

MEDIA RELEASE

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Yvonne 'Thom' Rebner Calls Time on a Stellar Career at Burnside Hospital

Burnside Hospital announces the retirement of our longest serving staff member, Clinical Manager of the Perioperative Service, Yvonne 'Thom' Rebner. Thom arrived at Burnside Hospital in 1974 as a 23-year old Registered Nurse and has participated in over 50,000 surgical procedures in her 43 years at the Hospital.

- 1974: 23-year old Thom commences employment at Burnside Hospital as a Registered Nurse in what were three theatres downstairs.
- 1978: moves to work in Ear Nose Throat surgery, which became one of her favourite roles
- 1992: promoted to Clinical Nurse following the entire theatre suite move upstairs to the 1st floor and a large expansion to 5 theatres including a day surgery suite.
- 1997: takes on the role of Clinical Nurse Consultant
- 2000: moved to acting Clinical Manager when her predecessor left and took over the role as Clinical Manager of the Perioperative Service permanently in 2002.
- 2017: announces her retirement from nursing

If you've undergone surgery at Burnside Hospital since 1974, chances are you've been cared for by Yvonne 'Thom' Rebner. From her earliest memories of begging her mother for a nurse's dress-up kit at the age of three, Thom has lived her nursing dream since starting her career in 1966. Some of her favourite recollections of Burnside Hospital include her early days amongst the theatre team of 10 (the number of staff working in the Periop Suite now stands at approximately 90) when the surgeons would regularly join the small team of nurses for a chat in the tearoom and she recalls many fun Christmas parties!

Through a career spent in the operating theatre, one of Thom's most distinct memories was a patient with a diagnosis of an early placenta praevia caesarean section that resulted in a full hysterectomy. While both mother and baby were fine, Thom remembers more blood than she had ever seen in her nursing career and the memory of the operation and the outcome for the patient has stayed with her since.

A highlight for Thom was her appointment to Clinical Nurse in 1992. The Manager targeted Thom for the role because she had volunteered willingly for extra tasks, always asked to learn more and took new staff under her very experienced wing. Thom recalls being 'chuffed' to be approached for the role and she relished the increased responsibilities, higher level nursing duties and being able to facilitate staff education and training.

A career over 43 years witnesses a generation of change and the most intense has been the advancements in technology that have assisted the visiting medical officers and nursing and support staff. Laparoscopic work, robotic devices, electronically operated operating tables, theatre lights, instrumentation advancement, cardiac and anaesthetic monitoring systems, patient positioning devices, sterilisation processes to name a few have all resulted in improvement and enhancement of patients' perioperative care and clinical outcomes.

For Thom and her colleagues who trained to be a theatre nurse prior to the 1980's, their focus was on upskilling and education for each new development in procedures and instrumentation. For example, a cataract lens replacement procedure during Thom's early days in the theatre meant the patient was under a general anaesthetic for an hour-long surgery and recovery meant 10 days flat on their back in hospital with their head movement restricted. The procedure is now 15 minutes under local anaesthetic and the patient is usually discharged within a few hours!

Clinical Manager of the Perioperative Service, Yvonne 'Thom' Rebner:

"I have seen first-hand the developments in the way the hospital is managed, with better policies and procedures, continually improved clinical standards, changes in technology, new research and risk mitigation all contributing to a improvements in clinical practice, safer working conditions for staff and better outcomes for the patient."

Her advice for young nurses moving into the industry is to start in general nursing with lots of patient contact to give them grounding in the industry and allow their interest area to develop. As for theatre nurses, be meticulous and taken an interest in all aspects of what occurs in an operating theatre. Ask questions and show initiative – no hands in pockets! When asked what makes a great nurse, Thom's response is simple; great nurses are patient advocates – they put their patient first above all else.

While Thom lost her beloved husband Dieter just months ago, she is planning some road tripping across Australia following her departure from Burnside Hospital on 7 July 2017. Then, after a well-deserved 5-star Darwin holiday with her daughter Karin and granddaughter Kayla, Thom is preparing a move to country South Australia to create her dream garden complete with home-grown veggies and a chicken coop.

Clinical Manager of the Perioperative Service, Yvonne 'Thom' Rebner:

"Theatre has been the great love of my nursing career and I wouldn't change a day of it. From the surgeons & anaesthetists I have worked with over my years here, the team that have supported me and the young nurses that start their career with Burnside Hospital, I have appreciated the professionalism, exceptional knowledge and care that each person brings to the patient experience. Up until my last day, I have learnt something new each and every day from all of the team here. Thank you."

Thom, you have certainly taught the team at Burnside about commitment, professionalism and dedication. You will be missed.

Director of Clinical Operations, Ms Suzanne Murray:

“Our longest serving staff member Ms Yvonne (Thom) Rebner is highly regarded by the clinicians, staff and patients alike and has been an effective and well respected manager. Though we wish her a happy, healthy and well deserved retirement, she will be missed by us all.”

CEO Heather Messenger:

“Thom is an outstanding Manager and a very good nurse: she is loyal & hard working with a calm and professional demeanour that instills confidence in all those with whom she works. Being a manager of a perioperative suite can be a thankless task but Thom has met the challenges over many years with great finesse. She is the epitome of what the public thinks of when they say about someone, ‘she’s a good nurse’. Thom has had a stellar career at Burnside Hospital and we thank her for her contribution and wish her all the very best of health and happiness in her new ventures.”

Note

The new Clinical Manager at Burnside Hospital is Mr Trent Batchelor. Trent’s most recent role was as the Perioperative Service Manager at Epworth Healthcare in Geelong where his role involved the establishment and then management of a Perioperative Service in this brand new hospital. Prior to this Trent was in a similar role at Ashford Hospital, Adelaide for six years.

About the Burnside Hospital

Burnside Hospital is a not for profit community-based hospital that has 76 beds, five operating theatres and a range of services and clinics to care for and support the thousands of patients who choose to have their healthcare needs met at the hospital each year.

The hospital’s vision is to sustainably serve current and future generations of the South Australian community by delivering excellent outcomes for patients.

The hospital was awarded four years’ accreditation from the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards in October 2014 under the EQIPNational Standards. These standards include the 10 mandatory National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards designed by the Australian Commission for safety & Quality in Healthcare to provide a nationally consistent statement of the level of care consumer should expect from health services. The accreditation provides the community with a clear message that the hospital, board, management staff and volunteers are committed to excellence in healthcare with a strong & continuous focus on safety, quality and performance.

For more information about the hospital, please refer to the website: www.burnsidehospital.asn.au

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