. Windows were taped, sandbags were filled and distributed across facilities, external furniture was secured.
- families, patients and residents were kept informed
- during the highest winds and driving rains, care could continue as facilities and patients were made safe. As the photo below shows, staff excelled in their creative and innovative response as a temporary measure to contain the driving wind and rain
- after the event, facilities were cleaned and dried, and fallen trees were cleared and gardens restored

It took all of us working together to achieve all of this, and I sincerely thank you for the role each of you played.

I also want to acknowledge that you did all of this despite your own personal challenges and family responsibilities during a time of high anxiety because the weather was so very unpredictable.

As is always the case, we have also learned many lessons through this event and in the interest of continuous improvement, we will be looking at what we can do better.

As a very small token of thanks, a small bag of lollies has been prepared for each staff member. It is a small gift that comes with a huge thank you.

Warmest regards  
Glynis