

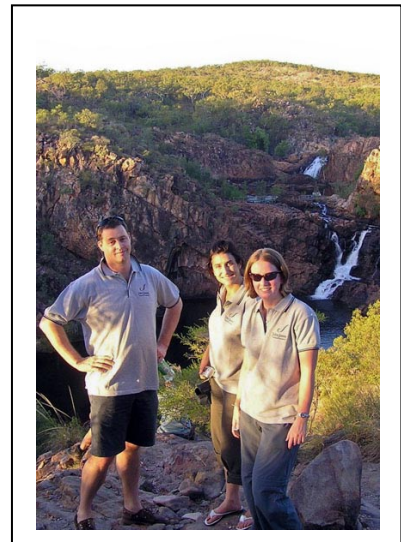
## John James Completes its First Volunteer Specialist Trips to Katherine, NT

The John James Memorial Foundation, former owner of the John James Memorial Hospital and now a broad based Health Promotions Charity has commenced its Specialist Volunteer Program, arranging for the first two medical teams to travel to Katherine in the Northern Territory for a week at a time.



The first team, comprising Orthopaedic Surgeons, Drs Al Burns and Chris Roberts, Anaesthetist, Dr Peter Yorke and Calvary John James Hospital nurses Angelo De Paoli and Megan Hassall travelled from Canberra to Katherine on Sunday 18 May 2008. Monday began with an outpatient clinic at Katherine Hospital, which was repeated again on Tuesday. A relatively early finish at 4.30pm on Tuesday allowed for some sight-seeing at the beautiful Edith Falls, just north of Katherine.

Wednesday dawned with Al Burns and Angela De Paoli travelling to Beswick (approximately 100km south of Katherine) and Chris Roberts and Megan Hassall flying by charter to Ngukurr (about an hour by plane east of Katherine). Both groups enjoyed their time in these remote clinics and were kept busy seeing patients throughout the day, most of whom had been waiting some considerable time for a specialist consult. They did however find some time to tour the local surrounds guided by the friendly clinic staff. While Al and Chris were at these remote clinics, Peter Yorke spent the day in theatre with Darwin based General Surgeon, Dr David Read.



The whole team then spent Thursday and Friday in theatre carrying out a variety of operations from fractures to knee arthroscopies. In doing so, they performed the first ACL reconstruction in Katherine Hospital and the first endoscopic carpal tunnel decompression in the Northern Territory – with thanks to Bill Walker at Arthrex and the Calvary John James Hospital for supplying the necessary equipment. In total for the week, the team carried out almost 100 patient clinic consults (including a number of ED staff consults), 14 theatre procedures and added a few new cases to the waiting list for the visiting Orthopaedic surgeon from Darwin.



The second trip commenced on Sunday, 1 June 2008 and included ENT Surgeon, Dr Gerry Crisp, Anaesthetist Dr Mark Skacel, Vascular Surgeon, Dr David Hardman and Calvary John James nurses Debbie Simpson and Narelle O'Rourke.

The week began with an outpatient clinic at Katherine Hospital for Gerry Crisp and an anaesthetic clinic for Mark Skacel, who would be assisting a local doctor on the Tuesday and Wednesday with a sizeable backlog of circumcision cases. Tuesday saw further clinic consulting and by the end of the day Gerry Crisp had seen almost 30

patients over the two days – a good result given the two thirds turn up rate on scheduled appointments.

On Wednesday the whole team travelled to the remote community of Borroloola, about two hours by charter plane south east of Katherine. Gerry saw around 15 patients and David a further five before a little local sight-seeing and the flight back to Katherine. Thursday was spent in theatre by the whole team from 8am to 9pm, which was followed by enjoying the cuisine of the local petrol station – the only place still open in Katherine selling food!

During the week David conducted several educational seminars on diabetic wound treatment, which by all accounts were extremely well received and in total for the week, Gerry completed almost 50 clinic consults and nine procedures with David adding a few more consults and operations in between seminars.



So far, the trips have been extremely well received by the Katherine staff, remote clinic staff and patients. By all accounts NT Health are also extremely happy, with the NT Minister for Health, Dr Chris Burns saying: “The program of specialist visits and services that have been organised [by the John James Foundation] will assist the department in providing much needed medical support to the Katherine Region and will also help reduce the specialist waiting time for patients living in this region. This can only lead to an enhanced health outcome for these patients”.

The Foundation has five further teams booked to travel to Katherine during 2008 from late July to late September across the specialties of Dental, ENT and O&G and is extremely grateful to the previously mentioned Doctors for the time they gave and to Drs Peter Wong, Susie Hsieh, Phil Morrissey, Liz Gallagher, Janelle McDonald, Fiona Bell, Don Lu, Peter Chapman and Phil Mutton, who are booked on future trips.

It is expected the Program will continue on an almost monthly basis from 2009 onwards and if anyone would like more information or would like to offer their time to assist, please contact the Foundation’s CEO, Mr Peter Williams on telephone 02 6281 6695 or by email: [peter.williams@jjmf.org.au](mailto:peter.williams@jjmf.org.au).