

# Getting Good Stuff Done



COMFORT: Books and magazines are just some of the things Jeanne Lindsey offer to patients to help make their stay that little bit better. (Charles Geary: 447042)



SUPPORT: Jeanne Lindsey is one of many Drovers who have supported those staying at the hospital over the years. (447042)

## Drovers of the wards

### CHARLES GEARY

AN extended stay in the hospital can be a daunting experience, particularly in Central Australia where your nearest family members may be thousands of kilometres away.

That's where the Drovers Volunteer Service at the Alice Springs Hospital comes in.

Founded in 2007, the Drovers have been helping make stays a little more comfortable for almost two decades, with volunteers bringing essentials and support to patients staying in wards across the hospital.

Whether that is providing those who have been admitted unexpectedly in an emergency with toiletries and phone chargers, or having a chat, being a smiling face needed at a low point,

the Drovers have been a welcome sight for many patients.

Jeanne Lindsey was one of the service's first volunteers in 2007, having returned to volunteering after a break caring for her late husband. Having spent much of her life volunteering, she realised the service was something she wanted to support after attending initial meetings to set it up.

Mrs Lindsey said she had found it important to return the favour to a community which has been so good to her.

"I've had issues myself that I've needed support," Mrs Lindsey said.

"I think it's good to give that to the community that's supported me for 38 years."

Whether it be an overnight night visit or an extended stay at the hospital, it can be an awfully isolating and lonely experience for a patient if they're by themselves.

Mrs Lindsey said while things such as books, toys, and activities were popular with patients, it was a simple smile that proved to be the biggest hit time and time again.

"I think it's the chat," Mrs Lindsey said.

"People say, 'oh I'm glad you've come in, it's nice to see a smiling face,' and you just sit there and have a chat.

"But they do like their magazines and crossword puzzles."

It's not only the patients who are glad to see the Drovers, but the doctors and nurses as well.

With medical professionals working hard across the country, Mrs Lindsey said they are always thrilled to see a Drover.

"The staff are really appreciative.

"They're always 'oh it's lovely to see you! Not me personally, just a Drover..."

"They do praise us quite a lot."

Mrs Lindsey said the simple act of giving back to others was the most rewarding aspect of her role.

She also said meeting a range of people who come through the hospital was also interesting.

"You meet all sorts of people too. Some of them are quite characters."

To join the Drovers Volunteer Service or find out more phone 0458 978 653.

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52 Smith St, Alice Springs NT 0870