

Race against time

Cairns businessman and racing enthusiast, Bren Turner, is used to competing against the clock. But once a year he concentrates on organising an event – "Unit's" Jet Ski Fundrun – to help people for whom time is even more precious.

In late 2010, the owner of Cairns Watercraft was approached by an oncology nurse and a cancer patient, both determined to raise money to provide more comfortable surroundings for terminally ill patients in the Medical 4 Oncology Ward at Cairns Hospital.

Manunda resident, Brian "Unit" Wilson, was an unlikely-looking fundraiser for charity. Then aged 42, he had always partied hard and continued to do so even after he was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Mr Turner liked him on sight. "He was a lovely guy, a joker ... a loveable larrikin."

Mr Wilson and Danielle Peever, the Nurse Unit Manager of the Oncology Ward at Cairns Hospital, wanted someone to help organise an action-packed, aquatic fundraising event involving big boys' toys – jet skis – and Bren Turner was just the man for the job.

Originally from Adelaide, he had been around "fast machines" all his life: as a boy he raced BMX bikes, until he was old enough to start purchasing speedy cars and motorbikes.

His working life at that time was decidedly more conservative: as a corporate finance operations manager, he wore a suit, "spent a lot of time sitting in planes", and negotiated transactions rather than race tracks.

The after-hours adrenalin junkie discovered jet skis in 2000... and it was only a matter of time ...

"One day I said to my wife, 'I'm going to do something crazy'."

Mr Turner's definition of "crazy"? Quitting his lucrative job and moving to the other end of the continent to sell jet skis.

He established Cairns Watercraft in November 2008. When Danielle Peever and "Unit" Wilson contacted him a year later, he was more than willing to assist them and the Hospital Foundation to launch the Jet Ski Fundrun.

"Everybody who reaches 40 knows someone who has or has had cancer, whether it be a relative, friend or even a child," he said simply.

Twenty-three personal watercraft riders assembled for the first Fundrun from Cairns to Fitzroy Island on 29 January 2011. The organisers later decided it would be more prudent to stage a jet ski event outside the cyclone season, and held a subsequent Fundrun in November of that same year. (It now takes place every November.)

"Unit" Wilson was in hospital for the first Fundrun, but he was determined to take part in the second event, which attracted 34 jet skis. He rode as a pillion passenger with Bren, although the cancer sufferer's health was clearly in decline.



Bren Turner

"He was still his typical comical self," remembered Mr Turner.

The two Fundruns held in 2011 raised more than \$32,000. "Unit" Wilson did not live to see the 2012 event. He lost his battle with cancer on 19 May last year.

"He was ready to go, but he was in high spirits right to the end. Quite simply, Brian was a hero," said Mr Turner.

"Unit's" Jet Ski Fundrun 2013

On November 16, Bren Turner and 34 other jet ski riders set off for Fitzroy Island, watched by "Unit's" mother, Dawn, and step-father, Harry Butler, who make the journey every year from Victoria to Cairns, to attend the event named in memory of their son.

Danielle Peever, the Nurse Unit Manager of the Oncology Ward at Cairns Hospital, remains a driving force behind the Jet Ski Fundrun: she has been the top fundraiser for the event for two years in a row (closely followed by Roger Bell, who has participated in every Fundrun since the event was launched.) To date, the 2013 "Unit's" Jet Ski Fundrun has raised a total of almost \$13,000 – and donations are still flowing in.

Bren Turner is now busy raising another Fundrun participant – his son, Liam, currently 30 months of age.

"I took him out on a jet ski for the first time last weekend. He loved it," said the proud father. "He couldn't wait to go to child care to tell everyone about it."



Jet skiers arrive at Fitzroy Island

School children help young patients get ready for Christmas

While most children are busy composing their Santa wish lists and making holiday plans, a group of Kuranda primary school students has taken time out to ensure that children in the Cairns Hospital do not miss out on the excitement of Christmas preparations.

On 3 December, six Year 7 students from the Candlenut Steiner School in Kuranda travelled to the hospital to help youngsters in the Paediatric Ward make Christmas decorations, and then adorn the ward with their festive artwork.

On the same day, the rest of their classmates were busily decorating the wards at the Mareeba Hospital.



Candlenut Steiner School Year 7 students from Kuranda, Max Ridinsky (left) and Taneesha Stallbaum (right), both 13, bring some Christmas cheer to little Saxon, aged two and a half, in the Paediatric Ward at Cairns Hospital

Their teacher, Michelle Martin, said the Steiner School encouraged students to think of others and seize opportunities to engage in "random acts of kindness" – not just at Christmas, but all year round.

"We believe that it is important to help children develop compassion and a sense of community," she said.

Wheel done!

The 2013 Mount Franklin Cardiac Challenge attracted 350 riders from Queensland, interstate and overseas, and is currently on track to reach its fundraising target of \$350,000!

The pumped riders, aged from 12 to 74, peddled out of Cairns on Saturday, 21 September ... 335 kilometres of road, several thousand litres of sweat and three days of laughter and groaning muscles later, the 15 packs swept triumphantly down the main street of Cooktown and dismounted on the banks of the Endeavour River.

More than 600 riders, support crew members and volunteers gathered at the presentation dinner to relax, swap stories and congratulate this year's top fundraisers:

- **Individual fundraiser:** \$9,407 Graeme King (Pushin Thru team member)
- **Fundraising team:** \$22,038 Pushin Thru

Well done, Mount Franklin Cardiac Challenge "Class of 2013"! You can rack your bikes ... for the moment. Registration for the next Mount Franklin Cardiac Challenge will open early next year!



Sight for sore eyes

Doctors at Cairns Hospital will be able to focus on their job more easily with the help of a new instrument that takes the guess-work out of diagnosing eye conditions.

The automated refractor/keratometer is a hand-held device that allows doctors to quickly and accurately assess the strength of focus in a patient's eyes.

Previously, staff at the hospital's busy Ophthalmology Outpatients Clinic, which treats about 30 patients per day, were required to manually measure eye strength or advise patients to go to their local optometrist to receive the more up-to-date test and then return to the clinic with the results.

"Manually measuring a patient's eye strength by holding up a series of lens one at a time was a tedious, time-consuming and not very accurate process," observed Dr Neha Sharma, who works in the Ophthalmology Department.

"The alternative – sending people to the optometrist for testing – could be quite an exhausting process for elderly patients, particularly those suffering from cataracts, who then faced a lengthy waiting list for surgery."

The automated refractor/keratometer was purchased for the clinic by the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation with a donation received from the Lions Clubs International Foundation Sight First Program.

Worth \$16,500, the new equipment will save "vast amounts" of time in the diagnosis of eye conditions and also provide more accurate information.



Cairns Hospital Ophthalmology Department staff test the new automated refractor/keratometer

"The instrument provides valuable information needed both before and after cataract surgery," said Dr Sharma. "It ensures that the intraocular lens inserted in the patient's eye is the correct strength, and also helps us to evaluate the outcome of the surgery."

While the majority of the Ophthalmology Outpatient Clinic's patients are aged between 60 and 80, the new device will also be useful with younger patients.

"Many children who come to the clinic require spectacles," said Dr Sharma. "The automated refractor/keratometer will ensure they receive the correct prescription of glasses – and will also help us to diagnose cases of amblyopia (otherwise known as "lazy eye")."

Going the extra distance

Which bank is willing to walk the Kokoda Trail in New Guinea, bake an endless supply of cup cakes and hit a hole in one every year to raise money for the Hospital Foundation?

Five years ago, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia decided to make an investment in the future health of Far North Queensland residents.

"We wanted to focus our fundraising efforts on a charity that touches the lives of most people – so we chose the Hospital Foundation," said Vanessa Moret-Lalli, the Commonwealth Bank's Operations Manager for Regional and Agribusiness Banking.

The 12-strong Regional and Agribusiness Banking team, based in Cairns, was already into the swing of fundraising: staging a highly successful annual charity golf day.

But in September 2009, nine members of the corporate team decided to make a huge leap outside their professionally deskbound comfort zone and tackle the notoriously demanding 96 km trek along the Kokoda Trail, in order to raise money for the Hospital Foundation's Paediatric Playground Project.

Commonwealth Bank North Queensland Area Manager, Aaron Boddington, was one of the staff members, ranging in age from 30 to 50-plus, who volunteered for the ambitious expedition.

"Intense preparation was required, after we all had a laugh about our varying levels of fitness," he said.

"The preparation extended way beyond simple training runs, with some team members undertaking regular personal training sessions and intensive bike riding, and others regularly trekking local mountains on the weekends.

"But no matter how challenging things got, we had powerful motivation, which was to raise money to build a playground for children in the Cairns Hospital."

The Kokoda Trail trekkers made it back alive and the expedition raised \$32,000 for the Foundation's Paediatric Playground Project.

Since then, the fundraising fever has extended beyond the original Regional and Agribusiness Banking team and now includes more than 100 Commonwealth Bank staff stationed at branches between Tully and Port Douglas, and on the Tablelands as well.

Staff at the bank's Lake Street and Smithfield branches in Cairns are renowned for their highly popular fundraising bake sales, which are a regular sell-out. In September alone, their culinary efforts raised more than \$1000 for the Hospital Foundation.



Taking time out during the Kokoda Trail expedition

"The staff do all the baking in their own time," said Ms Moret-Lalli. "Then they come in to work and decorate the whole office in the Foundation's colours (purple and gold)."

"These fundraisers – and all the other staff who fundraise throughout the region – are proud to demonstrate that the Hospital Foundation can always bank on our support."

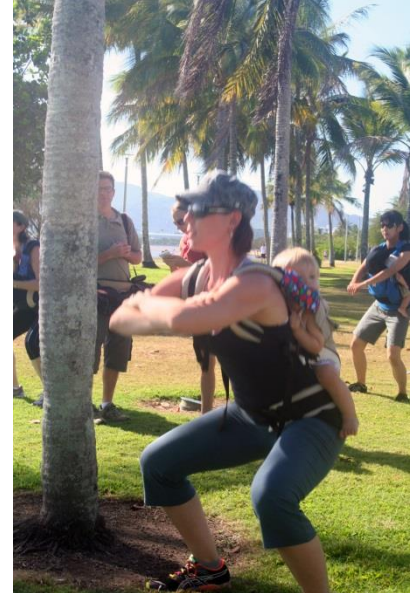
Baby steps

They were no doubt the youngest "flash mob" performers that Cairns has ever seen: 30 bouncing babies strapped to their mums for a fundraising work-out on the Cairns Esplanade.

The flexible family event, which raised \$2,000 for the Foundation, was organised by Philippa Bowman, owner of Kangatraining Cairns, which runs postnatal exercise classes for women who like to keep their babies close to them – even while exercising.

The practise, known as "babywear", holds particular meaning for mums whose babies arrived prematurely or experienced other health issues which required them to spend time in the Special Care Nursery at Cairns Hospital.

"Each family I have spoken to who have had their child or children in the Special Care Nursery cannot speak highly enough of the staff and support they have received," said Ms Bowman.



Their experiences prompted the physical trainer to organise a special fundraising Kanga class on the Esplanade to raise money for the Hospital Foundation, which will use the proceeds to help purchase new equipment for the Special Care Nursery.

"There were about 30 mums and their babies taking part, so we made a pretty good flash mob," said Ms Bowman.

"We played songs like Lady Ga Ga's *Born this Way* and Jennifer Lopez' *Let's Get Loud*."

The event was held on 12 October, during International Babywear Week.

Dead accurate

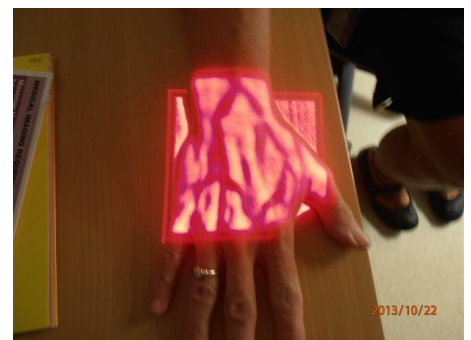
Inserting a needle into a patient's vein can be a challenging procedure for medical staff and a painful one for the patient. It can also be a matter of life or death.

The Foundation recently equipped the Mossman Hospital Emergency Department and the Cairns Hospital Surgical Care Centre with a revolutionary device that literally makes light work of inserting needles.

Medications are delivered intravenously to treat a range of emergency conditions, such as anaphylactic shock, cardiac arrest and haemorrhages. Any delays in finding a vein and successfully inserting the needle can have a dramatic outcome on the patient's chances of survival.

The AccuVein, which resembles a hand torch, emits an infrared light that immediately illuminates the veins beneath the skin like a road map, when it is shone over the surface of a patient's arm (or other part of their body).

"Haemoglobin in the blood absorbs infrared light, so when the AccuVein is held above the patient's skin, the veins



**The AccuVein highlights the veins
in the back of the hand**

stand out darkly," observed Mossman Hospital Nurse Unit Manager, Sharen Cook.

"This saves valuable time when we need to insert an IV needle quickly to begin treating a patient or obtain blood specimens to help diagnose their condition.

The pocket-size AccuVein, purchased for \$7,500, is battery-rechargeable and can be used hands-free.

"It will be particularly useful for treating babies and other patients whose veins can be difficult to find, such as the elderly and the obese, as well as burns victims and people who are agitated," said Ms Cook.

Stuck on Christmas?

Christmas is fast approaching and some people are already breaking out in stress-related "tinsel-itis".

However, for those of you who have a cool time at Yule time, do we have a job for you ...!

Every year, the Foundation recruits a festive, nimble-fingered army of volunteers to staff the charity's annual Christmas gift wrapping service.

For one gold coin donation per parcel, hundreds of harried Christmas shoppers are happy to watch someone else wrestle with the wrapping paper and sticky tape.

Last year, the Foundation's gift wrappers used almost seven kilometres of paper. Their artistic efforts, along with the raffle tickets they sold, raised more than \$16,000 in the lead up to Christmas!

This December, the gift wrapping service is being rolled out at three locations: between Tosca's and the Sushi Train at Cairns Central, (from 2 December) as well as in Myer, (from 13 December), and Michael Aw The Good Guys store at 285 Mulgrave Road (from 11 December).

"It's a great way to share the spirit of Christmas with others, and at the same time assist the Foundation," said Volunteer Program Manager, Anne Chirio.

If you would like to volunteer for the Christmas Wrap please contact Anne Chirio on 4226 8993 or email anne.chirio@fnghf.org.au



That's a wrap! Hospital Foundation volunteers, John Heineman and Sarah Douglass, have a gift for gift wrapping

Wheel chair roll-out

The Triage section at Innisfail Hospital is on a roll since the arrival of three new wheel chairs purchased by the Innisfail Friends of the Foundation.

The wheel chairs, which vary in size to accommodate patients of different stature, were funded by a \$2,000 donation from stalwart FoF supporter, Christine Vincent.

Innisfail Hospital Director of Nursing, Lesley Harris welcomed the arrival of the new wheel chairs.

"It's important to be able to provide comfortable transport for patients in our community who come to the hospital," she said.

"These new wheel chairs will get a lot of use. They will assist us to transport patients with mobility issues to and from the Emergency Department and also to the wards, if they are admitted."



On your marks ... (from left) Innisfail FoF member, Estelle Kopp, FoF supporter, Christine Vincent and Children's and Maternity Wards Nurse Unit Manager at Innisfail Hospital, Joanne Stitt, get ready to test the new wheel chairs (under the watchful eyes of Emergency Department Clinical Nurse, Ethel Mestroni and Registered Nurse, Joanna Labrinske)

Ms Harris said Innisfail was "very fortunate" to possess such a pro-active FoF group, committed to assisting the hospital, while Estelle Kopp paid tribute to FoF supporter, Christine Vincent, the proprietor of several McDonalds restaurants in Innisfail and Cairns.

"We are overwhelmed by her continuing generosity," she said.

Basket case

Darrylene Paterson keeps her talent under wraps.

During the past three years, the Foundation volunteer has assembled and wrapped more than 1,000 tempting gift baskets, which are snapped up by visitors on their way to see patients in the Cairns Hospital.

This year alone, Ms Paterson's baskets have netted the Foundation around \$6500.

Not surprisingly, baby gift baskets are particularly in demand. Ms Broadbent enjoys combining nursery staples, like nappies, wipes and baby powder, with ultra-cute baby accessories, such as decorative bibs, singlets, headbands and tiny slippers – topped with a cuddly soft toy.



Darrylene Paterson (right) and her friend, Judy Turner, have a gift for gift presentation

The basket contents are colour-coordinated, but Ms Paterson has extended her colour palette to include hot pink, lime green and purple-hued items, as well as the more traditional pastel tints.

A true artist, she has a number of "works in progress" – baskets that will not be ready until she is satisfied with the contents she has found for them.

Ms Paterson's friend, Judy Turner, acts as her "scout", keeping any eye out for suitable items to add to her stockpile.

During a monthly visit to Cairns, the Airlie Beach-based volunteer drops off her latest batch of gift baskets to the Foundation office.

"I usually bring about 30 baskets, depending on size," said Ms Paterson.

Now that's a lady with considerable presents.

Food for thought

FNQ Hospital Foundation Commercial Operations Manager and self-confessed "foodie", Steve McGuinness, who oversees the menu at the Foundation's Sea Breeze cafe, is a firm believer in culinary creativity.

Make thyme for herbs this summer

When I was an apprentice chef in the late 80's, herbs were not used much, apart from a token sprig of parsley to garnish a dish and make it look a little posh, and, of course, a standard jar of "mixed herbs".

These days we use an abundance of fresh herbs in our everyday cooking and it certainly is a great way to bring a dish to life. There is not a savoury dish in any cuisine that doesn't taste better with the addition of fresh herbs.

Don't be shy when using fresh herbs. Many cooks are a little stingy with them, perhaps due to a lack of confidence or understanding of how fresh herbs can enhance food.

Whatever you do, use herbs in the dish and not just as a garnish – half a branch of rosemary has no place sitting on a rack of lamb!

With summer upon us, the smell of barbeque is filling the air, so I thought I'd share my recipe for *Chimichurri* – one of most delicious and versatile sauces around.

Chimichurri is traditionally served with grilled steak, but it goes great with chicken and fish too. It works well as a marinade or just spooned over your dish, and is also delicious on vegetables. (I love it best with grilled barbeque lamb or beef.)

Chimichurri

Ingredients

- 1 cup tightly packed fresh parsley leaves
- 1 and a 1/2 cups tightly packed fresh coriander leaves and stalks
- 1/2 cup tightly packed fresh oregano leaves or fresh mint
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tablespoon toasted cumin seeds, ground
- 1 pinch of chilli flakes
- 100ml olive oil
- 50ml red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar or honey
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper



Method


Place all the ingredients in a food processor and blitz to a coarse paste.

Taste and season with sea salt and pepper.

Refrigerate until required, then spoon a good drizzle of Chimichurri on your favourite barbeque dish. Yum!!



putting the pieces together
for a **healthier** north



far north queensland
hospital
foundation

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