



Towards Healthy Families

SUMMER 2019

Ija Mulanggari, Goodtha Mulanggari
Thriving Mothers, Thriving Babies



Solid Gold

What a summer we have had: highs and lows of temperature and emotion and an opportunity to remember a life well lived.

I was saddened to hear news Dr Rhodanthe Lipsett RN RM OAM passed away on January 17, 2019. A specialist in infant and maternal health, Rhodanthe was a giant of midwifery and a champion of mothers and their families. Her 50 year career included 18 years based at QEII where she provided support and care for over 23,000 'day stay' mothers. Rhodanthe believed in the importance of assisting, encouraging and inspiring new mothers "...so that they experience more 'up times' than 'down times'. If they can experience less anxiety and more confidence in the early weeks, I believe it can set the pattern for the months and years ahead". Canberra is fortunate indeed that Rhodanthe decided to make the national capital her home. A memorial service was held in the church hall at St John's Reid on Sunday 18 February 2019 and it was Rhodanthe's special request that Mary Kirk deliver the eulogy; you will find extracts of Mary's beautiful speech here in this newsletter. Rhodanthe was an advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives and the Rhodanthe Lipsett Indigenous Midwifery Charitable Fund is named in her honour. I invite you to contribute via the website: www.indigenousmidwives.org.au

I'm confident that Rhodanthe would have shared in the elation, on Australia Day, when Dr Sue Packer was recognised as Senior Australian of the Year for her work advocating for the rights of children and in child abuse prevention. The

standing ovation Sue received from the audience present at the Award's ceremony hosted at the National Arboretum was mirrored by those of us watching at home. A proud moment and wonderful recognition for Sue's lifetime commitment and her ongoing role. As Sue said in a subsequent interview with the ABC's Fran Kelly "...there goes my idea of retirement." You can see footage of Sue's acceptance speech on <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-25/australian-of-the-year-awards-2019-announced-in-canberra/10751382> and her Australia Day recipient profile on www.iview.abc.net.au.



If this wasn't enough what a thrill to read the Australia Day Honours list and see CMS President (2011-2014) Jane Smyth awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community of Canberra. Warm congratulations Jane.

What luck to be in the midst of these intelligent, articulate, motivated community-minded women.

On matters of the day-to-day, following a prolonged period of negotiations, CMS advised our members at the AGM in November that we will cease operating QEII in June this year. Through our staff, we continue to work with the ACT Health Directorate to transition QEII to new operators. Our goal is to see no disruption to services for the community through a smooth transition to the incoming provider. We also aim to see the continuing employment of as many staff as possible.

Fiona Smith du Toit

Dr Sue Packer AM 2019 Senior Australian of the Year

On Australia Day Eve, our very own Dr Sue Packer AM, Board Member and Honorary Medical Officer, was named 2019 Senior Australian of the Year at a televised ceremony (ABC) held at the National Arboretum in Canberra.

Since starting her career as a paediatrician in 1972, Dr Packer has worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights of children in our healthcare system and in the wider community.

She has been involved in child abuse prevention through the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect since its very early days and has treated babies and children suffering terrible trauma from child abuse and neglect.

In addition, Sue has championed the importance of early childhood environments for the developing brain, leading to recognition by education and government agencies. Sue was one of the driving forces behind the acknowledgement of the importance of creating

child-friendly spaces in hospitals and the value of play in recovery.

Presenting papers at conferences internationally and still volunteering on a number of boards to improve health and well-being of children.

She maintains an interest in the adult lives of children she has seen. Sue stands up for the rights of children at every opportunity and encourages others to do the same.

In accepting her award from Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Dr Packer spoke of the need to create environments where children can flourish and to consider not what we can do to or for children, but with them. She compared the lives of children to the seeds she plants in her garden, which require nurture, sustenance and love to flourish.

We congratulate Sue on this well-deserved accolade and we are incredibly proud to have such an outstanding and influential Australian as a member of our Board.



Congratulations Jane Smyth OAM

We would like to congratulate our friend and Board Member, Jane Smyth, who received a Medal of the Order of Australia in this years Australia Day Honours, in recognition of her service to the Canberra community.

Jane has served as a member of our board since 2002. She has also been a Volunteer Guide at the National Gallery of Australia for more than 20 years.

Jane served as a Community Representative on the ACT Emergency Management Community following the 2003 Canberra fire disaster.

She has also made a significant contribution to Early Childhood Education as the Founder

and Director of *Working and Parenting* and as a published Author of *'Story Telling with Children'* (2002).

We are proud of Jane's achievements and we are pleased to see her recognised for years of contribution.



Vale Rhodanthe Lipsett

The Canberra Mothercraft Society was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our long-time friend and colleague, Rhodanthe Lipsett. Rhodanthe served for 18 years with the Canberra Mothercraft Society, mostly at the Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Family Centre.

Rhodanthe was a quiet and unassuming achiever who was also one of the founding 'mothers' of the Australian College of Midwives. Since its foundation, Rhodanthe Lipsett was an active member of the College at branch, national and international levels.

With 65 years of service to mothers and babies, Rhodanthe never missed an opportunity to teach or learn something new herself. As she developed in midwifery, she demonstrated that she cared deeply for those around her by encouraging and developing others who were less experienced.

She can rightfully lay claim to be the author of the world's first evidenced based breast feeding protocol. A published midwife author of the bestselling book, *Baby Care*, her mantra "there's no one right way" (former title of the book), resonated strongly with her beliefs about empowering new mothers. She always championed that the word 'should' be replaced with 'could', which enabled mothers choice and a sense of control.

Rhodanthe was an inspiration and quietly received countless accolades throughout her life.

In 1992, she received a medal of the order of Australia, having helped an estimated 23,000 mothers and their newborns adjust in those crucial first weeks together.

Upon retirement from paid work, after so many years contribution, Rhodanthe stayed a positive influence and participant in the activities of the

Australian College of Midwives and work of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and, most importantly, adopted the role of a wise elder.

In 2012, Rhodanthe was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Canberra for a lifetime of service to baby and maternal health. She was made a Distinguished Fellow of the Australian College of Midwives, as recognition of her work for the profession

Those of us who knew Rhodanthe knew to stop, listen and most often act when she got you into a figurative corner when and said "Dear girl, we must....." These are usually the first words of a wise woman on a mission, be it to achieve the worlds first evidence based breast feeding protocol, or scholarships for indigenous midwives or anything important in between. Whilst the mission she had in mind may have taken us in unexpected directions we did stop, listen and act for very good reason.



She was a lioness of human rights, most especially for women and their newborns, and especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their newborns. Her dream was for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to experience excellent pregnancy and birth outcomes, through having the benefit of care from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives. This commitment saw the establishment of what is known today as the *Rhodanthe Lipsett Indigenous Midwifery Charitable Trust* and through it the provision of scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student midwives.

She will be missed for her vision, her passion, her tireless work and her endless knowledge and experience on the care of mothers and babies.

Sleep and settling at QEII



Many families come to QEII seeking support with sleep and settling issues. We know that sleep is important for babies to grow and develop just as it is important too for those parenting them! There is a lot of information available on sleep and settling and it can be overwhelming knowing which advice to trust.

What can families expect at QEII

We understand parenting is complex and there are a lot of factors influencing the ability to make and sustain change. To guide this process the staff at QEII use the C-Frame, a strengths based, solution focused approach for working with families that promotes connection, collaboration and change. This means we explore: what goals the family is hoping to achieve; what changes are made along the way; how much progress is being made towards meeting the goals; how carers are adjusting to parenting; how to manage some self-care; what supports are available to help at what is often a challenging time; how the primary carer is coping emotionally; and what barriers there may be to achieving goals.

The nurses and midwives work in partnership with the families discussing different settling options and providing support with strategies to help them and their baby. They work to identify responsive settling strategies that best meet each child's physical, developmental and emotional needs as well as matching the family's goals and capacity. It is important that these strategies complement the family's values and will continue to work at home. It takes time and patience for a baby to learn new ways to settle and this work continues after the stay at QEII.

What the literature says

All babies cry and have periods of being unsettled. This crying is best viewed as a sign that they are upset and in need of physical and emotional closeness from their caregiver. Babies become distressed if left to cry alone, and can lead to negative long term psychological consequences if done repeatedly.

Caregivers are encouraged to help soothe their babies in a variety of ways, such as holding, stroking, rocking, singing, or talking to the baby. When caregivers help babies to manage their difficult feelings, their babies learn how to do this for themselves as they grow. Many healthy babies have long periods of being unsettled, where the cause of the crying is not immediately evident. A caregiver's kind presence helps babies feel less alone with their feelings, making these feelings less overwhelming and easier to tolerate. It is reassuring to know that babies are resilient enough to cope with incidental or accidental lapses in responsiveness (for example, when a parent is caught in traffic while the baby is crying) and this resilience increases with age.

What helps a baby sleep?

- Ensuring that the baby's nutritional needs are being met.
- Spending quality time with the baby when they are awake.
- Responding to baby's cues, including looking for tired signs and responding to them.
- Wrapping the baby if they are not yet rolling, strong startle reflexes can disturb their sleep.
- Having a calm space prior to and during sleep times, for example, keeping the baby away from the TV or other electronic devices, having soft music and dimmed lights.
- Establishing a bedtime routine, as babies respond to predictable rhythms. A bed time routine will help associate certain actions with sleep time. The key is that similar activities are done in roughly the same way before the child's bedtime.
- Night time bedtime routines often include having a bath and brushing teeth, as well as quiet activities like reading a book. In the daytime it may be closing the blinds, a short story and a cuddle. The aim is to keep the atmosphere calm and positive.

How much sleep do babies need?

Just like grown-ups, babies all sleep for different amounts of time. But a baby's mood and

wellbeing is often a good guide to whether they are getting enough sleep.

If a baby is:

- wakeful and grizzly, they likely need more sleep.
- wakeful and contented: they are getting enough sleep.

The first three months

Newborns generally sleep between 15 to 18 hours in a 24-hour period. Baby's sleep cycles largely depend on feeding cycles and they feed 6-12 times in a 24-hour period. Most babies will not have a consistent or reliable sleep pattern for at least the first three months. Tired signs at this age can include: grimacing, yawning, grizzling, frowning, sucking, staring, turning head away, jerky movements, becoming over active, clenching fists, squirming, fussiness or crying.

Three to six months

Babies at this age, on average, sleep for around 14 hours in a 24-hour period. Night and day rhythms may mean longer night sleeps. They will still require a minimum of six feeds per 24 hours but for some babies night feeds may become less frequent. Sleeping patterns vary a lot, but babies generally nap three times during the day and most babies need help to settle to sleep. At this age a tired baby may: grimace; avoid eye contact; have jerky movements; yawn; frown; clench fists; grizzle; have a tense body; and cry.

Six to twelve months

Babies still sleep for around 14 hours in a 24-hour period. Sleeping patterns vary a lot, but babies generally nap three times during the day for 1 to 2 hours however, a quarter of babies nap for less than an hour. Some babies need 1 to 2 night feeds, however this normally decreases by 12 months. More than a third of parents say they have problems with their baby's sleep at this age. Tired signs include a baby: being less co-ordinated and clumsier; not interested in food; having a shorter concentration span; in need of constant attention; grizzling; requiring more

physical contact; and rubbing eyes, nose, ears or pulling hair.

Settling strategies

At QEII we recommend using evidenced based settling strategies that are responsive to a baby's cues. These strategies may vary depending on how the caregivers and the baby are coping.

Place the baby on their back in the cot when they are calm and drowsy and give them an opportunity to self-settle. Some babies might grizzle before finding a comfortable position and drifting off to sleep. Many babies will call out and need assistance to calm. The carer may need to shush, sing or pat them to calm them in the cot. If they are not calming they may need to be picked up and cuddled until calm. Once calm return them to the cot. This process is repeated until the baby falls asleep. If it is not working and either the carer or the baby are getting distressed it is OK to settle them another way or get them up and try again at the next sleep time.

How much "hands on" settling each baby needs will vary from settle to settle. The nurses and midwives working with each family provide guidance and support until they feel confident to do it alone. Initial settling sessions may not immediately be successful as the baby is learning a new way to settle. Being persistent and consistent with the settling strategies will enable a baby to adjust to the new settling regime. It is important carers look after themselves too and the midwives and nurses will discuss strategies to help remain calm and cope when settling is a challenge.

References:

Australian Association for Infant Mental Health Inc., 2016, Responding to Baby's Cues, viewed 6 September 2018, available at [https://www.aaimhi.org/key-issues/position-statements-and-guidelines/AAIMHI-Position-paper-2-\(2016\)-Responding-to-infant-cues-\(1\).pdf](https://www.aaimhi.org/key-issues/position-statements-and-guidelines/AAIMHI-Position-paper-2-(2016)-Responding-to-infant-cues-(1).pdf)
Raising Children Network, 2017, Sleep Needs for Babies, viewed 6 September 2018, available at http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/concerned_about_your_babys_sleep.html/context/730

QEII renew accreditation as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace

We have recently renewed our accreditation from the Australian Breastfeeding Association as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace. This accreditation is important to our organisations family friendly ethos and our commitment to supporting working mothers and the health and wellbeing of their babies.

The accreditation acknowledges our compliance with the key elements of support required, including:

- a private, comfortable space to breastfeed or express breastmilk
 - time during the working day to breastfeed or express
 - support from employer and colleagues.



We are proud of this accreditation and look forward to continuing to support our breastfeeding staff members to maintain breastfeeding while at work.

Crispin Day Visit: Family Partnerships Model

In October 2018, QEII co-hosted Crispin Day, who was visiting Australia from the UK.

Crispin is one of the authors of the Family Partnership Model - an innovative approach based upon an explicit model of the helping process that shows how specific helper qualities and skills, when used in partnership, enable families to overcome their difficulties, build strengths and resilience and fulfil their goals effectively.

The Family Partnership Model Foundation course is core training for clinical staff at QEII and staff attending the session with Crispin gained a deeper understanding of how to work in partnership with families to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Feedback from Crispin on the day endorsed that the C-Frame, the platform we use to deliver primary health care at QEII, compliments the Family Partnership Model.

HYDRANGEAS 2019 MEETINGS

The hydrangeas will meet on the following days during 2019:

Thurs 21st March at the Botanic Gardens

Thurs 25th July at the National Arboretum

Thurs 24th October at the Botanic Gardens

All members and past and present CMS staff are welcome to join us. For more information, please contact Lynne Johnson on lynnejohnson@grapevine.com.au.



L to R: Rosemary Lee and Di Fernando with the late Rhodanthe Lipsett at the first Hydrangeas get-together in 2013.

2018 Annual General Meeting

Our 92nd Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 21st November 2018 at the Hellenic Club in Woden. The Annual Report was presented to the Board, Members and staff in attendance. It was also announced that after a prologed period of negotiations with the ACT Health Directorate, the Canberra Mothercraft Society will cease operating QEII in June this year.

Following the formal proceedings, our community gathered for some drinks, nibbles and socialising. It was wonderful to see so many familiar smiling faces. We will be working to keep all stakeholders up to date with information on the transition to the new provider at QEII, as it comes to hand.



Meet Frosso Papadogiannis

Frosso is one of QEII's most familiar faces, having worked in the Support Team for more than 15 years.

Prior to starting at QEII, Frosso worked in her own business for many years. A friend who was working for QEII asked her if she would be willing to do some shifts while some staff members were away and, as she put it, "the rest is history."

Frosso loves the friendly and welcoming work environment at QEII.



"QEII is such a warm place to work, it is a social environment where my work colleagues are more like friends. It is really enjoyable work, I always want to give my best. I get to meet new people all the time and it is so pleasant to work around babies," she said.

When Frosso is not at QEII, she loves to work in her garden and she really enjoys helping her friends and neighbours in her spare time.

QEII Playroom refurbishment

Mid February saw the completion of the client playroom refurbishment at QEII. Clients have been enjoying the refreshed space with enthusiasm.



STAY CONNECTED

For inclusions in upcoming editions of the newsletter, to opt out of the newsletter mailing list, or to **SAVE PAPER** by receiving this newsletter electronically, contact Colleen at Colleen.Josifovski@act.gov.au or phone (02) 6205-2322.

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