

# ROYAL

REHABILITATION CENTRE SYDNEY

*Maximising Abilities - Optimising Lifeskills*



*Looking to the Future*

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2010/2011**

## Our Vision

Royal Rehab's vision is for people who have been seriously injured or who have experienced a chronic and disabling illness to regain and maintain their health and wellbeing within the circle of their family, friends and community.

## Our Mission

To maximise abilities and optimise lifeskills in partnership with people who suffer a disability as the result of trauma, accident or disease through the delivery of specialist rehabilitation and disability support services, based on world class research and evidence based practice.

## Our Values

**Independence** - We promote independence in a supportive and innovative environment.

**Individuality** - We respect people's individuality and promote understanding through open communication.

**Quality** - We value excellence through continuous improvement in the delivery of our services.

**Learning and Research** - We support the development of our people and services, through teamwork, learning and research.

## Patron

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of NSW.

## Providing Care since 1899

Our beginning was due to the energy and compassion of a remarkable woman of the late nineteenth century, Susan Schardt. Miss Schardt recognised the needs of patients being discharged from hospital and labelled as "incurable", often without family, money, or hope of getting a job.

From these small beginnings in 1899, Miss Schardt's work became increasingly recognised and valued, culminating in a wave of public support that resulted in Sir Henry Moses M.L.C selling his Ryde property Weemala.

## Celebrating 105 years of Service

Weemala became the "NSW Home for the Incurables", and services commenced on this site in 1906. From these humble beginnings there are now a vastly expanded range of rehabilitation and disability services and facilities.

In 1924 Moorong opened for the care of cancer patients, and subsequently housed the Spinal Injury Unit. Coorabel opened in 1967 to provide adult rehabilitation services, and the Brain Injury Unit opened in 1992. A new Weemala was built in 2011, and construction commenced on the new Rehabilitation Centre for all other services.

The Centre's name has changed over time. From 1906 as the Home for the Incurables to Royal Ryde Homes in 1954, Royal Ryde Rehabilitation Hospital in 1978 and finally the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney in 1990.

## Royal Rehab – An Introduction

The Royal Rehabilitation Centre is a nationally recognised organisation that provides specialist rehabilitation and disability services for people who have acquired a disability as the result of trauma, accident or illness. Royal Rehab engages in extensive education and research to improve the rehabilitation outcomes for its clients, and to improve the independence and quality of life for those requiring long term support.

Royal Rehab is a not-for-profit charitable organisation with an independent Board of Directors. Royal Rehab operates as an affiliated health organisation under the NSW Health Services Act 1997, and as an accredited service with the Department of Human Services NSW Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) and with the NSW Lifetime Care and Support Authority (LTCSA). Royal Rehab also relies on financial support from the general community to provide the range of services and equipment required by individuals undergoing rehabilitation, and to support its research activities.

As a teaching hospital, Royal Rehab has partnerships with the University of Sydney's academic units, including the Rehabilitation Studies Unit, the Centre for Community Based Health Care, and the Centre for Disability Studies, in addition to our own Rehabilitation Nursing Research and Development Unit and the Royal Rehabilitation College.

Royal Rehab provides on-site and home based rehabilitation for those with complex and long term health care needs, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury, and supports the development of specialist spinal cord rehabilitation services in regional NSW. Royal Rehab also provides a growing number of long term supported accommodation places for people with significant disabilities living in the community.



## Chairman's Report

I am pleased to report that 2010-11 was a most satisfactory year in terms of the advancements made towards achievement of the Board's vision to create a Centre of Excellence in rehabilitation medicine and disability support at our property at Putney. Our new Weemala facility was recently opened by the NSW Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner MP. This building is a vast improvement on the old Weemala in every aspect, and provides a wonderful home-like environment for our long term residents with complex health care and support needs. Most importantly, whilst options for relocation to Royal North Shore Hospital were investigated with the Northern Sydney Local District Health, NSW Health has recognised and accepted the sensibility of collocation of our new state of the art Rehabilitation Centre to help provide on-going support to our Weemala residents, and to meet our commitments to the local community through the construction of much needed community facilities. Construction on our new Rehab Centre is scheduled to commence in November of this year.

2010-11 was also a year in which Royal Rehab was able to significantly improve its financial operating performance in what remains a very tight funding regime. Whilst there still needs to be proper recognition by NSW Health of the higher cost of specialist rehabilitation services, Royal Rehab managed to contain its operational costs to significantly reduce its operating losses. Steady growth was again achieved in the organisation's Community Services portfolio where Royal Rehab provides both home based rehabilitation services and full time care in Supported Accommodation homes throughout the Sydney region for people with a disability and high support needs.

With the issues of the redevelopment now largely behind us and the major construction underway, I am looking forward to the year ahead to continue our expansion into community based services, and to invest more focus and energy into the growth and support of our research and educational activities which form such an integral part of our service delivery at Royal Rehab.

I would again like to acknowledge the tremendous passion and commitment, and the achievements of all of our staff and Management without whom Royal Rehab could not achieve the wonderful outcomes for each of our clients. I would also like to express my gratitude for the counsel, commitment and vision of my fellow Directors who give voluntarily, so much of their time and energy to this great organisation. In particular I would like to thank Bruce Hatchman and John Dakin who are retiring from the Board after many years of exceptional service.

**Clive N Austin**  
Chairman



## Chief Executive Officer's Report

2010/11 was a major milestone for Royal Rehab with the completion recently of our new Weemala long term care facility. This 32 unit facility provides for the changing health care and support needs of our existing residents in a modern, well appointed home-like complex supported by on site staff and as required, staff from the adjacent Rehabilitation Centre. The facility will over the longer term provide transitional accommodation for complex clients who no longer require full inpatient treatment, but are awaiting home modifications or the organisation of community based support in their local area. Our long standing Weemala residents have settled extremely well into their new homes, and visits by the NSW Treasurer Mike Baird, the Minister for Disability Services Andrew Constance and the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner who officially opened Weemala, as well as a number of Senior Executives from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Lifetime Care & Support Authority have given us a great deal of confidence that facilities and programs such as this are most highly regarded and in short supply.

Weemala is only the first Stage of a comprehensive redevelopment plan for Royal Rehab's Putney site. Royal Rehab is now well and truly "looking to the future" and is proceeding with Stage 2 of its redevelopment – the construction of a new 60 bed state of the art rehabilitation centre, together with a community hall and child care centre, and associated recreational landscaping and facilities for joint use by the local community and our own clients. An application for a 24 bed Private Hospital Unit together with a Day Hospital program has been submitted to NSW Health, to replace the beds which will be lost to the Graythwaite Unit in early 2013. These private beds will focus on complex stroke, post-surgical reconditioning and orthopaedics. ADCO Constructions, who have done such a great job on the new Weemala, have been awarded the construction contract and will commence work in November 2011. The Centre is expected to be completed by the last quarter of 2013.

Planning for the redevelopment and the consequential relocation of all operational units, service teams and tenants has of necessity been a considerable focus of the year just gone. In the restricted space available to us, Youthsafe, the Dixson Day Activity Centre, and the Centre for Disability Studies have relocated to other premises but I would like to acknowledge the valuable relationships with each of these entities that we have enjoyed over many years. Wheelchair Sports NSW, Stroke Recovery NSW and Brain Injury Australia remain with us and we are most pleased to be able to provide accommodation and support for them throughout this phase of our redevelopment.

2010/11 has also seen a steady expansion of our Home and Community Based Rehabilitation and Disability Support services. The pilot Neuro-behavioural service which was a joint venture with the UK based Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust did not proceed but Royal Rehab continues to provide care and support to a number of clients who progressed through that service and who are now living in the community, in our supported accommodation.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the unrelenting professionalism and passion of all of the staff at Royal Rehab and acknowledge the tremendous support and resolve of my Board, for a most satisfactory year in this important transition.

**Stephen Lowndes**  
Chief Executive Officer



NSW Minister for Health Jillian Skinner with official guests - Stephen Lowndes CEO, Ryde City Cllr Vic Tagg, Residents and Advocates Chairman Mick Matthews, Chairman Cive Austin, Victor Dominello MP, Vice Chairman Anthony Staveley, Stan Riley descendant of Royal Rehab founder Susan Schardt and Weemala residents Warren Allen and Margaret MacKenzie.



**The Hon Jillian Skinner MP**  
 Minister for Health  
 Minister for Medical Research

**WEEMALA EXTENDED CARE SERVICE  
 OFFICIALLY OPENED**

Monday 7 November 2011: The Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, officially opened the Weemala Extended Care Service at the Royal Rehabilitation Centre.

The Royal Rehabilitation Centre has a record of service to the people of NSW that spans more than 100 years.

Weemala provides specialist and complex rehabilitation, as well as health services and support for people with a disability.

The new facility comprises 16 high care units and 16 low care units, in a modern, spacious and purpose built facility and is the first stage of a larger redevelopment proposed by Royal Rehab.

Mrs Skinner said the new facility was a more spacious, home-like environment that reflects the community's enlightened view of people with a disability.

"Our focus today is about providing the best possible care for these patients," Mrs Skinner said.

"The service provides the comfort, security and independence the residents of Weemala deserve," she said.

"The new facility provides a far greater degree of individual privacy and independence, and is designed to accommodate changing health care and support needs as client's age.

"The Royal Rehabilitation Centre and its Board have worked through many changes in policy direction under the former government which contributed to a degree of uncertainty about the security of future funding arrangements," Mrs Skinner said.

"I congratulate the resilience and perseverance of both the residents and their families and the Board and Management of Royal Rehab."



Stan Riley, the great nephew of the founder Susan Schardt speaking at the opening of Weemala, said "If my great aunty Susan were here today she'd throw up her arms and rejoice in the Lord to see such a beautiful place."



Spacious accommodation areas for residents provide individual privacy and independence.

## The Year in Review

2010/11 finally saw the commencement of Royal Rehab's long-held redevelopment plans with the construction of our new Weemala facility, completed in September 2011 and recently Opened by the NSW Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner. Weemala is the name of the original building purchased by our Founder Susan Schardt, with the assistance of a public fund-raising campaign so it is most fitting that this facility, which provides a home for 32 of our longest permanent residents, celebrates over 105 years of continuous service to the citizens of NSW with a disability and continues to deliver upon her vision all those years ago. Mr Ron Cowland has resided and been cared for at Royal Rehab for over 50 years, and it was most fitting that Ron turned the first sod on his spacious, modern and magnificently appointed new home, in September 2010.

Weemala is only Stage 1 of what is a major project to deliver a state of the art rehabilitation facility to the people of the Northern Sydney and Ryde area and for New South Wales. Construction work on the new community parkland, is nearing completion. This land has been donated to Council and the people of the Ryde community by the Royal Rehabilitation Centre as part of the overall development approval. Stage 2 will comprise the 60 bed Rehabilitation Centre, Community Hall and Child Care Centre and the Recreation Circle, complete with hard surface sports courts. Construction is scheduled to commence in November 2011 with all works completed by November 2013.

It has been an extremely busy twelve months with the planning and relocation of all inpatient services, commencing with the closure of the old Moorong building and relocation of our Spinal Injury Unit in February this year to the existing Weemala complex. The successive relocation of each of our other clinical units to the old Weemala and Hodson buildings has tested the resolve and good will of all of our staff and patients at some stage but they have all responded magnificently as we "look to the future", to ensure that the high standards of care and clinical governance have been maintained throughout.

Funding pressures were again a feature of the year in review, requiring tight cost management and constraints on professional development

activities and equipment upgrades. However, thanks to the generosity of our Foundation Members Brydens Lawyers and ISS Cleaning Services and some wonderful fund raising initiatives from a number of our patients and their relatives, several initiatives were made possible. Our annual Foundation Dinner raised some much needed funds to help meet the costs of our Driver Assessment and Training program, and to develop new programs in our Spinal Injury Unit; the Run for Scott team in the City to Surf and Brianna Shaw's brave trek along the length of the Great North Walk to raise money for smart technology devices for our Brain Injury Unit, and Anthony Abraham's kayak trip down the Murray River to raise money for our Spinal Injury Unit were but a few examples of the wonderful support for Royal Rehab received from many of our clients and sponsors. ADCO, our construction partners for the new Rehab Centre sponsored our Annual Golf Day, and once again the Ducati Owners Club continued their wonderful support of our Spinal Injury Unit.

The support of our State and Federal politicians has again been most appreciated, with visits throughout the year from our local NSW Member for Ryde, Victor Dominello, Federal Member for Bennelong John Alexander, State Treasurer Mike Baird, Andrew Constance the Minister for Ageing & Disability, and of course Jillian Skinner the Minister for Health.

2010/11 saw the introduction by the Royal Rehabilitation College of new Certificate and Diploma courses in Disability, and in Rehabilitation continuing its excellent record of building capacity and competence in the rehabilitation and disability support sector.

The year culminated with Royal Rehab's Return2Sport Expo held at Sydney Olympic Park in conjunction with the Sydney Paralympic Committee where over 45 disability sporting and recreation associations were represented, providing opportunity for many hundreds of visitors to come and try one of the many sports on display. The Expo was opened by the NSW Minister for Sport Graham Annesley MP and we look forward with his Department's continued support, to extending this tremendous concept to other major Centres next year.



Andrew Constance MP Minister for Disability Services made an extensive tour of Royal Rehab, including visits to the new Weemala and the Brain Injury Unit. Photo: Dr Stuart Brown, Delia Gray, Rachel Merton (CEO Brain Injury Association of NSW), Dr Clayton King, Tish Peiris (client advocate), Andrew Constance MP, Stephen Lowndes, Don Ferguson (Regional Director Metro North, ADHC)

## The Royal Rehabilitation Foundation

The Royal Rehabilitation Foundation was established with a primary aim of attracting corporate and individual support for the Royal Rehabilitation Centre, to engage in research projects.

The identification, evaluation and implementation of evidence based practice is a fundamental philosophy of Royal Rehab, to ensure the best possible outcomes for our clients.

The Royal Rehabilitation Foundation also assists in the purchase and assessment of leading edge equipment and assistive technology applications to improve the quality of life and independence of people with a disability.

The Chairman of the Royal Rehabilitation Foundation is Board Director, David Piper OAM.

### Foundation Membership

Brydens Compensation Lawyers are committed to supporting rehabilitation projects that assist people who have suffered stroke, brain injury, burns, and spinal injury. Brydens, one of the largest law firms in Australia, work with compensation and personal injury clients.

ISS Facilities Services support the Working Together programs which offer individually tailored multidisciplinary rehabilitation, designed to maximise function and independence.



The Recreational Fishing Trust working with Royal Rehab's Recreational Therapists, provides opportunities for regular fishing trips for residents and clients. Funding supplies modified rods and equipment, adapted for use in this recreational program.

### Construction Industry Partnership

Supported by the Foundation, the Construction Industry Partnership was formed to identify safety related issues that will be the subject of new research initiatives, for the development and implementation of new work place safety practises. The aim is to create a safer construction workplace across Australia, reducing the incident of preventable workplace injury.

### Research

The Royal Rehabilitation Foundation provides support for the ongoing education and development and support for staff undertaking research that is related to their area of practice at Royal Rehab.

The Royal Rehab Human Research Ethics Committee is responsible for providing ethical review and monitoring for the ongoing conduct of research.



Using the Lightwriter, a client is able to "speak" the name of his friends identified from the photos.

The Lightwriter was donated by the James N Kirby Foundation, and is used by Speech Pathologists in a rehabilitation program improving communication, memory, and speech to those recovering from traumatic brain injury.



Team Scott approach the finish line of the City2Surf led by Scott McLean. Scott had set a goal in his rehabilitation program to complete the race and challenged his friends to go the distance with him. More than sixty team members, including the Royal Rehab Runners and Walkers completed the 14km challenge with Scott and his partner Raelene.

## Events

**Foundation Dinner:** The annual Royal Rehabilitation Foundation dinner was held at Con Dedes' magnificent new Woolwich waterfront restaurant, The Deckhouse.

Guests were inspired and challenged with speeches and presentations made on behalf of a spinal injury project that will honour the life of Nick Morozoff. Generous support also came for the Driving Assessment Program following a testimonial from Daniel Buzuola, and Channel 10 reporter, Angela Bishop revived memories of the visit of Princess Di to Royal Rehab in 1996. A capacity attendance responded with donations and pledges following these heart-warming experiences shared by clients who had benefited from the expertise of Royal Rehab's staff and services.

**Charity Challenge Golf Day:** Long Reef Golf Club hosted the inaugural ADCO Cup to benefit the Royal Rehab Foundation. A full field of 120 players enjoyed beautiful conditions for golf. At the lunch that followed, the special guest speaker was Scott McLean. Scott is a professional stuntman, who had suffered severe injuries following an incident while making the film, Hangover Part 2. Scott and his partner, Raelene Chapman were an inspiring example of courage and determination to overcome the obstacles that they now faced. Scott had spent 10 months in Royal Rehab's Brain Injury Unit.

## Everyday Heroes

Three significant activities were promoted through the Everyday Hero website to raise funds for specific services at Royal Rehab.

**Paddle For Pop:** Anthony Abrahams paddled a kayak 200km down the Murray River to attract sponsorship support for his challenge. "Paddle for Pop" was dedicated to his father Tony Abrahams, who was in the Spinal Injury Unit. Money raised will provide new equipment for the Spinal Rehab gym.

**Doing it for Dad:** Brianna Shaw's dad, Steve, has been recovering at Royal Rehab after a head injury he suffered in a cycle accident. Brianna's challenge was to complete the Great North Walk, a 238km walk to raise awareness and funding for new technology within the Brain Injury Unit.

**Run For Scott:** Scott Mclean challenged his friends to compete in the annual City to Surf to raise funds for the Brain Injury Unit at Royal Rehab. Scott's promise to them was that he would do the distance and cross the line with them! "Run for Scott" raised over \$45,000 in donations.

## Donations

Royal Rehab was able to upgrade equipment and supply new technology for many of its services including spinal and brain injury, stroke, burns, aged related illnesses and home based services. Royal Rehab's Community Homes have attracted significant support for delivering services within local areas that directly benefit the residents and clients.

### Thanks to:

Inghams Chickens; Cecilia Kilkeary Foundation; R T Hall Estate; James N Kirby Foundation; Australian Chinese Foundation; Five Dock Rotary; The Primary Club; Department of Fisheries; Coopers Brewery; ICAP; Ducati Owners Club of NSW.

A unique event created in the Sydney office of wholesale stock broking firm, IPAC, raised \$50,000 for Royal Rehab. IPAC internationally donated a percentage of their total day's trading to several nominated charities, including Royal Rehab.

The Cecilia Kilkeary Foundation, support the Driving Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre, providing opportunities for people with significant disabilities to regain their independence and return to driving.

The R T Hall Estate are currently funding a research project for cardiovascular lipid disease.

Ten metropolitan Councils supported Royal Rehab through their annual Community Development Expenditure Scheme (CDSE) assisting both the Driving Assessment Service and Community Home projects. Council areas included: Ryde; Fairfield; Ashfield; Canada Bay; Holroyd; North Sydney; Parramatta; Baulkham Hills; Warringah; Canterbury.

### Acknowledgments:

David Gyngell (CEO Channel Nine); Peter V Landys (CEO Racing NSW); Bruce Tyrrell (Tyrrells Wines); Daryl Kelly (CEO ANZ Stadium); David Gallop (CEO, NRL); David Gilbert (CEO Cricket NSW); Star Casino; Pan Macmillan; Concord Golf Club; Gladesville Healthcare; Con Dedes; Radio 2GB - Alan Jones, Ray Hadley and Chris Smith; Peter Fitzsimons (author); Reg Cain - Betta Electricals; Val Gibson; Dr Niel Boustred; Wandin Valley; Tattler's Wines; Ryde Freighters; Slater and Gordon; Stacks Goudkamp; Beilby, Poulden & Costello; The Epping Club; Rob Potts (Entertainment Edge); Ed Riley (Max Sam); Commonwealth Bank; Arrow Voice & Data; Northern District Times; The Weekly Times.

Right: Darren Ashford and his son Harley with Craig and Wendy Job from the Ducati Owners Club and David Paix check over the classy red Italian Ducati ST3S prior to the annual Ducati Day. Ducati Day 2011 was a celebration of 30 years of sponsorship support for the Spinal Injury Unit by the Ducati Owners Club NSW.



## The Rehabilitation Directorate

The Rehabilitation Directorate provides a range of inpatient, outpatient, and community based and outreach services for clients who have recently had an injury or illness and require rehabilitation. Our rehabilitation services offer individually tailored, multidisciplinary programs designed to maximise function; and assist our clients in adjusting to their disability and attaining as much independence as possible. Rehabilitation bed days increased on prior year as did the revenue from privately insured and compensable clients.

### Spinal Injuries Unit and Spinal Outreach Service

The state wide Spinal Injuries Service provides inpatient rehabilitation in a 20 bed Spinal Injury Unit; and post discharge, community based clinical support through our Spinal Outreach Service for clients who have suffered traumatic or non traumatic spinal cord injury.

The Spinal Outreach Service focuses on effective education for both clients and clinicians, living and working in metropolitan Sydney and rural areas of NSW, helping spinal cord injury clients maintain their health and participation in their local community.

### Brain Injury Unit and Brain Injury Community Rehabilitation Team

The state wide Brain Injury Service provides inpatient rehabilitation and community based transitional support for clients from across Northern NSW who have sustained a traumatic head injury. The rehabilitation programs address the individual needs depending on the type of injury and part of the brain affected. Prevalent causal factors are assaults, motor vehicle accidents, sporting accidents and falls.

The Brain Injury Community Rehabilitation Team provides case management services and assistance addressing health issues, relationships, learning, finance, work and leisure following discharge from inpatient rehabilitation.

### Adult Rehabilitation Service

The Adult (CARS) and Aged Care (Dixon) Rehabilitation programs provide rehabilitation for clients following stroke, burns, neurological disease, amputation, and orthopaedic injury. The Adult Rehabilitation program is designed for clients of working age, whilst Dixon clients are over the age of 65 and are part of the Ryde Aged Care Service. A major focus of 2010/11 was on developing neurological and stroke rehabilitation programs to ensure best practice in the delivery of those programs.



### Outpatient Department

The Outpatient Department provides a range of goal directed individual and group therapy programs for clients who have experienced a decline in function. The aim is to enhance the quality of life enjoyed by all our clients.

The service provides clients with the option to remain living in their own home and visit the Centre as often as they require therapy. Through this service clients access medical care and skilled multiple allied health services in one team, comprehensive assessment and treatment facilities, and regular updates to their GP on progress

### Driving Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre

The Driving Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre is designed for clients who have had their driving ability compromised by a medical condition, and provides access to our highly skilled staff, in this very specialised area. Occupational Therapists have all completed postgraduate studies in driver assessment and are registered with the Roads and Traffic Authority. The Service offers heavy vehicle and scooter assessments and advice on modifications for clients wishing to learn to drive. Assessments are conducted in Ryde and Mona Vale and where restricted licenses apply, service is provided in the client's home environment.



### Mobility Equipment and Seating Service

The Mobility Equipment and Seating Service provides: hire, maintenance and seating service both internally to our inpatient clients and to external customers. Our maintenance service provides both routine services and emergency repairs for all types of mobility equipment and links clients back into our therapy services when new prescriptions are required. The hire service has expanded with the inclusion of a variety of highly specialised mobility and recreation items such as standing wheelchairs, beach wheelchairs, hand cycles and the modified SoloRider golf cart.



## Home Based Rehabilitation Service

The Home Based Rehabilitation Service provides an intensive goal based rehabilitation program (up to 6 weeks) for clients in their own home or community environment. Specialist nursing and allied health staff work with the client to regain or improve independence in a range of activities related to daily living. The clients may have suffered a recent injury or illness or a chronic musculoskeletal or neurological condition. The multidisciplinary team have significantly increased the number of hours of service delivered, and the occasions of service delivered. Referral to this program can be made by members of a treating team. Treatment and care is covered by Medicare. Royal Rehab's contract with NSCCAHS to provide the allied health therapy component of their transitional aged care program has contributed to the expansion of the Home Based Rehabilitation Service.

## The Community Services Directorate

The Community Services Directorate provides supported accommodation and rehabilitation. The service works with adults who have experienced acquired brain injury or spinal cord injury, and with clients with developmental disability. Most clients also have complex care, challenging behaviour, or mental health issues.

During 2010-11 clients achieved significant milestones, as a result of continuing to develop strategies and tools to keep up with the latest research in rehabilitation and to build this knowledge into practice.

## Our Clients

### Transition Unit Clients

The Community Services Directorate operates the Transition Unit on behalf of the rehabilitation services. The Transition Unit supports clients who have completed their active rehabilitation phase and are waiting to move into their next accommodation. Our service continues to provide rehabilitation for many of these clients as well as assistance in moving into their new accommodation.



Going home: Janice Auyeung says farewell after 2 ½ years in the Weemala transition unit. With her husband and father, Janice says "Thank You" to staff.

## Continuing and New Clients

The Community Services Directorate supports more than 110 long-term clients in accommodation. These clients continue to receive support, rehabilitation, training, and, where needed, nursing and medical support. During the year support was extended to include new clients. It is anticipated that Community Services will be providing support and rehabilitation to these clients over the long term.

## Service Achievements

The review of the research on effective rehabilitation and service delivery has led to an increased focus on improving the coordination of services in clients' home environments. The aim of this coordination is to increase the inter-relationship between therapies and the support that clients receive while they carry out activities in their homes and in the community.

### Senior Client Support Officers

Senior Client Support Officers - coordinate support and rehabilitation in clients' homes and are part of the team delivering care.

### Independent Living Coordinator

Independent Living Coordinator - works with clients in our Transition Unit and with clients from the Lifetime Care and Support Authority. The function of this role is to ensure services are coordinated to minimise delays in returning home or moving to other community living and to maximise outcomes while in the care of Community Services.

### Increasing Staff Skills

Applying up-to-date knowledge is essential for the clients of our services. A major project has commenced to add additional skills for our staff who work directly with clients. Staff completed additional training to be able to assist in conducting therapies, as Certificate IV - Allied Health Assistants, and these staff will be better equipped to build therapy interventions into everyday client activities. Staff attended training sessions to learn new skills and increase skills and knowledge of treatments; staff attended training in working constructively with clients' challenging behaviours; and staff participated in training in areas related to service systems and development.



Natalie Ryan, Independent Living Coordinator accepts the Rotary Pride of Workmanship Award 2012.

## Rehabilitation Nursing Research and Development Unit (RNRDU)

The RNRDU is funded by Royal Rehab for the purpose of undertaking and developing rehabilitation nursing research and providing leadership in rehabilitation nursing practice.

The Rehabilitation Nursing Research and Development Unit is building the research capacity and skills of Royal Rehab based nurses, and strengthening the organisation's commitment to providing evidence based practice and professional development of rehabilitation nurses.

Principals of the RNRDU undertake extensive professional networking, proactively linking with a wide range of organizations, including universities; provide consultancy services; and design and conduct evidence informed education programs.

## Rehabilitation Studies Unit

The Rehabilitation Studies Unit (RSU) research and educational programs are focused on injury related disability, particularly severe disability following motor vehicle accidents. While there is an historical focus on traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury, there is emerging research in regard to broader health services which assist the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme clients, and older people with disabilities.

The RSU aims to involve clinicians and promote evidence based practice. Regular educational sessions involving eminent visiting speakers, and RSU academic staff aiming to develop research skills, are conducted.

The Rehabilitation Studies Unit is an interdisciplinary research and educational unit of the Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney with collaborative links with other university departments, clinical colleagues working in rehabilitation, as well as groups and individuals with interest in injury related disability. It is funded by a substantial grant from the Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales (MAA), with additional funding from the Royal Rehabilitation Centre and the University of Sydney.

## Community Based Health Care Research Unit

The Community Based Health Care Research Unit (CBHCRU) was established in December 2007. The Unit is jointly funded by Royal Rehab and the University of Sydney's Faculty of Health Sciences. The Unit provides critical support to Royal Rehab in the development of its community-based rehabilitation services.

The Unit develops research programs that address the effectiveness of community-based health care for people with major traumatic injuries and long-term conditions with complex care needs, concentrating on finding ways in which people with a disability can participate in everyday tasks and be integrated into communities of their choice.

The Unit also examines the impact of impairments on activity and life participation, and the development and efficacy of interventions across the lifespan. Members of the Unit are currently undertaking research including investigating the most effective utilisation of therapy services in rural and remote NSW.

## Centre for Disability Studies

The Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) designs and develops research, teaching and clinical practice to inform policy and practice which impacts on people who have disabilities. It offers technical assistance and advice to organisations providing health, community support, accommodation and employment services to persons with developmental disabilities. Whilst strong support and collaboration between CDS and Royal Rehab remain, the Centre will be relocating to the University of Sydney campus to strengthen its research and academic links with the University.

CDS conducts the NSW Developmental Disability Health Unit which operates as a component of the Royal Rehab Outpatients' Department, providing medical and psychological assessments for adolescents and adults with developmental disability. Clinics include those for people with Down syndrome, Cornelia de Lange syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, rehabilitation clinics and ageing and dementia clinics. Psychology assessment and counselling clinics are provided.

The Royal Rehabilitation Centre is recognised internationally for its reputation as a teaching hospital. Throughout the year, students and medical professionals visit regularly from Japan and South Korea and recently 19 Chinese rehabilitation clinicians and managers completed a study tour.

Students from the Tokyo College of Medico-Pharmaco Technology completed a two day program covering their specialist interest in Orthoptics, and Speech Pathology. In this session, Speech Pathologist Janine Mullay presented a case study with the assistance of a client from the Brain Injury Unit.



## The Royal Rehabilitation College

The Royal Rehabilitation College's Vision is to be recognised as an expert provider of high quality educational services and qualifications for health, rehabilitation and disability professionals within Australia.

The College commenced operations in 2006 and specialises in the training of Allied Health Assistants. In 2011, the College enrolled its 300th student in the Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance, with 180 graduates across NSW, SA and Victoria. These graduates have come from the health sector, both public and private; the community sector; from NGO's and government departments such as Ageing, Disability & Home Care (ADHC).

The College was one of the first Registered Training Organisations (RTO) to deliver this course in NSW and continues to have the largest number of graduates. The demand for this course continues, with students who are newly employed as therapy assistants, which role has been recognised as an area of growth within the health and community sector to provide more extensive care to clients.

In 2011 the College commenced the delivery of the unique, nationally recognised, and newly accredited Diploma of Rehabilitation. There has been a high level of interest and excellent feedback from participants.



The Rehabilitation College provides theoretical training and study programs, to support practical experience in the workplace.

The College in conjunction with the Centre for Disabilities Studies has developed a Certificate IV in Disability and Diploma of Disability. These programs are now approved and the Diploma and Certificate Courses will commence in 2012.

The College has recently commenced "e" learning via Moodle for many of its courses. Moodle is a learning based management system which facilitates the on line delivery of courses. This allows greater access to the specialised rehabilitation and allied health training offered. The College also has a Facebook page to share information about training within the social network.

The Royal College continues to be recognised as an expert in the area of allied health assistant training and staff at the College are regularly consulted at both a state and national level. The expertise within the College was recently recognised with the appointment of its Manager, Sue Steele-Smith to the role of co-chair of the NSW Health Clinical Education and Training Institute, Allied Health Advisory Committee.

College staff are qualified health practitioners who have had many years of experience in the provision of health care. They combine this background with qualifications and experience in health education and training.



## Research

### Royal Rehab Human Research Ethics Committee

The Royal Rehab Human Research Ethics Committee is predominantly responsible for providing ethical review for single site research proposals; and for monitoring the ongoing conduct of research regarding compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) for the life of the projects. The Committee includes external community members, who give their time voluntarily, and we thank them for their contributions during 2010-2011

Royal Rehab provides support for the ongoing education and development of committee members, as well as support for staff undertaking research that is related to their area of practice at Royal Rehab.

During the period 2010/11 seven studies were given full approval, and included three low or negligible risk applications. Each was fully funded, and the following is a summary of some of the studies given full approval:

- Retrospective analysis of driving assessment outcomes after stroke - Dr Annie McCluskey
- An exploration of what concerns women in relation to their sexuality following stroke.- Ms Sandra Lever
- Self Reporting of S4-S5 motor and sensory function – Assoc Professor Lisa Harvey

Six site specific assessments for research to be carried out on site by other organisations were also approved during 2010/11.

## APRIL FALL'S DAY



Friday 1 April. April Falls Day activities highlights the importance of preventing falls, for both clients and staff.

## RETURN2SPORT



Members of the Recreational Therapy team prepare for the Return2Sport Expo. The Expo brought together 45 disability sporting associations, allowing visitors to explore a range of sports and recreational activities. Return2Sport was hosted by Royal Rehab in collaboration with the Australian Paralympic Committee, and supported by Graham Annesley MP, Minister for Sport and Recreation. The venue for the Expo was provided by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority.

## STROKE WEEK



Noreen Cronin and Sandra Lever were kept busy at Top Ryde City during the promotion of Stroke Week. Shoppers took advantage of a quick check-up. Activities promoting Stroke Week were supported by the Stroke Recovery Association of NSW.

## VOLUNTEERS



Royal Rehab benefits from a dedicated team of volunteers who each week provide services and support for clients within the Centre. A weekly hairdressing and "make-over" is provided by volunteers, for clients in the Adult Rehabilitation Unit.



## DOING IT FOR DAD

Brianna Shaw and her hiking companion Rashika Jutle are farewelled by her parents, Steve and Lorene Shaw, and staff at the start of her 238km fundraising walk for the Brain Injury Unit.

"I have been inspired by the courageous journey dad has been on. The walk is my challenge, as a tribute to the incredible recovery dad is making, and to draw awareness to the vital role the Rehab Centre played in restoring his independence."

## Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance describes the practices and processes adopted by Royal Rehab to ensure sound management of the organisation within the legal and clinical framework under which it operates. The Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney is an Affiliated Health Organisation as defined in Schedule 3 of the Health Services Act 1997. It is a public company limited by guarantee with an independent Board of Directors, elected by the Members of the organisation. The Board of Directors is responsible for the overall corporate governance of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney and believes it has the necessary experience, skills and mix of people to oversee the high standards of corporate integrity and accountability required of an ethical, values based organisation.

The Board has delegated responsibility for the operation and administration of the organisation to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Management. Responsibilities are delineated by formal delegations of authority.

### Executive

Chief Executive Officer  
**Stephen Lowndes**

Director, Finance & Corporate Services  
**Chris Champ**

Director, Inpatient & Specialty Services/Director of Nursing  
**Elizabeth Drolz**

Director, Medical Services/Director Clinical Support Services  
**Professor Ian Cameron**

Director, Community Services /Allied Health Services  
**Delia Gray**

### Human Resources

In 2010-11, Royal Rehab had a committed team of over 600 people working on a full or part time basis. This equates to 415 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.

### OH&S

The Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney has an OHS Risk Management System in place that includes the identification, assessment and elimination of all foreseeable hazards in the work environment and ensures safe systems of work.

The Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all of our staff, contractors, volunteers, clients and visitors. We are committed to proactive injury prevention and injury management aimed at the safe, sustainable and early return to work of any injured staff. OHS consultative arrangements enable staff to contribute to the development of safe systems of work and be involved in decisions that affect their health, safety and welfare in their place of work. 2010/11 saw an 11% reduction in the number of workers compensation claims and a 36% reduction in the cost of claims.

## Professional Development

To demonstrate commitment to the professional development of staff at the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney we have a Leadership and Management program for all current and emerging leaders within the centre. The inaugural program saw 45 leaders within Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney attend supervision and leadership and people management programs. The second phase of the program allows for the continuing growth of our clinical and operational employees and managers resulting in optimal operational decision making and succession planning within the centre.

### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney continues to offer the services of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all staff. The aim of the EAP is to assist staff resolve personal issues at an early stage and avoid situations which might otherwise ultimately affect their work performance or attendance. The EAP covers a wide variety of problems and concerns such as post incident debriefing, balancing family and work responsibilities, career and vocational issues, managing and coping with change, and dealing with difficult situations. Access to the EAP is available to all staff.

### Accreditation and Risk Management

In May 2011 the Royal Rehabilitation Centre successfully completed a Periodic Review as part of the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) accreditation process. Royal Rehab remains accredited by the ACHS until 2013.

The ACHS surveyors noted it was evident that staff were committed to providing quality care and obtaining client feedback. There is an obvious culture of continuous improvement and management of risks. The quality improvement and risk management programs are integrated and form part of the organisation's strategic and operational planning and clinical and non-clinical activities.

The clinical teams and facility recently completed a self assessment using the Quality Systems Assessment (QSA). The QSA assesses the health and adequacy of the organisations clinical safety systems and processes. Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) surveyors will be visiting the Centre in March 2012 to review the QSA.

Disability Services achieved accreditation under the Attendant Care Industry Management System Standards in August of 2010, only the second Organisation in NSW to do so. High achievement ratings were attained in risk management, complaints/incident management and evaluation of the effectiveness of support. ACiA accreditation is for a three year period, and the first periodic review was completed successfully in February 2011.

### Food Safety Accreditation

The Food Services Department has developed and maintained a Food Safety Program (FSP) which requires the training of all the food service staff including successful completion of the Advanced Food Handling & HACCP Principles Training Course.

The Food Services Department and the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney continue to be successfully audited by the NSW Food Authority and maintain accreditation as a food provider.

## The Board

**DIRECTORS:** The following persons were Directors of the Company during the financial year and/or up to the date of this report.



**Mr Clive N. Austin** LLM, FAICD

Chairman Consolo Limited (Group) and consultant to Sydney legal practice, Hardings Solicitors. Former President of The Royal Life Saving Society of Australia (NSW). Chairman of the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation. Director since 1993. Chairman since 2003.



**Mr Anthony Staveley** MComm, Grad Dip (Land Econ), FAPI, MAICD, JP

Director of Balance Group Pty Limited and Balance Corporate Property Development Pty Limited. Director since 2000. Vice Chairman since 2005.



**Professor Trevor Parmenter** AM, BA, PhD, FACE, FAAIDD, FFIASSID, FASSID

Professor Emeritus, Sydney School of Medicine; former Foundation Professor of Developmental Disability in the Sydney School of Medicine; Honorary Professor in the Faculty of Education & Social Work and the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Sydney. Director since 2000.



**Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn** PhD, DipOT, BA, MEd, DipContEd, NE, NSW Coll OT GAICD

Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney. Executive Member, Special Interest Research Group on Parents and Parenting with Intellectual Disability and Member of Council of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability. Director since 2004.



**Mr David Piper** OAM

Retired insurance company executive, Director of NSW Wheelchair Sports. President and Life Member of Queenscliff Surf Life Saving Club Inc. Life Governor of Wheelchair Sports and Life Member of Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches, and Surf Life Saving NSW. Director since 2004.



**Mr Bruce Hatchman** FCA, MAICD, JP (Retiring)

Former Chief Executive, Crowe Horwath. Has 40 years experience in providing audit and assurance services to listed companies and large private enterprises. Director since 2006.



**Ms Bronwyn Connolly** LLB, BA (Juris) MAICD

Has held a number of legal counsel and other senior positions for organisations including Olympic Roads and Transport Authority, NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, SA Health Commission, WA Health Department and acting Deputy CEO of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Director since 2008.



**Mr John Cullity** Grad Dip Mngt

Recently retired as Chief General Manager - Information Technology of Allianz Australia and Director of a number of Allianz Australia subsidiary companies, responsible for strategic and business planning and national responsibility for workers compensation and rehabilitation services. Director since 2008.



**Professor Richard Madden** BSc, PhD, FIAA

Professor of Health Statistics University of Sydney and Director of National Centre for Classification in Health. Former Director of the Australian Institute of Health and Deputy Secretary of NSW Health Department. Honorary Chair NSW Population and Health Services Research Ethics Committee. Director since 2008.



**Mr John Dakin** MEdAdmin, BA, DipEd (Retiring)

Director of Directioneering Pty Ltd and Directioneering International. Previously Executive Director of the foundation of an independent school. Director since 2008.



**Special Consultant:**  
**Professor Ian Cameron**  
MBBS PhD FAFRM (RACP)

Director of Medical Services at the Royal Rehabilitation Centre. Rehabilitation Physician with a PhD in Medicine. Director of the Rehabilitation Studies Unit with research projects in falls and injury prevention, rehabilitation and recovery after injury, and health services research. Appointed 2009.

## Tech Toys help brain injury patients



Physiotherapist Carly Adams and Steve Shaw

Smartphones and tablet computers might be the latest playthings for tech fans but they could also play lifesaving roles for brain injury patients. After suffering a brain injury many people struggle to remember anything for more than a few minutes.

They have to rely on writing endless notes in diaries or on having carers, relatives and friends to remind them to do a range of tasks including taking vital medication or shopping.

Some also have problems remembering their family, friends and carers.

But a new study has found that tablet computers, smartphones and other handheld digital devices can improve their memories.

Researchers from the Royal Rehabilitation Centre in Sydney spent eight weeks training a group of 21 brain injury patients to use personal digital assistants (PDAs) - palmtop computers - so they would no longer have to rely on nagging or diaries.

The calendars featured on the devices were used to help participants keep track of appointments, medication times or daily tasks like doing the washing.

An alarm would sound each time they were meant to carry out a task, while names were attached to pictures of people they often struggled to remember.

Small laminated cue cards were also stuck to the PDA cases as reminders for how to use the devices. Another group of 21 patients used traditional paper diaries to act as their memory banks. By the end of the two months, the researchers found improved memory function among those using the PDAs.

"We found that their levels of forgetting were reduced and their carers reported the amount of memory failures were less," the centre's occupational therapy leader Belinda Carr, who led the research, said.

"I think the alarm system was a big thing to do with it [the success]."

"Having that sound and alert to prompt someone to do something rather than having a family member saying, 'You have to take your medication now', I think that probably made a huge difference."

Ms Carr said that based on the success of the PDAs she believed smartphones and tablet computers would be just as useful as they had similar features.

The traditional training for people with memory problems was a diary system," she said.

"Research that had been done previously said they were effective, but most people we see with brain injuries are young guys who don't like carrying around diaries.

"PDAs and smartphones were something they were much more interested in using."

Ms Carr, presented her findings at the Occupational Therapy Australia Conference and hopes to convince insurance companies to fund the devices for brain injury patients through the NSW Government's Lifetime Care and Support Scheme.



Belinda Carr Professional  
Leader of Occupational  
Therapy Royal  
Rehabilitation Centre

The Board and management of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre would like to acknowledge and thank the staff, clients, families and supporters who feature in photographs or who have shared their stories within the Annual Report.

*Looking to the Future*



**ROYAL**  
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