



MEDIA RELEASE

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CAMPAIGN FOR CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY IN THEATRES

Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) today launched its new fundraising campaign - Operation LRH, which aims to raise money for equipment for the operating theatres.

Operation LRH has set a \$500,000 target over the next two years.

LRH theatre manager Christine Lynch said the appeal was working with theatre staff to raise the profile of these vital facilities and bring in extra funding for new technologies.

"LRH has four operating theatres and specialises in general surgical, orthopaedic, ophthalmology, gynaecology, obstetrics as well as ear, nose and throat surgery. More than 7700 operations were carried out here last year," Ms Lynch said.

"One of the first pieces of equipment the Operation LRH appeal is seeking to deliver is an image intensifier, worth \$200,000. An image intensifier is a highly complex piece of equipment that allows surgeons to see real time images on a monitor during surgical procedures," she said.

Orthopaedic surgeon Peter Rehfisch said an image intensifier is used in the repair of bone fractures, the placement of catheters, for the insertion of long term intravenous lines and when checking for gall stones.

"A new image intensifier would be very valuable as Latrobe Regional Hospital is the region's major referral hospital for orthopaedic surgery, Mr Rehfisch said.

"More than 1900 orthopaedic operations were carried out here last year," Mr Rehfisch said.

"Everyone from Mallacoota to Pakenham comes here with fractures and degenerative joint disease, an image intensifier is used when we treat those conditions.

"Some of the equipment is in need of an upgrade because it is used constantly and with advances in technology we can do more with new equipment.

"The Operation LRH appeal is tremendous. It is enormously helpful for the operating theatres and for the patients who go through here, if the money can be raised," he said.

Latrobe Regional Hospital board of directors, chair Barry Dunstan said Operation LRH signalled a major shift in fundraising efforts from the Gippsland Cancer Care Centre (GCCC).

"While the hospital acknowledges the enormous efforts made by the community towards the Cancer Care Centre, it is time to change the focus," Mr Dunstan said.

"The hospital has been in public ownership for nine years and there are emerging needs specifically within the operating theatres.

"Equipment is ageing and in need of updating, there are also upgrades needed to keep up with advances in technology.

"The state government does fund new equipment on a regular basis, however fundraising will improve the hospital's capacity to deliver more services and improve health outcomes," Mr Dunstan said.

Operation LRH campaign has already received generous support from the Churchill and District Lions Club. The club's donation of \$7000 has enabled LRH to purchase a new blanket warmer.

"The Lions Club felt that it was important to support their local hospital and in particular Operation LRH," president Tom Quinn said

"We would encourage other clubs, groups and individuals to consider supporting this appeal as it is a very worthwhile cause," he said.

For further information about Operation LRH and how to assist please contact LRH's fundraising department on 5173 8577.

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For more information contact Kate Lancaster, Communications Advisor, Latrobe Regional Hospital on 03 5173 8589.