

Media Release

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Jayne and Jackie celebrate 70 years of service at Mater

Helping little Queenslanders with their hearing has always been a passion of Jayne Hegarty and Jackie Moon, who are together celebrating a combined 70 years of service at Mater.

Brisbane had only just experienced the 1974 floods when Ms Hegarty joined Mater, where she worked as a nurse and midwife for many years.

But it was her determination to improve the hearing of newborns that has been the focus of much of her career and brought her together with Ms Moon.

Ms Hegarty became a member of a working party which successfully lobbied the Queensland government to implement Universal Newborn Hearing Screening in 2004.

The quick and simple screen may be performed on babies as early as 12 to 24 hours after birth to screen for possible hearing problems allowing the best chance of early intervention strategies.

"Newborn hearing screening is a simple and effective way of identifying if a baby can hear at the level required to develop speech and language," Ms Hegarty said.

"We offer free hearing screens to all Medicare eligible babies and follow-up with immediate referral to Audiology when required and also to the Healthy Hearing Family Support Service," she said.

"We know that late identification of hearing loss increases the risk of language and communication problems and can have a significant impact on education achievements and quality of life."

Today Ms Hegarty combines her role as Mater's Healthy Hearing Quality and Data Coordinator with that of Southern Area Coordinator for the Healthy Hearing Program.

She provides leadership through clinical, protocol and database support to the hearing screening teams at 16 public and eight private maternity hospitals, including both metropolitan and regional communities as far away as Charleville, Roma and St George.

Mater Director of Speech Pathology and Audiology Jackie Moon started working at Mater in 2003, just four days after arriving in Australia from the United Kingdom.

Ms Moon is responsible for the management of speech pathology and audiology services, the Healthy Hearing Universal Newborn Hearing Screening program and the newborn Pulse Oximetry screening program.

She enjoys working closely with babies, children and adults and said the best part about her job was managing several diverse and skilled teams knowing the positive impact they have on patients.

Both women received Mater Long Service Awards at a ceremony at the Princess Theatre in Woolloongabba on Tuesday (28 May).

Ms Moon said it had been a privilege to work alongside Ms Hegarty for two decades.

“There have been a few floods in Brisbane since 1974, but there's only been one Jayne,” she smiled.

“Jayne has been a nurse, midwife, helicopter team member for neonatal retrievals, a research assistant, a program coordinator, and our patient, when she had her two babies here.

“Jayne was instrumental in setting up Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening at the Mater, and with Queensland Health, went on to become a zonal hearing screening coordinator for one third of Queensland.

“Jayne's passion for excellence and accuracy in her work is unstoppable. She has always been supportive, and generous with her time and expert knowledge.”

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