

Boffins get in on the joke

DAD jokes will replace discourse and limericks will replace lectures this week at the University of Newcastle.

The institution's city campus will host a three-day laughter conference starting today.

The 19th Colloquium of the Australasian Humour Studies Network will bring together more than 50 national and international experts, academics and practitioners who study humour as a cultural form and creative activity.

Topics include analysing the humour in dad jokes, animations, political satire, limericks, comics, feminist art and stand-up comedy.

Conjoint Professor Michael Evans from the faculty of education and arts and Michael Meany from the faculty of science and information technology have convened the colloquium.

Mr Meany said it was the first time Newcastle had hosted the conference.

"Humour is one of the things that makes us human," he said.

— Alison Branley



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MESS FIGHTER:
Marissa Roberts with daughters Sophie, 3, and Georgia, 18 months.
Picture: Marina Neil

Blogger cleans up

By **PENELOPE GREEN**
Business Reporter

OF all the tips that Australia's desperately time poor, working mums ask Shortland's queen of clean Marissa Roberts, by far the most popular is how to tidy up a living area for unexpected guests.

"I have a sneaky trick – I tell them to have a 'put-away' basket, or a container with a lid that looks pretty, so if they have random visitors they can pop everything in there and sit it beneath a table or beside a chair and it still looks good," said Mrs Roberts, mum to daughters Sophie and Georgia.

Encouraged by the friends she helped with her own tried-and-tested remedies as a working mum keen to keep her house in order, Mrs Roberts launched her blog-turned busi-

ness beautifullyorganised.com a year ago.

Such is her reputation for using her powers of good to fight the evil force of mess, Mrs Roberts has been asked to play a key role in a new mentoring program designed to help working mums cope with their overloaded lot.

Working Mums Masterclass is an online support network for women who can tap into workshops, webinars and events that last about 45 minutes via phone or Skype and cost about \$69 an hour.

Developed by Sydneysider Penny Webb, the program features 12 mentors in categories ranging from Mrs Roberts' specialist area of home organisation to cyber safety, meal planning and health and nutrition.

Mrs Roberts – who insists her

husband, if asked, would refer to her as orderly rather than bossy by nature – said she was honoured to be among the select group of national mentors who will be available to help clients ranging from a mum on a remote farm who can't cajole her toddler to eat vegies to a city-based mum struggling to juggle her schedule.

"Most working mums just don't have time to stop and look at how they are running their home and how they can make life easier for themselves," she said of her own skills.

"They are too busy putting out fires to look at fire protection, if you like, so that's where I come in to offer advice."

Mrs Roberts is also more than happy to assist house husbands.

DITCH OR KEEP

To declutter your household, ask yourself 4 questions

1. Do you own it? If you don't, don't keep it. If you really need one, you'll value it enough to get one.

2. Do you use it every month? If you're not using something regularly, it's just taking up space.

3. How much would you miss it? Put it in a box with a lid, write the date six months from now on the lid. If you don't open the box by that date, it's safe to throw away or donate the item.

4. Does it have a home to live in? If you value it enough to keep it, assign somewhere for it to belong and keep it there.

Hospital reports major mistakes

By **ALISON BRANLEY**
Health Reporter

A BABY was given another mother's breast milk, 11 patients were given the wrong scans, seven were given medication they were allergic to and three people were the victims of surgical errors at Hunter hospitals in the past 12 months.

Hunter New England Health has revealed there were 15 major medical mistakes at its hospitals in 2012 and seven medication mix-ups.

The 15 mistakes, known as "sentinel events", were recorded from 134,000 hospital experiences, including admissions and outpatient encounters, the health service said.

In one case a baby, one out of 6400 births, was given another mother's breast milk.

It is understood the baby was closely monitored afterwards and



REGRET:
Director Anne Duggan said incidents were distressing.



PROACTIVE:
Group founder Lorraine Long is unhappy with the complaints procedure.

the family offered counselling.

The three "surgery-related" events were among almost 42,000 theatre attendances.

Hunter New England Health's clinical governance acting director Associate Professor Anne Duggan said while the incidents were regrettable and distressing, there were no "adverse outcomes" from the incidents.

"Hunter New England Health thoroughly investigates each sentinel event and adverse reaction to determine how they occurred and takes any action required to minimise the risk of

further incidents," she said.

"Actions and lessons learned are also incorporated into teaching material used across district."

Medical Error Action Group founder Lorraine Long said they were pursuing a number of cases with Hunter New England Health.

She said she had written to the service a number of times with no response and was unhappy with its complaints department.

"Hunter New England Health are secretive, they're not open and transparent," she said.

"[They] are notorious for not

handing over medical records.

"There's a number of families that have matters still before the executive."

Ms Long said the figures were based on voluntary reports and the government should start actively investigating health matters.

"Those figures would be a minimum," she said.

"There's a level of carelessness that just continues."

Ms Long encouraged patients to be proactive to avoid mistakes.

Australian Medical Association president and neurosurgeon Professor Brian Owler said it was important to remember doctors were human.

"Anyone who works in the health system understands that things can go wrong," he said.

"When they do it's important to learn from those problems."

Clinical governance departments in hospitals investigated such incidents, he said.

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- Creamy Garlic Prawns, Simmered in White Wine, Cream & Garlic, Served w/ Steamed Jasmine Rice
- Curried Prawns in a Delicious Vegetable Curry, Served w/ Lemon Myrtle Rice
- Crumbed Prawn Cutlets, Served w/ House Made Tartare, Chips & Salad
- Chilled Whole Prawn, Avocado & Mixed Tossed Salad, w/ Lemon Dressing
- Grilled Marinated Moroccan Prawns, Served on Crisp Caesar Salad

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