

PPC Photo I.D. cards improves Tennant Creek Hospital security

WHILE the use of security photo ID cards is commonplace in Australia's large city hospitals, the trend for staff to carry photo ID is now spreading to smaller hospitals in remote outback communities.

An example of this can be found at the Tennant Creek Hospital.

The hospital is part of an integrated health service offered by the NT Department of Health and Community Services in the Barkly region.

Tennant Creek Hospital is a 20-bed facility providing diagnostic and therapeutic services for both inpatient and outpatients.

The hospital serves 6,000 residents across the 250,000 sq km Barkly Region which extends from just north of Ti-Tree in the south to Elliott in the north and east to the Queensland border.

According to the hospital's General Manager Mary Williams the staff works closely with the local general practice, aboriginal health organisation and rural and remote sections of the Barkly Health Service to provide integrated health services to its patients.

"The hospital employs four full time Medical Officers. District Medical Officers from Alice Springs Remote Health services the remote communities in the Barkly region," said Ms Williams.

"A 24 hour Accident and Emergency Department and an Aerial Medical Service are provided.

"We have a Renal Dialysis Unit, Community Health Services and a Health Development Unit located on the hospital campus."

With 77 staff employed by the hospital as well as numerous contractors and visiting medical service providers it is essential that staff and others can readily identify each other.

In June of 2005 a PPC plastic card printer was purchased for the purposes of being able to produce Photo ID cards on demand.



Ms Williams said that they purchased the PPC plastic card printer because the previous method of printing ID cards from an excel file, physically pasting down photos and then laminating them was far too time consuming for staff.

"The addition of PPC's printer turned a difficult process into a simple and quick ID security card solution," said Ms Williams.

"Even though it is a small hospital the staff have adopted well to wearing the Photo ID card.

"You become very conscious of the ID card when you meet with staff. The card readily identifies who the person is and to what department they belong through different colour coding on the card."

Ms Williams explains that an additional security feature of a red stripe is included on cards where staff need to have access to restricted areas in the hospital.

"If the photo ID card doesn't carry a red stripe then the person is denied access to restricted areas," she said.

"Another handy feature of the card is that we have printed the hospital's security colour reference codes on the back of the card. In the event that a security alert is announced staff can quickly refer to the back of the card to see what the alert means.

"We also use the printer to produce visitor badges for contractors or other visiting medical service people.

"The PPC plastic card printer is very easy to use and the back up support has been there from day one.

"We are very happy with our decision to go with PPC."