



ST VINCENT'S  
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

MELBOURNE

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA



# 2024 Quality of Care

A year in review

Better and  
fairer care.  
**Always.**

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Cover image: Megan Hearn, Continuum of Care Coordinator, and Sarada Gurung, Continuum of Care ANUM, lead the Pre-admission Service. Together with their team, Megan and Sarada work tirelessly to continuously improve pre-admission processes to achieve exceptional patient experiences.





# CEO Message

As I reflect on 2024, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne team for all that we have accomplished together over the year. Your dedication and hard work have made a significant impact across our four hospitals in East Melbourne, Fitzroy, Kew, and Werribee.

In East Melbourne, we made significant improvements to our facilities, including major renovations to the Central Sterile Supply Department and Café 1934, enhancing the experience for patients, staff, and visitors alike. At Werribee, we expanded our services with the addition of a new ward, allowing us to better serve the growing needs of the west. Meanwhile, our Kew hospital achieved outstanding patient experience results, consistently hitting and even exceeding the Net Promoter Score target of 80 on multiple occasions.

Our commitment to compassionate care touched the lives of more than 60,000 inpatients, and we were privileged to support families with the delivery of 2,001 babies. Seventeen dedicated Consumer Representatives worked alongside us across various hospital committees, ensuring that patient voices were heard. Additionally, our amazing team of Volunteers provided invaluable support to both patients and staff at each of our sites.

In 2024, we saw a continued growth in the number of patients identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with 433 admissions. Our patient population's diversity is further reflected in the fact that 24% of patients were born outside of Australia, and 6% have a preferred language other than English. In response to this diversity, we've expanded our offerings, increasing the number of translated information brochures and enhancing cultural support services to better meet the needs of all our patients.

I am incredibly proud of our team and everyone who forms part of the extended St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne family. The 2024 Quality of Care Report offers a glimpse into some of our many accomplishments, and I hope you enjoy reading the stories that reflect our collective journey over the past year.



**Janine Loader**  
Regional CEO  
St Vincent's Private  
Hospital Melbourne

2024: THE YEAR THAT WAS



# Who we are

St Vincent's has been a leader in Australia's health and aged care landscape for more than 165 years.

What started with five Sisters of Charity who arrived in the colony of New South Wales in 1838 – and opened the first hospital in 1857 – is now a unique not-for-profit social enterprise that operates two major inner-city health networks in Melbourne and Sydney, 10 private hospitals, 26 aged care facilities, and a range of virtual and home care options across three states.

St Vincent's comprises a team of over 30,000 people including employees, visiting medical officers (VMOs) and volunteers working from regional Queensland to Melbourne's western suburbs.

Each year across its service, St Vincent's has close to 3 million connections with patients and residents, including 1,300,000 outpatient appointments, 330,000 admissions, and 138,000 Emergency Department (ED) presentations.

Our integrated health innovation precincts in Sydney and Melbourne host globally-renowned medical institutes, all founded by St Vincent's.

The St Vincent's promise to its people, patients, residents, partners, and the broader community is to provide better and fairer care, always.

It's the bar we set ourselves to make sure we are always delivering the care Australians need.

## Our Structure

TRUSTEES OF  
MARY AIKENHEAD  
MINISTRIES

ST VINCENT'S  
HEALTH AUSTRALIA

**10** PRIVATE HOSPITALS

**2** MAJOR PUBLIC  
HOSPITAL NETWORKS

**26** AGED CARE  
FACILITIES

**6** CO-LOCATED  
RESEARCH INSTITUTES

### ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL MELBOURNE:

4 PRIVATE HOSPITALS AT

- EAST MELBOURNE
- FITZROY
- KEW
- WERRIBEE

## St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne (SVPHM) is a facility of the larger St Vincent's Health Australia group and operates as a not-for-profit, private, Catholic hospital which combines the highest quality healthcare with modern facilities and cutting-edge technology.

SVPHM is one of Melbourne's largest and busiest acute care hospitals with sites in Fitzroy, East Melbourne, Kew and Werribee.



**65,805**  
ADMISSIONS



**34,808** DAY  
ONLY ADMISSIONS



**46,040**  
OPERATIONS



**1,360**  
STAFF



**2,001**  
BIRTHS



**593**  
BEDS



**70**  
VOLUNTEERS



**17** CONSUMER  
REPRESENTATIVES

Our proud history of leadership in compassionate care, healing and serving people with special needs forms the foundation of the reputation we continue to build across our four sites.

Our services expanded further this year with completion of the new 12 storey East Tower at our Fitzroy hospital taking our capacity to 600 beds and 38 procedural areas over four hospitals.

### Our major specialties



EAR, NOSE AND THROAT



HEART



MATERNITY



NEUROSCIENCES



ONCOLOGY



ORTHOPAEDICS



PAEDIATRICS



RECONSTRUCTIVE PLASTIC SURGERY

The Sisters founded the hospitals to serve the sick and disadvantaged in Melbourne. Their vision was to create the most well-equipped hospitals in Australia and promote the Healing Ministry of Jesus. This mission remains at the heart of all we do.



## First baby in our new maternity facilities

While some Melbourne maternity units are closing their doors, St Vincent's Private Fitzroy opened its new maternity facilities in September. Patient Hannah Tarrant and partner Calhum Dower shared this first with the arrival of their daughter. This was the first baby born in our new birthing suite and also the couple's first child.

"The red carpet was rolled out as soon as I got here, it was amazing" said Hannah who herself was born at St Vincent's Private, "it's going to be hard to go home."

Channel Seven [shared the news](#) of this wonderful occasion.



## We're in!

After years of planning, the new 12 storey East Tower at Fitzroy opened in 2024. The Central Sterile Supply Department was the first area to move in to the new facilities in mid-year. This was followed by a steady transition of wards one after the other. The final clinical area to relocate was the Intensive Care Unit which boasts top floor views across Melbourne to the north and southeast.

Redevelopment of the Ground Floor Victoria Parade entry and reception area has now commenced along with the 8th floor West tower Oncology Hub, and 3rd floor Special Care Nursery Maternity Hub. The old ICU and PACU on 2nd floor will be redeveloped into additional operating theatre space and equipment storage. Building works in this Phase 2 stage are expected to be completed by mid to late 2025.



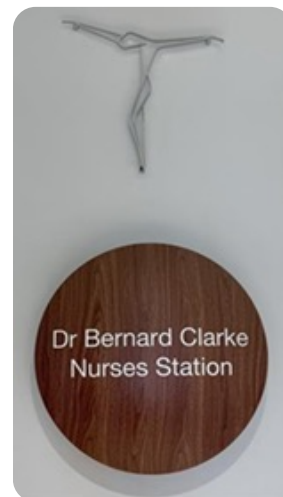
## Dr Bernard Clarke Nurses Station

With the transition of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) into their new facilities in the Fitzroy East tower, we recently unveiled a new plaque, the Dr Bernard Clarke Nurses Station. This plaque has been placed in memory of Dr Clarke, a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, thanks to a generous donation from the Clarke family in his honour.

Dr Bernard Clarke was a remarkable and loved doctor whose long career as a respiratory and Intensive Care physician at St Vincent's spanned over forty years. He served as the very first Director of the Intensive Care Unit and was instrumental in the planning and development of our private hospital. A great teacher and mentor to many doctors and nurses, his devotion to St Vincent's was known to all.

A loving family man, he was the proud father of ten children. His daughter, Dr Anita Clarke, a Urologist, is working hard to fundraise for the future of St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne as the Chair of the SVPHM Capital Appeal Advisory Committee. Anita and her family are proud to be supporting the hospital and honouring their cherished father's legacy. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Clarke family for their generous contribution.

For information on how you can support St Vincent's by making a donation, please follow [link](#) to St Vincent's Foundation or scan the QR code.



## The future of intensive care

Our new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) boasts state-of-the-art facilities on Level 9 of the East Tower, the crowning jewel of our new clinical spaces. The team, excited for this bright, modern space, welcomed their first patient – a post operative open-heart patient carefully handed over by the theatre team.

*Above: The level 9 ICU team.  
Right: Abode Restoration bricklayers meticulously re-mortared every single brick in the wall at 7 Brunswick Street; The finished project.*



## A treasured restoration

Edensor House was built in the 1880s as a grand residence and still stands today at 7 Brunswick Street, now serving as the Offices for Executive, the Mary MacKillop Meeting Room, and adjacent to the newly created St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Reflective Garden, the birthplace of Mary MacKillop in 1842. Those familiar with our Fitzroy site will recognise the stunning heritage-listed brick wall at the front of 7 Brunswick Street.

When the East Tower redevelopment commenced four years ago, the fence needed to be closely assessed, due to its age and safety. The extensive ivy was stripped from the wall, and a rather alarming lack of mortar between each brick was revealed. It seems the entire long wall was being kept upright by the heavy foliage.

Heritage Victoria ordered the fence to be reinforced and protected for the duration of the building works and restored to its original splendour.

A skilled team of bricklayers from Abode Restoration was engaged to meticulously re-mortar every single brick. The team have said that the ivy growth went into every brick edge and the very old mortar was pushed out by the ivy spreading. Each brick painstakingly cleaned re-laid and re-mortared into the original design of the wall. The result is beautiful.

The dedicated team of four—Dom, Dan, Richard, and Kevin — who are pictured on-site, are experts in their unique field. We thank them for a wonderful job.





# Our Mission, Vision and Values

Over 175 years ago five Sisters of Charity endured a hazardous four month journey across thousands of miles of ocean to venture to an unknown land called Australia. They were compelled by the original vision of their founder, Mary Aikenhead – to care for the poor and vulnerable.

This sense of serving, of purpose, of mission has continued undiluted across the decades. The love of Christ urges us to continue striving to meet these needs.

That is both our heritage and our legacy – where we have come from and where we are committed to continue heading.

It is what urges us on, calls us to continually exceed our own expectations, to be better than we thought we ever could be. That's why we call it a mission.

And mission is everything we do: from cleaning the rooms to providing cutting edge technology, from delivering highly complex surgical procedures to a meaningful conversation with a patient.

## Our Mission

As a Catholic healthcare service we bring God's love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus. We are especially committed to people who are poor or vulnerable.

## Our Vision

We lead through research driven, excellent and compassionate health and aged care.

## Our Values

St Vincent's Health Australia's four core values are:



### COMPASSION

Our care is an act of love.  
We are present and accompany people when they are most in need.



### JUSTICE

To act with courage and speak in pursuit of what is right and just.



### INTEGRITY

Ensuring our actions and decisions are transparent.



### EXCELLENCE

Our care is safe, evidence based and continually seeking to improve.



# Yahya... eight years on

Some readers may recall the story of the Moroccan family St Vincent's Private supported back in 2015. Mum Fatima travelled to Australia in 2014 with her little 3-year-old son Yahya who became known as Channel 7's ["The Boy with No Face."](#)

In February 2015, Plastic Surgeon Tony Holmes carried out remarkable, life-changing surgery on Yahya at The Royal Children's Hospital, successfully transforming his facial congenital deformities and giving him a chance at a more typical life. Despite being blind and having no eyes, Yahya has a beautiful singing voice and is a gentle, patient child.

He now walks and feeds himself independently, bringing joy to everyone around him. His family loves and cherishes him deeply.

Yahya's mum Fatima arrived in Australia in 2014 and discovered soon after that she was pregnant. Having significant hearing impairment, a speech deficit, and no knowledge of English, she found herself feeling extremely frightened and isolated. Her little boy was facing major, complex surgery in a foreign country, and she was unexpectedly pregnant, re-living all of the fear and dread that her second baby may be also afflicted with the abnormalities Yahya was born with.

We were asked to help with Fatima's pregnancy and delivery by Moira Kelly (of Children First Foundation) and her friend Fatima Baraka, a Moroccan Melbourne woman who fundraised \$200,000, partnering with Channel 7, to bring Yahya to Australia for surgery. Our Hospital Service of the Poor Committee and our Hospital Executive warmly approved the support required for Fatima's pregnancy and delivery.

Obstetrician Lionel Steinberg did not blink, before agreeing to enthusiastically partner with us to give Fatima a safe, healthy and expert pregnancy and delivery. Lionel garnered enormous generosity from his trusted colleagues - anaesthetists, if needed, paediatricians, ultrasound, pathology all ahead of time to ensure the expert team were ready to go, if needed.

Channel 7 brought dad Mustafa to Australia a day before the due date, allowing him to witness Yahya's amazing transformation post-operatively, and be present for the birth of his daughter Amal, here at St Vincent's Private Hospital.

In Moroccan culture, there is a beautiful tradition where the father whispers the first words into the baby's ear, and Mustafa embraced this moment proudly and lovingly shortly after Amal's arrival.

So many of our staff members were moved by this family's needs. Teams, individuals, and families came together to provide beautiful newborn gifts for "our newborn Amal." Numerous toys and clothes were generously donated for Yahya. Fatima, the mother, received a lovely pink wool wrap for her baby, but it quickly became her favourite headscarf, which she wore every day in the hospital, she looked radiant as a new mum in pink.

The midwives who attended to Fatima and her family were exceptional in every aspect. They provided unwavering support around the clock and maintained their care and expertise long after Fatima and Amal returned home from the hospital. Our lactation consultants and paediatrician, Dr Dani Freeman, were also incredibly supportive during those initial delicate days at home.

Heart-warming stories like these bring out such kindness and deep compassion in us. Special stories immerse us in our service of the poor and vulnerable, reminding us of why we each chose to be a vital part of St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne. What a privilege it was to serve this family so kindly, and what a privilege we were afforded to see this family bring out the very best in us.

Fast forward eight years, and we seen a joyful photo (left) of Yahya and his sister Amal with their Melbourne friend Fatima Baraka, taken during her visit to Morocco.



Yahya (left) with Fatima Baraka and his sister, Amal.

# Closing the gap on Aboriginal Healthcare

## Access to private healthcare

Each year, the hospital conducts a risk profile study of the First Nations patients receiving care at our four sites.

"The study highlights a continued increase in the number of Indigenous patients at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne, with 433 patients admitted in 2024, up from 348 in the previous year" reports Diana Smith, Quality Consultant – Consumer Engagement. "This demonstrates a significant increase from the 16 indigenous patients admitted in 2007 and a closing of the gap in terms of access to private health care."

Patient centred cultural support for our First Nations patients is offered prior to admission and during as required. Of the 433 patients admitted this year, 18 reached out for this extra support and this was provided in a variety of ways to meet the specific needs of each patient.

Each of these eighteen patients were contacted pre-admission and met on admission by the mission team.

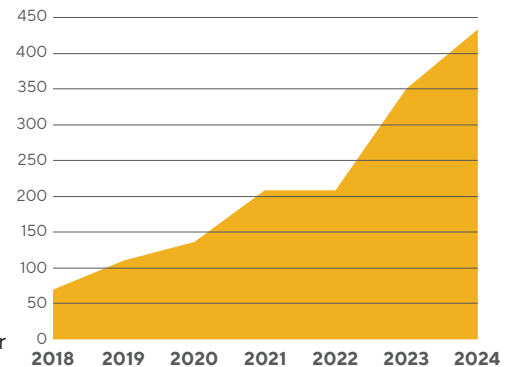
The AHLO (Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers at SVHM) also made contact with the patients, often making a daily connection.

"Some patients sought extra support for practical needs such as transport information, allied health post-discharge arrangements and visiting hours for country family" explains Julie Wain, Mission Integration Manager. "I met with patients who were in the early days of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait recognition, and saw the Hospital and AHLO team as valuable links to cultural safety, information and support."

"Some of these patients suffered fear and loathing at the thought of having to come to hospital, with a cultural background of trauma including Stolen Generation of self, parents and grandparents. Their terror is very real."

Most patients reflect positively about their experience in the hospital of feeling safe, valued and welcome. Often patients are understandably very sensitive about their culture and history, and it is our compassionate

NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS PATIENTS ADMITTED 2018–2024



care that helps to build trust for them in what can be a bewildering health system."

Human Resources Indigenous Talent Partner, Chris Delamont, extended his gratitude for the hospital's ongoing advocacy... "All of the hard work and consistent focus on making SVPHM a safe and inviting place for our people is speaking volumes. Your constant advocacy is a huge part of this growth, I personally can't thank you enough."

## Nursing Scholarships

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne is proud to support three First Nations undergraduate nursing and midwifery students with a three-year, SVPHM-funded scholarship, covering their study costs for each year of their program. This unique scholarship has been sponsored by the hospital for the past 16 years.

"Some of the graduates complete their graduate year at SVPHM and continue working with us for some time," says Julie Wain, Mission Integration Manager. "Others are eager to gain a broad range of nursing and midwifery skills before returning home to work on country, once they have the confidence and competence to serve their mob," she adds. "Our scholarship plays an important role in this bigger journey."

## Welcoming art

First Nations artist Christopher Delamont, our St Vincent's Victoria Indigenous Talent Partner, and creator of the beautiful artwork "Bindari" hanging in each of our hospital entry foyers completed a new three-piece work titled "Nginhagu" meaning Belonging, for St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne.

This triptych is a continuation of the story from the original artwork "Bindari - The Place on the Hill". It shows that as the gums and the wattle blossom so does the feeling of "Nginhagu", belonging for our people within St Vincent's Private Hospitals Melbourne and that the dreaming of our ancestors is becoming reality, that their people would feel welcomed and safe in our care. The bottom of the artwork represents the ripple effect that this will continue to have on the health outcomes of all First Nation's patients in our care.



## Cultural safety for maternity patients

To further enhance cultural safety and a welcoming environment for First Nations women, the Maternity Unit has introduced a new initiative: gifting the children's book "Welcome to Country" to all newborns of First Nations parents. This gesture aims to celebrate and honour the cultural heritage of First Nations families.

In addition, the Maternity Unit plans to observe National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day on August 4 each year by gifting the book to all babies born on this date, regardless of their indigenous background. This initiative underscores the unit's commitment to cultural inclusion and recognition.





## A poem from First Nations bush poet Grant Mitchell

Grant Mitchell, a Bush Poet and First Nations man from Pira, near Swan Hill, wrote poetry as a heartfelt thank you to our team during his stay at Fitzroy Hospital. On a subsequent admission, Grant composed the following poem, reflecting on the noise from the new tower construction. He describes it as the “music of progress,” highlighting it as an essential part of achieving an outstanding result.

### Progress is upon us

*Some may call it noise  
But it's sweet music to me  
The sounds of works in progress  
That's where I long to be  
9" Grinders, big sledge hammers  
Drills and Jack Hammers on the go  
Forklifts and generators  
Welders lighting up the show  
Steel and concrete to demolish  
For new building to take shape  
The old gives way to progress  
And hence must meet its fate  
Soon new building will arise  
And the noise will fade away  
The Tradies will have done their job  
Give praise to them I say  
Their job is quite demanding  
Many dangers to beware  
Safety gear is so important  
When they are working there  
Yes the noise can be intruding  
And cause you some unrest  
Yet if they could avoid it  
They'd gladly do their best  
Please find yourself some earplugs  
And when they cause you grief  
Insert them in your ears  
And hopefully you will find relief*

## Understanding First Nations patient experience in private health care

Over the past two years, St Vincent's Private Hospitals in partnership with the Menzies School of Health Research completed a study to better understand and improve the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in our private hospitals.

“Much research has been done into First Nations patient experience in the public sector but there is nothing in the private health care arena” explains Mission Integration Manager, Julie Wain.

The project incorporated an iterative ‘yarning’ approach – a conversational process synonymous with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that involves the telling of stories as a way of passing on cultural knowledge. In this way, the involvement and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the survey and its data analysis was strengthened, making the results more comprehensive.

“The study's results revealed several areas where St Vincent's could improve the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander private patients” explains Julie, “and the organisation is committed to pursuing the necessary changes and improvements.”



This artwork was developed by Jasmine Sarin, JS Koori Designs, for the research project with the large circles representing both St Vincent's Health Australia and Menzies School of Health Research. The smaller circles are all of the communities and services that are part of this project. The background shows hand prints which acknowledge our history, our journey, and our issues with healing and coping with trauma. Communities are connected by journey lines. These lines are like the rivers and waterways that bring life and maintain our cultural connection to place.

# Celebrating our graduates

Our annual Graduate Ceremony celebrated the academic excellence, perseverance and future potential of our graduates. Each graduate's unique path of hard work and commitment showcased their dedication to both personal and professional growth.

The evening included a curated reflection video featuring graduands sharing their educational experience and achievements. We also acknowledged our graduates and the nominees and winners of the Preceptor of the Year award, giving special recognition to our staff across all programs, including the graduate nurse and midwifery program, postgraduate programs, introduction to specialty practice, and acute care transition programs.

## EN graduate of the year:

Angus Kennedy - 8th Floor - Fitzroy

## RN graduate of the year:

Emily Phelps - 1st Floor - East Melbourne

## RM graduate of the year:

Samantha Singam - Maternity - Fitzroy

## Preceptor of the year:

Raiza Albaytar - 2nd Floor - Kew



Top: Raiza Albaytar, Preceptor of the year. Above: Our graduates.

# New Prayer Room

As a faith-based hospital we are keen to respect and honour all faiths and offer worship spaces for all. This year, we very happily announced the opening of our multi-faith Prayer Room at Fitzroy.

Two rooms side-by-side in the West Wing are now dedicated as male and female prayer rooms. Each room is carpeted, has a bathroom and there is shelving to store prayer mats.

Faris, one of our Muslim staff members, shared his delight with the dedicated Prayer Room at Fitzroy... "I am so grateful and now feel at peace to have a permanent, dedicated space for prayer. Thank you."

Across our other Melbourne hospital locations, Werribee has a Catholic Chapel and a Prayer Room and Kew has a Quiet Prayer Room for all to use. East Melbourne has a small Catholic Chapel where everyone is welcome and a separate prayer room is a work-in-progress as precious space becomes available.



"I am so grateful and now feel at peace to have a permanent, dedicated space for prayer. Thank you."





## Farewell Anna Clarke



This year we farewelled Anna Clarke who has 100% St Vincent's DNA. Anna was born at St Vincent's and trained at St Vincent's and has worked at St Vincent's for over thirty years. Yes - she came back after a stint in London and then some time at what was then the Royal Melbourne (RMH).

Over Anna's impressive and brilliant career, she has had roles at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne and St Vincent's Health Australia in clinical nursing, as Manager of Education and Quality, Director of Nursing and as Human Resources Executive as part of the Private Hospital Division.

Anna made the happy decision to retire and explained at her farewell morning tea that she aims to travel more and improve her golf game. "I'm excited to be getting rid of my alarm clock! And despite planning a trip to Europe I'm very sad to think I won't be sharing quality work time with many of my work friends and buddies. It's the people I will miss" she said warmly.

We wish Anna good health and happiness as she now concentrates on her own time 24 /7 with friends and family. Farewell Anna... you have been a great friend, great fun, and an absolute professional. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

*From top left to right: Anna as a young nurse 1985; Anna and Diana Smith; Ag Morina, Dominique Speirani, Julie Wain, Gail Briffa, Anna Clarke, Kevin Dalton, Julia Hill and Janine Loader.*





# A Mission of Love: A Legacy of Compassion and Care

## 100 VIPs

Our staff Values-in-Practice (VIP) program turned 10 this year and we celebrated our 100th VIP. Staff nominate a colleague explaining how they consistently live and demonstrate the hospital values every day.

A celebration morning tea is held for each monthly recipient of the VIP Award where they receive a \$250 gift voucher, a VIP pin to wear proudly, a certificate and a copy of their portrait which is also displayed in each of our hospital foyers for the month.



The Australian Women's Weekly, shared a lovely article on a transformative chapter in Australia's healthcare history, as Sister Clare Nolan recounts the establishment of the first dedicated HIV/AIDS ward in Australia by the Sisters of Charity at St Vincent's Hospital.

Four decades ago, this ground-breaking initiative emerged amidst fear, stigma, and a lack of understanding about the disease that devastated so many lives. As Sister Clare shares with The Australian Women's Weekly, the ward became a sanctuary for countless young men — brothers, sons, and friends—most of whom faced overwhelming prejudice and life-threatening illnesses.

She reveals both the heartbreak and resilience within the walls of Ward 17 South, highlighting the courageous commitment of the Sisters to provide compassionate care and dignity at a time when many were abandoned by society.

We featured the moment Sr Clare received a copy of the Australian Women's Weekly and a link to the full article on our [Instagram page](#):



*Below, clockwise from top left: Sister Clare first heard about HIV/AIDS in 1982 when she was Director of Nursing; Ward 17 opened in 1984; David Polson was one of the first 400 diagnosed with HIV in Australia, was admitted to Ward 17 in 1992, with Sister Clare.*

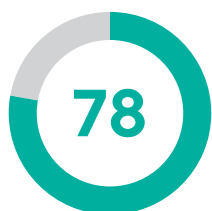


# Providing safe care

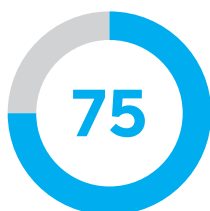
At St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne we want every person to feel welcome, valued and safe in our care. We seek ongoing feedback from patients about their experience and use this feedback to improve our service.

## Patient Recommendation

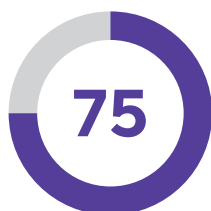
Patients are asked if they would recommend the hospital to friends or family. The score is the percentage of people who said they would 'probably or definitely' recommend the hospital.



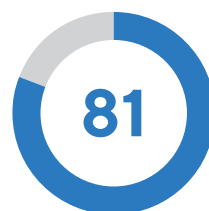
St Vincent's Private  
EAST MELBOURNE



St Vincent's Private  
FITZROY



St Vincent's Private  
KEW



St Vincent's Private  
WERRIBEE



## #1 with Medibank Customers

St Vincent's private hospitals were ranked first in Australia by Medibank Private customers for the fourth year running as part of the health insurers annual patient experience survey.

St Vincent's private hospitals were ranked first by Medibank's overnight stay patients – against 12 other hospital groups – in six of the nine categories surveyed and didn't finish lower than third in the three other categories.

These results reflect the exceptional dedication and care of our private hospital teams – from our doctors and specialists to our nursing and allied health staff, through to food, environmental, and administrative services.

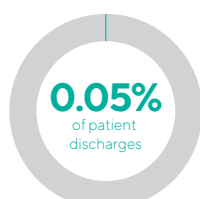
To be ranked first by patients, against our peers, is truly incredible and one that we are extremely proud of.

We closely monitor our performance on a wide variety of safety indicators and these help us to focus our improvement efforts. Listed below are some of the key safety performance results for the period July 2023 to June 2024 as a percentage of patients discharged from our hospitals.

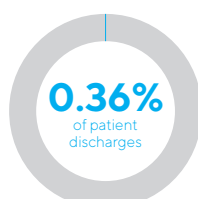


### Infections in hospital

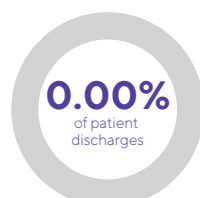
When people are unwell they can be more likely to get an infection. Hospitals have a range of procedures to reduce the chance of this happening. We also monitor any cases of rare but serious infections like Staphylococcus Aureus Bacteraemia (also known as 'golden staph').



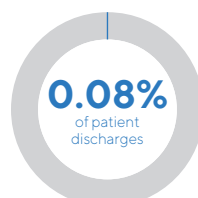
ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
EAST MELBOURNE



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
FITZROY



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
KEW

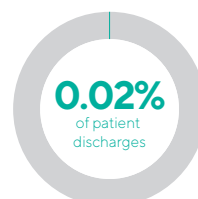


ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
WERRIBEE

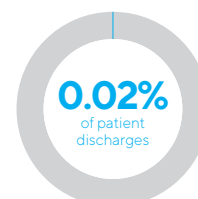


### Falls with harm

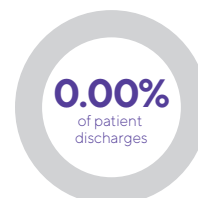
Hospitals are unfamiliar places and patients may be weak, dizzy, or less steady than they expect. A fall in hospital can delay a patient's recovery. In older people, it can contribute to a loss of independence. We use a range of strategies and tools to reduce the risk.



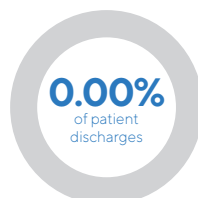
ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
EAST MELBOURNE



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
FITZROY



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
KEW



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
WERRIBEE

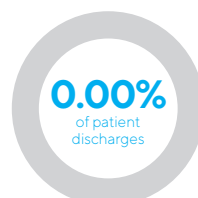


### Medication-related deaths

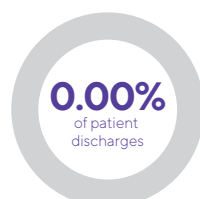
Medicines are the most common healthcare treatment. Used correctly, they are an effective and important part of care. However, medication errors can cause harm and, in rare cases, death. We report and investigate these cases to help prevent future errors.



St Vincent's Private  
EAST MELBOURNE



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
FITZROY



St Vincent's Private  
KEW

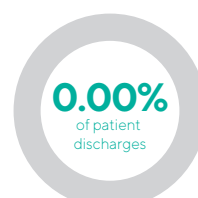


ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
WERRIBEE

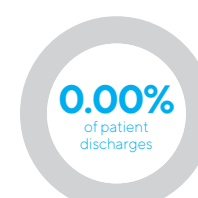


### Pressure injuries (Stages 3-4)

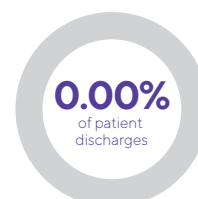
Anyone who needs to be in a bed or chair for a long time is at risk of developing a pressure injury, often referred to as 'bedsores'. They are most common on bony parts of the body like the hip, tail bone, or heel. Hospitals use a range of approaches to prevent and treat pressure injuries.



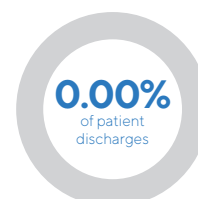
ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
EAST MELBOURNE



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
FITZROY



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
KEW



ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE  
WERRIBEE





## Werribee expands services in the west

In July, St Vincent's Private Werribee opened a newly refurbished inpatient rehabilitation ward on the second floor. This ward has increased capacity as the theatre complex continues to grow, allowing Werribee to accommodate unplanned admissions. Further, it enhances the ability to provide better, more equitable care for the community in the west.

"Our aim is the recovery of patients, their physical and mental wellbeing, to get them home safely" says Nurse Unit Manager, Dusica. "It's great to be able to expand services and open another floor as our activity grows."

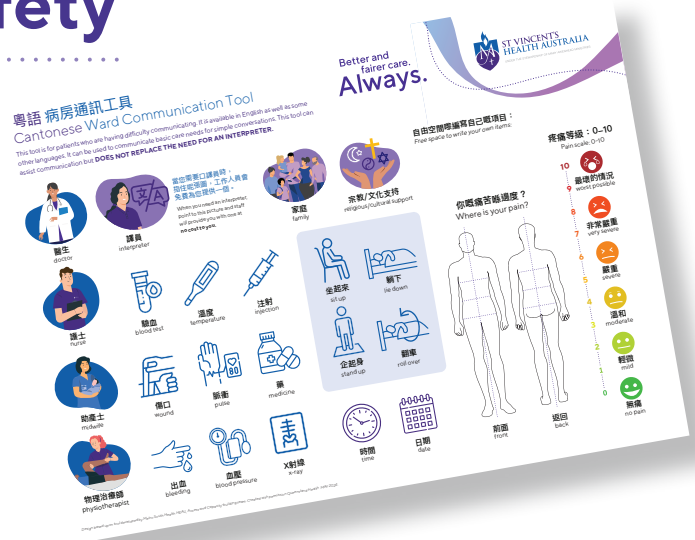
## Communicating for safety

As healthcare providers, it is important to recognise and understand the diverse backgrounds of the patients we serve. Imagine living in another country, having an illness, requiring hospital treatment and no one understands your fears, your questions, or your needs.

At St Vincent's, our mission to serve those in need, and our values of compassion and excellence guide our care for every isolated patient. We understand that language and cultural factors can create barriers to accessing health care, leading to poorer health outcomes and a lower quality of care for some sections of diverse populations.

A review of the patients treated at our hospitals in 2024, focusing on their country of birth, preferred language, and the utilisation of interpreter services revealed 24% of our patients were born outside of Australia, which aligns closely with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, indicating that 30.7% of the Australian population is born internationally (ABS reference period June 2023).

As the diversity of our patient population changes, SVPHM has steadily increased the range of patient information translated into our top preferred languages after English.



New translation communication tools have been added to our tool kit of resources for communicating with non-English speaking patients. Developed by our sister hospital in Sydney, they allow for simple communication between patients and clinical staff. Additionally, we utilise the *TalktoMe* App and Language Helper Guide.

24%



OF OUR PATIENTS WERE BORN OUTSIDE OF AUSTRALIA

6%



OF OUR PATIENTS HAVE A PREFERRED LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

175



INSTANCES OF INTERPRETER SERVICES UTILISED

# Quality Awards



*Tiffany Leung, finalist shortlisted to present her project 'Improve patient flow for day patients'.*

Our team received both local and national recognition for their quality initiatives and the remarkable partnership with the public hospital, showcasing our commitment to excellence.

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne introduced a Quality Improvement Award program in 2024. "The program is a way to recognise local initiatives and provides a gateway to the national St Vincent's Awards held later in the year" explained Donna Kelly, Director of Patient Experience and Clinical Support.

Eight finalists were shortlisted to present their projects at an Awards ceremony where they also received feedback from a judging panel comprised of Janine Loader (CEO), Neil Cunningham (Acting Medical Director) and Sue Owens (Consumer Representative).

CATEGORY	STAFF NAME	PROJECT TITLE
Consumer Centred	Anita Gamble (Day Oncology NUM East Melbourne)	Distress thermometer for oncology patients
Consumer Centred	Tiffany Leung (NUM Theatre, Kew)	Improve patient flow for day patients
Excellence	Jemimah Chisolm (CNS, A/PACU Werribee)	Medication May – engaging learning
Excellence	Lydia Brown(CNS) Christine Pirotta (NUM Level 5 Fitzroy)	Admission and long stay weight
Innovation	Katherine Simunic (HIS Manager, SVPHM)	Improving coding and documentation
Innovation	Melissa Rigos (CSSD Manager, East Melbourne)	Loans optimisation project CSSD
Innovation	Bronwyn Payne (Registered Nurse, Education SVPHM)	Student learning in operating room
Mission	Julie Wain (Mission Integration Manager, SVPHM)	First Nations art exhibition

## St Vincent's Health Australia Quality Awards

Congratulations to our Public in Private Elective Surgery (PIPES) team on winning the National 2024 St Vincent's Health Australia *People Awards for Connected Care*.

From over 700 nominations nationwide, 12 awards were given and our incredible team was recognised with an award that highlights the exceptional cross-functional collaboration that has taken place within St Vincent's Melbourne. This accolade celebrates our commitment to building new capabilities, driving innovation, and enhancing service delivery through a unified approach.

The Rehab at Home PIPES partnership, a remarkable collaboration between St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne and St Vincent's Virtual and Home, successfully developed and implemented a connected care pathway for over 550 elective orthopaedic surgery cases through the Department of Health's Public in Private Elective Surgery program.

Our dedicated team of surgeons and specialists came together across our four sites, joined forces with St Vincent's Virtual and Home to deliver outstanding post-operative rehabilitative care through the innovative Rehab at Home program.

This award is a testament to our collective effort and the 'One St Vincent's' spirit that drives us.

# A unique and special connection to St Vincent's

Recent inpatient Jim, a retired schoolteacher and now living the good life on a beautiful family winery in Avenel, has a special connection to both our St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals in Melbourne through his parents, Dr John and Dr Evelyn Billings.

A renowned neurologist, Dr John Billings served as a doctor in New Guinea during World War II with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) before studying in London and returning to practice in Melbourne. He went on to become the Head of the Neurology Department at St Vincent's Hospital, as well as the Clinical Dean of its clinical school at the University of Melbourne. Until his retirement, he also served as the hospital's consulting neurologist from the late 1960s.

Dr John Billings initially worked at St Vincent's Public Hospital and cared for many private patients at Mt St Evins, the early Fitzroy Private Hospital, before our current building opened in 1971. He later became known for his work with the Catholic Marriage Guidance Bureau, where he and his wife, Dr Evelyn, developed the Billings Ovulation Method in the 1950s to help women worldwide identify their fertile and non-fertile states based on their menstrual cycle.

Jim found comfort in being cared for in the very same ward that his father had helped establish and would've treated many neuroscience patients in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Jim expressed gratitude for feeling his father's presence at St Vincent's "I feel like my father is still looking after me here at St Vincent's" and was given a copy of the hospital's history book from 1906-1993, "A Place on the Hill" to keenly read about his father's pioneering role.

We wish Jim well in his recovery and speedy return to good health and to his loving family of six adult children and ten beautiful grandchildren. Jim, thank you for sharing your family's special connection to our hospital. We are honoured to continue the tradition of compassionate care that your father helped establish all those years ago.

*Below: Jim is pictured with some of his daughters and granddaughters in the hospital.*





# Keeping you informed

Setting up the new Fitzroy East tower rooms was an opportunity to review our patient Care Boards.

## What is a Care Board?

A Care Board is a communication board on the wall in each patient room. It aims to keep patients informed about treatment plans, identify the staff caring for them and help with preparation for discharge.

**St Vincent's Private Hospital**  
Keeping you informed

Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**MY PREFERENCES**  
Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT MATTERS TO ME, MY CARE GOALS:**

**FALLS RISK?**  
☒ Yes ☐ No  
**CALL Don't Fall**

**ASSISTANCE**  
☐ Meals ☐ Personal care  
☐ Mobility \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPORT NEEDS**  
☐ Hearing ☐ Vision ☐ Language  
☐ \_\_\_\_\_

**PAIN SCALE**  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
No pain at all Very severe pain

**MY CARE TEAM**  
Doctors: \_\_\_\_\_  
Allied Health: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nurses: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nurse Unit Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

**TODAY'S PLAN:**

**MY DISCHARGE PLAN:**  
DISCHARGE TIME IS **9.30am**  
EXPECTED DISCHARGE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Discharge destination: \_\_\_\_\_  
Person collecting me: \_\_\_\_\_

**FEEDBACK**  
Your feedback is very important to us. We encourage you to complete our discharge survey. "How likely would you be to recommend SVPHM to family and friends?"  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Not likely at all Extremely likely

**BEDSIDE HANDOVER**  
Your nurse will hand over your care at the change of each shift. We encourage you to participate.

**REACH OUT**  
You and your family know you best so if you are worried about a change in your condition or have any concerns, please tell us.

**REACH OUT FOR HELP ANY TIME**  
Refer to REACH OUT poster on the wall

"As well as keeping patients informed, the board also provides some insight about patients for staff" explains Diana Smith, Quality Consultant – Consumer Engagement. "For example, we record the patient's preferred name, their care goals and what matters to them. We used this opportunity to look at what parts of the old design were not being used and how we could enhance the layout. After talking to staff and patients, we added in a pain scale and symbols to identify support needs such as preferred language or hearing impairment. Messages about our patient and family escalation process, REACH OUT, bedside handover and providing feedback were also included."

Some minor changes were made after a six-week trial then the final design rolled out to the new patient rooms. "Such was the positive feedback" explains Diana "that we fast tracked roll out to other wards across all of our four hospital sites."

## Introducing the latest medication dispensing technology

OMNICELL is an automated medication dispensing storage unit, which supports safe and efficient medication storage and dispensing. Demands on healthcare services are ever changing and advanced technological systems such as OMNICELL allow our staff more time to focus on patient care and daily tasks.

St Vincent's Private introduced OMNICELL into the new Fitzroy East Tower clinical areas this year to store our medication imprest stock and imprest stock of Drugs of Dependence.

This is a very exciting opportunity for St Vincent's Private Melbourne to be a lead in safe and efficient medication storage and dispensing.



# Exceeding expectations

Our aim is to make each of our patients feel welcome, valued and safe in our care. Many of our patients take the time to provide extended feedback about their stay and for this, we are very grateful. The feedback below is a great example of our staff at St Vincent's Private Maternity working together, living our mission:

"We were originally booked into have labour induction at another hospital – but on the morning of the induction we received a call from that hospital advising they didn't have any beds for me. As you can imagine, this caused a lot of angst and stress. A few hours later my obstetrician called and apologised for these unlikely events, and suggested we try St Vincent's Private Hospital.

Later that day, I received acceptance for my booking and I received the paperwork immediately. Peggy as part of the admissions team was fantastic with turning around the admission super quickly and being available to answer all of my questions. The impact of this really helped alleviate the stress and anxiety I was feeling about the uncertainty of not having a hospital to go to – especially when paying for private insurance, where you expect not to have these issues.

The morning of my induction, my husband and I arrived at St Vincent's Private to be greeted by warm smiles from the entire nursing team at the front desk. They directed me to the birthing suite where we met Alisa, the midwife that would stay with me throughout my labour and subsequent birth. Alisa was absolutely fantastic! She provided a level of calm, great conversation and put me at ease. Her depth of knowledge to explain every part of the process. When Alisa's shift came to an end I started active labour, Alisa kindly came back to support me through the labour even though her shift was finishing. Throughout the labour Alisa was actively coaching and guiding me which resulted in a quick, relatively straightforward birth of our second child. The thoughtfulness and level of care that Alisa provided was well above and beyond what we have experienced previously and actually made the whole process light-hearted, fun and enjoyable – despite the labour pains!

After the birth, we were transferred to the maternity ward and Joanne was lovely in ensuring we had a smooth transition and handover with Merle, who was also absolutely lovely in helping us settle our baby son and also explaining the eligibility of the transfer process to The Park Hyatt hotel stay.



# Escalating care



We understand that you know you best and occasionally patients, or family members, may feel that their concerns are not being addressed. St Vincent's Private has processes in place for patients to escalate their concerns as required. We call this process REACH OUT.

In 2024 we updated the branding on the REACH OUT posters and used the opportunity to have our Consumer Reps review the wording, content and design. "Our Consumer Reps provide a valuable perspective when reviewing patient information" explains Chiara James, Quality and Risk Consultant.

"When reviewing the REACH OUT posters for us this year, the Reps assisted by ensuring the posters were eye-catching, uncluttered and the messaging was clear and simple.

We want our patients to feel safe in our care and that includes an escalation process for the times when they have a concern and continue to be worried. The REACH OUT poster guides patients and family members through the simple three step process to escalate care from the nurse caring for them to the Nurse Unit Manager and on to the Hospital Coordinator as required. We want to impart the message that it's ok to escalate care and to empower patients to do so."

In addition to the patient room posters, St Vincent's Private has administrative processes in place to document REACH OUT requests so that concerns can be handed over between treating staff. The information is also used to monitor and inform our ongoing improvement efforts.

Two nights later we transferred to The Park Hyatt, where we experienced wonderful and highly qualified midwives, including Leanne, who provided a warm welcome, explanation of everything and immediately changed our mindset – it didn't feel like we were in a hospital environment with severe sleep deprivation! It was also great to have our toddler be able to visit for extended hours and some of the midwives helped entertain our toddler when they came in to do observations. Special callout to Gini, whom my toddler absolutely loved talking to, and very patiently explained the medical equipment to her.

All in all, my experience started with a lot of stress and anxiety when my booking was changed, but I feel so grateful for St Vincent's Private for not only coming to the rescue with a booking, but also having the extremely highly qualified, caring, nurturing staff at every part of the process. Our experience was always consistently positive".



[VIRTUAL TOUR OF OUR NEW  
MATERNITY FACILITY](#)



# Embracing the evolving role of Consumers

Jenny Wilkins, Consumer Representative



30 years ago, I arrived by ambulance at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Emergency Department on a Sunday evening after the horse I was riding failed to take a jump, fell and rolled on top of me. I had a badly dislocated left elbow, broken ribs and concussion.

When I arrived at the Emergency Department, my dislocated left elbow stuck out from the trolley and I woke abruptly from unconsciousness every time the nurse brushed against it. The following day, the registrar who straightened my arm under anaesthesia came to my bedside and I stared at him and said, "I think I've seen you somewhere before, haven't I?" He was very understanding of the effects of concussion on my memory.

At that time, I complained about my care at St Vincent's because the emergency nurse found my private health insurance card in my wallet, admitted me as a private patient then, at discharge, referred me to the St Vincent's out-patient clinic.

The out-patient clinic's system of bulk appointments meant I waited 3 hours before seeing a consultant. When I said I would prefer to see an orthopaedic surgeon privately to avoid the long delay, the staff told me to go to my GP for a referral. My GP said the outpatient clinic could write a referral so it was back to the clinic. At the time, I was a busy professional, so getting the run-around was very annoying hence the complaint.

My letter of complaint was addressed to a nun who replied in her neat handwriting and explained that the hospital was very sorry to receive my complaint and hoped I made a speedy recovery.

As a competitive rider, I continued to have accidents, some resulting in hospital admissions but it wasn't until I was the carer of my seriously ill partner many years later that I felt compelled to complain again.

His care as a patient at St Vincent's Private was less than satisfactory and I emailed my complaint describing the shortcomings to the hospital. The response I received was very different from 30 years before. It was detailed and thorough. The matters I described were addressed, each one was investigated, staff members were interviewed and I was reassured those changes were afoot. Equally importantly, I had an answer to my nagging question, 'Why did this happen? What went wrong?'

Because St Vincent's Private made every effort to address my concerns, it was clear the hospital took my complaint seriously. The 'one size fits all' response was replaced by a thorough examination of my partner's care as well as an apology.

Wanting to learn more about the new role of consumers in hospitals, I joined the St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Community Advisory Committee. Public hospitals led the way for consumer participation with the introduction of mandatory Community Advisory Committees.

I had worked at St Vincent's public as an independent consultant and was familiar with the hospital and its values and mission. These values were reflected in its willingness to embrace consumers in advisory roles. During my 5 years as member of the Community Advisory Committee, I gained valuable insight into the latest developments in health by volunteering for committees, including research committees, planning, community engagement and others. I was not alone in advocating for consumers and often shared the same views as other consumer representatives.

A role for consumers also became available on accreditation committees. The National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards' purpose is to guarantee a high level of care for patients. Hospitals form a partnership with consumers to monitor the hospital's performance according to each of the 8 standards. I was appointed to 2 standards committees; they were St Vincent's Private Hospital's 'Communicating for Safety' and St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne 'Partnering with Consumers'. As consumers on these committees, we are part of the decision-making that improves safety and quality for patients and carers.

Appointments to the standards committees qualified me for Safer Care Victoria's Serious and Sentinel Event Review Panels. When an adverse event occurs in a health service it is reported to Safer Care Victoria. An adverse event is defined as a patient experiencing unexpected serious harm or death. A review panel is convened to address the circumstances surrounding the event, analyse the causes, identify the lessons learnt and make recommendations that improve practice. As an independent member of the review panels, it is my role to ensure the patient remains at the centre of the investigation.

In 2022, there was a further breakthrough for consumers when the Victorian government introduced laws that require hospitals to apologise to patients and their carers when they suffer an adverse event and share with them the findings of the Safer Care Victoria review panel. Known as the *Statutory Duty of Candour*, the legislation requires hospitals to meet with patients and carers to explain the findings of the review and describe any remedial actions the hospital intends to take. It reassures patients and carers that the hospital is open to discussing the events, takes responsibility for their care and explains what went wrong.

The *Statutory Duty of Candour* is a reminder to me of how important it is for the Safer Care Victoria review panels to find out what communication took place between staff and patients, to verify that the hospital obtained the patient's consent and to confirm that the patient's wishes and stated preferences were adhered to as well as putting patients at the centre of their care.

The advantage of consumer participation for hospitals is that the positives are reinforced and the negatives are identified as needing to change. Hospitals repeat the good practices and listen to consumers to remedy the bad practices.

Over the last 30 years, health services have recognised the importance of consumers in changing their practices. Consumers are not only partnering with health services in their own care but also sharing the decision-making about ways to improve the hospital's on-going performance.





# Transforming our new healing spaces with art

St Vincent's Art Curator, Monique Silk, worked extensively with Consumer Representatives and staff to adorn our new Fitzroy hospital East tower with beautiful artwork for patients, visitors and staff to enjoy.

The overall theme of the artwork captures the local indigenous red gum trees of Fitzroy. A large tapestry style artwork - Tree of Life - features on the new ground floor entry, and the theme of flowers, trees and gum leaves continue in the art, furnishings and décor.

Our hospital Consumer Representatives were asked to review each artwork, to approve colours, the theme, and to let us know if any of the art works were not positive in any way - such as too gloomy for a hospital or too much or too little of anything. Their unique perspective, we know, reflects the perspective of non-medical people, such as most of our patients. Valuable feedback that we are grateful to receive.

Consumer Reps also suggested display of historic imagery of the hospital on several floors as a point of interest.

Monique conducted walk-throughs of the new areas with staff to see the walls available and discuss the plans for the proposed artworks. Each of our Nurse Unit Managers were able to select a special original art work to hang in their new ward areas. All of the art is Australian and most of it Victorian. Each ward will have at least one First Nations piece, and every ward will have a feature piece that will then determine the other art works for that ward.

Monique was delighted that the managers were so invested to choose a piece that would suit their patient groups and told beautiful stories to accompany their choices. Each of our managers gave considerable thought and sensitivity, and what was remarkable was that each Nurse Unit Manager's choices were so different - what a joy it is to see them so excited by the beauty that our new Tower will display.





# A curly path to recovery

St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals in Fitzroy have been a safe haven for patient Anita Roper over the past nine years.

Anita has made a remarkable recovery from a stroke in 2015 with several admissions to St Vincent's Private for neurosurgery involving removal of skull bone. Anita is a go-getter with optimism and determination that has illuminated her colourful and successful life. She was initially cared for by her husband Tom, and then he became very unwell and as Anita was rehabilitating, she became his carer. Sadly, Tom died last year and now Anita is navigating her new life with the same energy and focus that she has always had.

Anita has been a grateful and happy patient even when progress was not always clear. Anita loves to ask questions in order to understand each next step and has forged respectful and happy relationships with her team of experts.

As a patient Anita is always a bright light on the ward, and has a good eye for things that could be better. Anita woke up after one major operation, unable to wear her prescription glasses over the wound on her head. This created a real dilemma – Anita was hungry, but couldn't read the room service menu, or navigate the telephone to order her meals. Her doctor, friends, and staff all got thinking and helped create a solution – carefully removing one arm off her specs – not ideal but it kept her surgeon happy that his hard work was safe from Anita's glasses rubbing on the precious and delicate wound. And a large print menu was sourced for Anita to use.

Anita is now at home, rebuilding her life of wellness, and is planning overseas holidays, returning to driving and enjoying her semi-retirement with a valuable community contribution as a Board member on a public company. We wish Anita well and all the best in her colourful and curly path to recovery.

*Pictured with Nurse Lydia, Anita wishes to thank everyone who has cared for her, "It has been a team effort".*



# Celebrating 20 years of partnering with consumers

October 2024 marks two decades since the inaugural meeting of five Consumer Reps alongside several staff members to establish the Partnering with Consumers Committee.

"It was called the Consumer Participation Group back then," recalls Diana Smith, Quality Consultant – Consumer Engagement. "But the function of the committee was very similar. Consumer Reps continue to provide an invaluable patient and carer perspective to our decision-making. They help us see the forest from the trees in terms of what we are doing well, what needs improvement, and they work with us to design facilities and processes that will optimize patient experience."

We were ahead of our time starting a Consumer Group in 2004, with only the public hospitals establishing them. And even then, that was driven largely by Health Department funding requirements. We established the group because we wanted to; we could really see the value in it. Twenty years down the track, we still do."

Our approach to consumer engagement has progressed significantly over the years. We have recruited many consumer reps, and currently, we have seventeen members across nine hospital committees. Seven of these members serve on the Standard 2 Committee, where they constitute the majority, complemented by four staff members.

Beyond committee roles, we frequently co-opt Reps for specific initiatives, serious incident reviews, or to gain a simple "what do you think?" opinion. Additionally, there are Reps who may not hold a committee position but are willing to provide advice or collaborate on specific projects. This includes individuals from harder-to-reach demographics, like Uncle John Baxter, who brings attention to issues surrounding disability and First Nations patient experiences. Thank you to all our consumer reps, both past and present, for the invaluable gift of their time and insights in shaping a patient-centred approach to all that we do. Here's to the next 20 years!







## Annual Consumer forum

Seven participants from our St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne Consumer group visited our Werribee hospital to engage with the team, explore the facilities, and hear directly from General Manager Emma Saliba, Assistant Director Rachael Cassar and Mission Integration Manager Julie Wain. They were treated to a demonstration of the rehabilitation gym, showcasing the various facilities and equipment that many post-operative patients utilise on their journey to recovery. Sean Park, our August 2024 Values-In-Practice VIP Allied Health Team leader and physiotherapist, delivered an enjoyable and informative session in the Rehabilitation Gym. The group also toured the spacious third floor, gaining an appreciation for the building's size and its potential for future growth. They visited the ward, operating theatre, and day oncology, with one group member sending a lovely follow up note...

"Just a quick note to say again how much I enjoyed my visit to our hospital in Werribee. The day was most enjoyable and the speakers very informative. Lunch was delicious, the tour of the wards was eye-popping, and our goodies bag a surprising bonus. Thank you."

We have 17 hospital consumer participants who actively collaborate as members of various hospital committees and contribute to the National Standards. Many are involved in diverse improvement initiatives and serious incident reviews. Our consumers offer valuable patient and carer perspectives that influence decision-making at both the patient level and within the overall governance of the hospital. We engage them thoughtfully to gather feedback on the design of our systems and processes. Recently, several consumers were instrumental in advising on the way-finding signage during its design phase.

We cannot do what we do without the expertise of our consumers doing what they do so well, and with such dedication to serve – thank you so much.

*Photos above and left: Consumer Representatives past and present. Poster of current Consumer Representatives.*





# Neurodivergent care planning

Efforts to improve access and inclusion for our diverse patient populations identified an opportunity to enhance the hospital experience of neurodivergent patients through development of a medical record form to gather information prior to admission.

"The aim was to create a form that would cater for both adult and paediatric patients and facilitate planning a person-centred approach for their admission" explains Rosie Lee, Exceptional Experience Manager. "There have been occasions where patients/parents had contacted the hospital directly to highlight their concerns about potential challenges prior to admission. These occasions have provided valuable information to plan appropriately and ensure a good experience."

Care planning for neurodivergent patients was investigated and a template developed. This was trialled with adult and paediatric patients from August to November 2024. Follow up and feedback was sought from patients regarding the trial document. Overwhelmingly the collection of information prior to admission to help plan and prepare for possible challenges was seen as extremely helpful and resulted in very positive hospital experiences" reports Rosie.

"In addition to the appreciation expressed by patients, suggestions were collected to help us optimise information collection" explains Rosie. "Even the graphic designer who drafted the final document for us commented on how delighted she was to see the form come across her desk and she suggested some further additions for Neurodivergent-friendly language. It was a real team effort."

"Prior to development of the Care Plan, there had been an experience noted where a patient's admission was cancelled due to being overwhelmed upon admission.

## WHAT IS NEURODIVERGENT?

A neurodivergent person refers to a person on the autism spectrum or, more generally, to someone whose brain processes information, learns or behaves in a way that is not typical of most individuals.

The admission was rebooked and very specific arrangements negotiated with the teen and parent to ensure the patient was comfortable and at ease. This included the admission process occurring whilst the patient was in the car/car park, minimal exposure to bright lighting, and direct admission to holding bay to avoid communal waiting area. Hopefully this type of experience is a thing of the past now that our new Care Plan is available."

## Patient feedback:

"Everyone was so understanding, supportive and accommodating of our son's extra needs. As the parents of a neurodiverse child, simple things can sometimes be the biggest headache. But we didn't need to worry. From putting him in a room where the window didn't look straight down (he's scared of heights) and accommodating his fear of lifts/ coming up with a plan B to get to theatre, the attention to detail was just wonderful. In a world that is already quite difficult to navigate for our son/our family, these little things make such a big difference."

## Preparing for hospital

COVID fast tracked our move from paper to an online patient registration process. Paying close attention to patient feedback since then and working with our Consumer Reps has helped us to modify and improve this information collection process.

A range of initiatives have been implemented including development of a short instructional video and use of lead questions to minimise the time it takes to complete the health history section.



## Play the video

Each patient who uses the online system has the opportunity at the end to evaluate their experience and these results are overwhelmingly positive.

# The benefit of advanced robotic technology



Adrian LoGiudice, President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Australia, experienced first-hand the incredible benefit advanced robotics technology has on neurosurgical operations following a disc injury to his back while exercising.

After discovering a spinal tumour during an MRI, Adrian underwent a successful four-hour surgery at St Vincent's, led by specialists Dr Phillip Cheung and Dr Paul Smith. His delicate surgery, which used a guidance machine to put rods into his spine, meant he had a greater chance of walking again.

Adrian was also able to recover faster than if he'd had more invasive surgery. Reflecting on his care, Adrian said "The team at St Vincent's were absolutely amazing. We take our health for granted until it affects us. I want to show people what an amazing facility St Vincent's is."

He shared his very personal experience of being a patient at St Vincent's Private Melbourne on a radio podcast and encouraged the community to support St Vincent's Private Hospital Capital Campaign.

Adrian's story is a testament to the cutting-edge care we strive to provide. Capital Campaign Director Cameron Smith said, "We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Adrian and the Italian community in Melbourne for their unwavering support. Rooted in a history that dates back to the 1950s, their connection to St Vincent's Private is profound, and their contributions continue to empower our efforts in healthcare."

[Click here to listen to the podcast.](#)

[Click here to donate to our Capital Campaign](#)

## Thank-you Jillian

Our longest serving Consumer Representative, Jillian McClure, retired from her role on the Clinical Governance Committee at the end of the year. Jillian joined our team at a time when we were expanding consumer participation across the hospital.

"She has witnessed it grow and flourish" said Diana Smith, Quality Consultant – Consumer Engagement. "I am very appreciative of each time she said "yes" to my many requests in addition to her Clinical Governance Committee role.

In particular, her bimonthly presentations at Staff Orientation, assisting me with development of the now annual Quality of Care Report publication, participating in ad hoc projects like the *Hear Me* trial, attendance at various external seminars including the annual leader management forums, and the list goes on."

"I have had the honour and privilege of representing consumers as a member of the Clinical Governance Committee for the past fourteen years" said Jillian. "The time has come for me to step down and pass the baton, so to speak, to another worthy consumer representative. It has been a role where I have been extremely proud to serve as a volunteer."



Jillian is looking forward to spending more family time with her granddaughter Florence. We thank her for all she has whole-heartedly given to St Vincent's Private and wish her every blessing as she enjoys the next chapter.

# Australia's first EV-ICD implant

St Vincent's takes pride in being a frontrunner in the adoption of innovative technology and is very proud of Associate Professor Uwais 'Wes' Mohamed and our team at St Vincent's Private Fitzroy who have achieved a milestone by completing the first EV-ICD implantation in Australia.

The EV-ICD is a less invasive alternative to traditional implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs), with leads implanted under the breastbone instead of directly within the heart. This ground breaking procedure and device is revolutionising the way that a defibrillator operates and the benefits are a game-changer in heart health.

[Click link to see Channel 7 news report](#)

In the lead up to the first implant in August our Cardiovascular Team, in collaboration with Medtronic Australasia, organised an educational evening for the staff.

The event saw robust participation from the Cardiac Cath Lab and Coronary Care units, who were grateful for the expertise of the guest speakers, including Dr Mohamed (Implanting Cardiologist), Mr Newcomb (Cardiothoracic Surgeon), and Mr James Hurley (Innovations Manager - Medtronic).

Congratulations to Associate Professor Wes and the Cardiology teams, Dr Andrew Newcomb, and Jennifer Collins, Nurse Unit Manager, on this on this remarkable achievement!



## Launch of Electronic Medical Record

Following a year of planning with key stakeholders, St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne was excited to go live with foundational functionality of the MEDITECH EMR (Electronic Medical Record) platform across our four sites in November, 2024.

### MEDITECH EXPANSE

The EMR provides up to date, complete information about our patients at the point of care and a range of built in "smarts" will facilitate improved quality of care.

This has been a long time in the planning and we are excited to see it all coming together. Thank you to our staff for supporting the training and implementation of the first stage of the new foundational platform and we look forward to transitioning across to the whole system in 2025.



# Our nursing future is in good hands

Talking to this enthusiastic duo, you can't help but feel our nursing future is in good hands. Ryan Mendoza and Renata Kandiman are Education Consultant and Clinical Coach respectively in our cardiac and critical care areas.

"The Cardiac Catheterisation Lab, Coronary Care Unit and Intensive Care Units at St Vincent's Private Fitzroy make up the critical care areas of my education portfolio" explains Ryan. "Additionally, I work as acting Associate Nurse Unit Manager of the Cath Lab at St Vincent's Private in Werribee."

As a Registered Nurse in the critical care area, Ryan's career progressed to a Clinical Coach role before moving into the Education Consultant position.

Ryan explains that a loss of staff during the pandemic left the Cath Lab facing a critical shortage of skilled staff. "This was an opportunity to pivot and rather than trying to recruit the necessary staff at a time when many nurses were leaving the profession, we decided to grow our own. We developed an Introduction to Specialty Practice course in Cardiac Catheterisation." Ryan proudly highlights the success of the course by noting that up to 80% of the current staff in the unit came through the course.

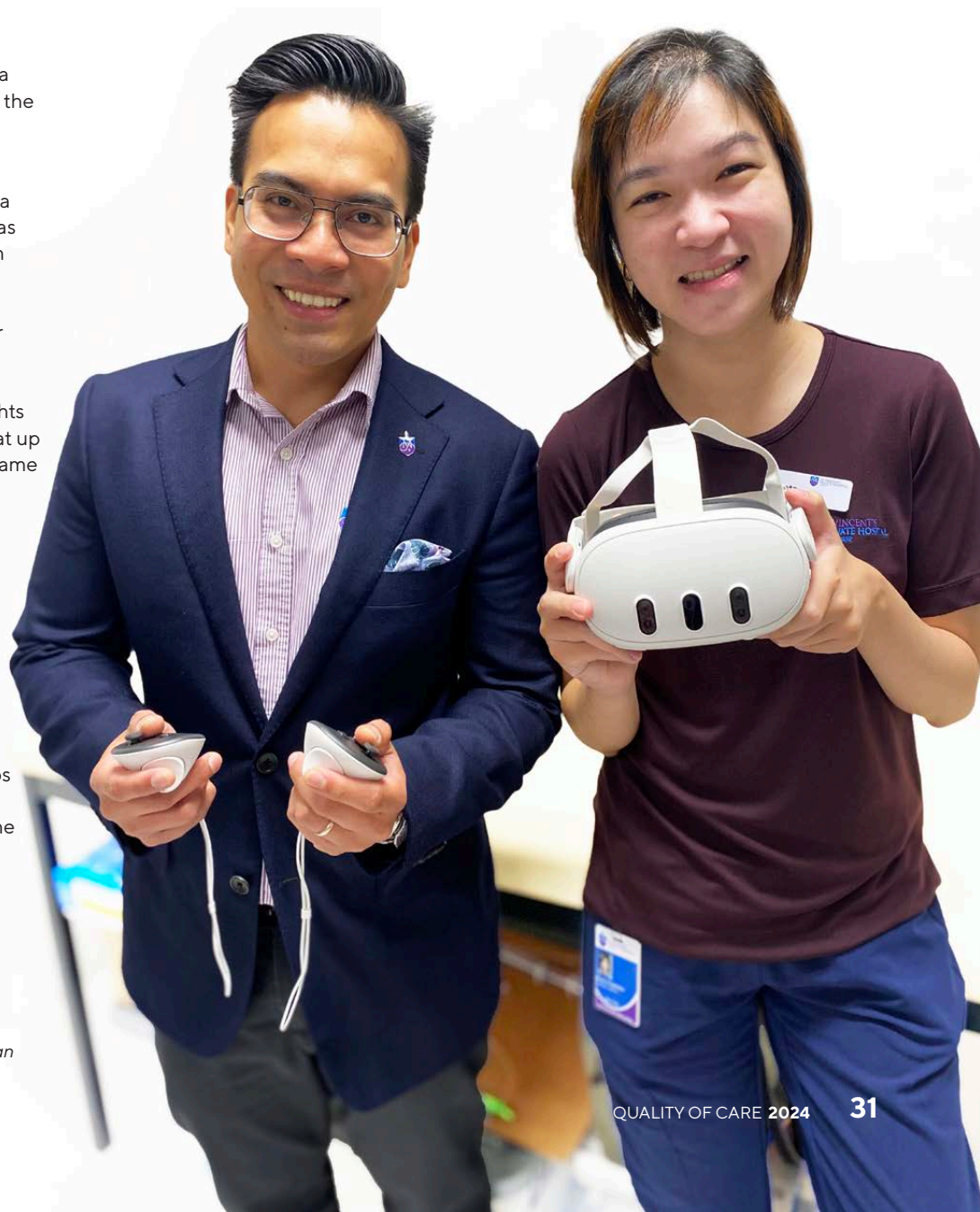
As an Education Consultant, Ryan guides and supports Clinical Coaches like Renata who are more hands on with learners.

Renata is based in the Fitzroy Cardiac ward on Level 9 where she provides tips and practical advice for new Enrolled and Registered nursing graduates at the patient bedside.

"I mentor the new grad's as well as nurses who are completing the post graduate Introduction to Specialty Practice program. What I love most about my role is seeing the progression of these new graduates over the months and years and watching their careers expand as they take on further post graduate studies. It's very rewarding."

In the everchanging world of healthcare, Ryan is excited about how they are embarking on new projects to address the challenge of educating large teams of staff in a post COVID environment where big group settings are no longer feasible.

"Coupled with adult learning principles which suggest 9-minute content sessions the likes of which Tik Tok has down pat, we have developed short, sharp tool box education sessions for delivery in a timely manner. We've also purchased a Virtual Reality (VR) head set and are currently at the content development stage. VR is a very exciting addition to nursing education and will allow us to place learners, for example, in a virtual clinical scenario wherein they can practice or make time-critical decisions and interventions in a safe and controlled environment."



Right: Ryan Mendoza and Renata Kandiman

## Relief for cancer patients

Werribee Day Infusion Unit has introduced scalp coolers, providing our cancer patients with much-needed comfort during their treatment. "Circulating a cool liquid at a specific temperature, the scalp coolers help to reduce hair loss during chemotherapy treatment" explained the Unit's Manager Rachel Simpson.



## Foundation Scholarship Program

The Foundation Scholarship program continues to thrive thanks to the exceptional generosity of our donors. This year, we are pleased to report an outstanding number of applications across specialised clinical specialties, reflecting both the program's prestige and the growing demand for advanced clinical expertise.

Our 2024 scholarship cohort included 46 applications ranging from post graduate study to attendance at short courses and conferences. 29 nurses pursued post-graduate education in clinical specialties: 5 in peri-operative nursing, 8 in PACU/anaesthetics, 6 in cardiac care, 3 in oncology, 2 in orthopaedics, and individuals in neuroscience, midwifery, neonatal care, clinical teaching, and clinical simulation.

This diverse group represents our commitment to advancing specialised healthcare knowledge across critical disciplines. Their education will directly translate to enhanced patient care, innovative clinical practices, and leadership development within SVPHM.

We extend our profound gratitude to our donors, whose visionary support makes these educational opportunities possible and creates lasting impact on healthcare excellence.

## CSSD

There was a lot of excitement as Lisa Barker, Perioperative Services Manager, and Melissa Rigos, Nurse Unit Manager of the Central Sterilising Services Department (CSSD), cut the red ribbon to mark entry to the new department at St Vincent's Private East Melbourne. The \$3.1 million refurbishment is equipped with new sterilisers and processing equipment, allowing for increased productivity while also ensuring that we're offering the latest technology.



## Keeping in touch with our GPs

In May we had the pleasure of hosting a GP Symposium for 79 GPs and Specialists across Melbourne. A full day with sessions focused on Cardiology, Orthopaedics, Plastic/Reconstructive and ENT, we heard from 12 incredible speakers on their specialty topics. It was an exciting day to learn and network with some of our most respected doctors.

Thank you to our guest speakers and attendees for making it such a special event, and to our sponsors, Cochlear, Pfizer and Kieser, for making the event possible.

### Donations to Foundation Scholarship in 2024:

**\$79,495.00**

- 46 scholarship applications (29 clinical post graduate/ 35 total post graduate)
- 17 foundation scholarships given to date totalling \$57,864.36



## Raising funds for oncology services

We celebrated the annual St Vincent's Foundation Long Table Lunch at Shadowfax Winery raising \$67,000 for Werribee's oncology service expansion. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made the Long Table Lunch a resounding success. The generosity which helped raise this incredible total for our Werribee hospital will assist us to better serve the local community.

A special shoutout to the Werribee Committee: Michelle Salvalaggio, Amanda Williams, Rhiannon Karcoushkas, Sue Rebesco and Brie Scolaro. Their dedication made this possible for the second consecutive year. Special thanks to Lehmo, for providing an afternoon of laughter and memorable moments for all who attended. A huge thank you to our sponsors for their unwavering support and contributions, making the day even more special.



## Cybersecurity

After experiencing a cyber-attack in December 2023, St Vincent's successfully completed its forensic investigation in January 2024 concluding there was no evidence that sensitive personal information had been stolen from its network or that any data had been posted on the dark web. Australia's National Cyber Security Coordinator described St Vincent's as an "exemplar in collaboration ...working around the clock with us to manage and limit the consequences of this incident."

At East Melbourne, we recently welcomed a very special patient for surgery. Malik, a seven-year-old from Timor Leste, came with his mother Maya to address a knee problem he had been struggling with since infancy. Thanks to a partnership with Children First Foundation that has spanned over two decades, we have been able to provide life-changing surgery to over 100 children from developing countries like Malik.

Associate Professor Leo Donnan performed the two-hour surgery to help Malik straighten his leg, followed by the fitting of a Taylor's Spatial Frame to aid in healing and correcting the direction of his leg. Malik will continue to wear the frame for a few more weeks before undergoing physiotherapy with Children First Foundation for the next four months.

## Meet Malik

Having a Children First Foundation patient in our hospital always brings a special sense of purpose, as it allows us to fulfill our mission of helping those in need in a meaningful way. A heartfelt thank you to Associate Professor Leo Donnan and all the staff involved in Malik's surgery, care, and recovery. Your dedication and compassion are truly appreciated.







## Rosie lifts our spirits

Rosie the Therapy Dog is a regular visitor to St Vincent's Private where she lifts the spirits of patients, staff and whomever she comes in contact with.

When Rosie visited Education Manager Ilona Ryan and her team, something special happened. "It transformed our entire day!" explains Ilona, "It's amazing how a wagging tail and gentle eyes can instantly change the atmosphere of a busy workplace."

Research consistently shows that interactions with therapy animals can lower blood pressure, reduce anxiety, and even boost productivity. But experiencing it firsthand was truly remarkable.

In our dynamic world of healthcare where we often prioritise care of others over ourselves, these moments of connection matter. Rosie didn't just brighten our day – she reminded us of the importance of pausing, being present, and finding joy in simple interactions."

*Ilona Ryan, Education Manager, with Rosie the Therapy Dog*



# Visiting the Transfusion Lab

Below, from top: Midwifery graduates visiting the Transfusion Lab;  
Enrolled Nurse Graduates outside St Vincent's Private Hospital Fitzroy.



A visit to the Transfusion Lab proved highly beneficial to our midwifery graduates, and plans are underway to organise similar sessions including all clinical staff in the future.

The intent of the visit was for staff to:

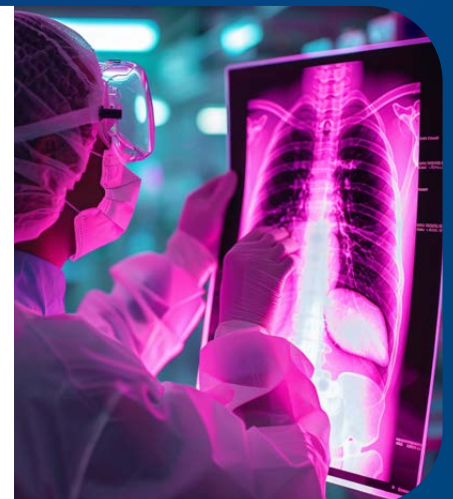
- gain an insight into the set-up and processes within the lab
- better understand the journey of blood samples and products from the patient to the lab and back to the patient
- understand the traffic and volume of samples, and better understand the receipt, sorting and triaging of sample requests
- recognise the importance of ensuring correct labelling of samples and the impact of non-conforming labelling, requiring patients to be re-bled and potentially delaying care.
- better understand blood types and antibodies and the impact of a patient receiving the wrong blood
- improve understanding of time requirements for the cross matching and delivery blood
- understand the courier system and the correct management of urgent samples
- build relationships between the clinical setting, staff and the lab that foster a respect and understanding of the functions and daily challenges in each space.

Feedback from the visit was overwhelmingly positive. Bringing small groups through the lab on a regular basis to meet with a scientist and demystify the journey of sample and blood products will result in improved processes, help mitigate risks, improve sample non-conformance errors and delays.

## Research

Medical research at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne operates under a National Clinical Trials Governance Framework to ensure clinical trials are conducted in a safe environment and in a high-quality manner for improved health outcomes for patients and the community.

"All Clinical Trials and other research must have approval from a Human Research and Ethics Committee (HREC) prior to commencing. Currently we have 18 Trials that have HREC approval" explained Sarah Gilmore, Quality and Risk Manager. "One of the studies, led by A/Prof Gavin Wright, aims to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of VGT-309, a tumour-targeted imaging agent, when it is used intra-operatively in patients having surgical resection or biopsy of suspicious or confirmed lung cancer. A range of criteria are used to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of this treatment on patients."



# Vale Mr Laurie Cleeve

**Mr Laurence Cleeve, Urologist, a great friend to many at St Vincent's Private, passed away in November.**

Laurie was a generous and excellent mentor to many of our current specialist urologists at St Vincent's and across Australia. To Laurie's close friends and colleagues at the hospital we mourn with you.

Laurie trained in Melbourne, the UK and USA before returning to Melbourne and establishing the Melbourne Urology Group and his wonderful long and successful urology practice at East Melbourne in Grey Street. He was Chair of ANZAUS Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand from 1991 to 1994 and President of the Society from 1999 to mid-2000. He was awarded the Society Medal in 2007 for his services to Urology.

His best friend, and anaesthetist, Dr Terry Little recalls the 35 years they shared working together, every Wednesday in the St Vincent's Private East Melbourne Theatres, with a devoted team of nurses and technician led by Maria Hubble. Terry, Maria, and Laurie were a tight-knit happy trio and remained close friends to the end. Laurie was known to have a cheery chat with the cleaner, the car park attendant, the nurses and everyone he crossed paths with – a true gentleman. Laurie used to say what a privilege it was to be able to give good care to his patients. That kindness extended to all whom he shared his busy days with.

Laurie leaves his beloved wife Joan, his five daughters Lucy, Jessica, Margot, Susie and Georgie and 14 young grandchildren. Being Pa brought Laurie great joy and endless love to share. Laurie was loved by his family, by his patients, by all of his friends and colleagues.

Laurie has touched so many and we pause to reflect and be grateful for the rich gift that Laurie was in our lives. We all remember his joy for living, on every page of his wonderful life story.

We pause to honour a very good man, a devoted husband, cherished dad and grandfather, a wonderful friend, an excellent surgeon, a fun colleague, a man of many interests – Carlton Football Club, golf, tennis, bird-watching and travelling. His family and his patients always came first.

.....  
May his dear soul rest in peace.





# Keeping in touch on social media



Follow us on Facebook and Instagram:

@stvincentsprivate

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If you are sharing pictures with us use **#stvincentsprivate** or **#stvincentsprivatebaby** or **#stvincentskids**



Find us on YouTube:

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## What do you think?

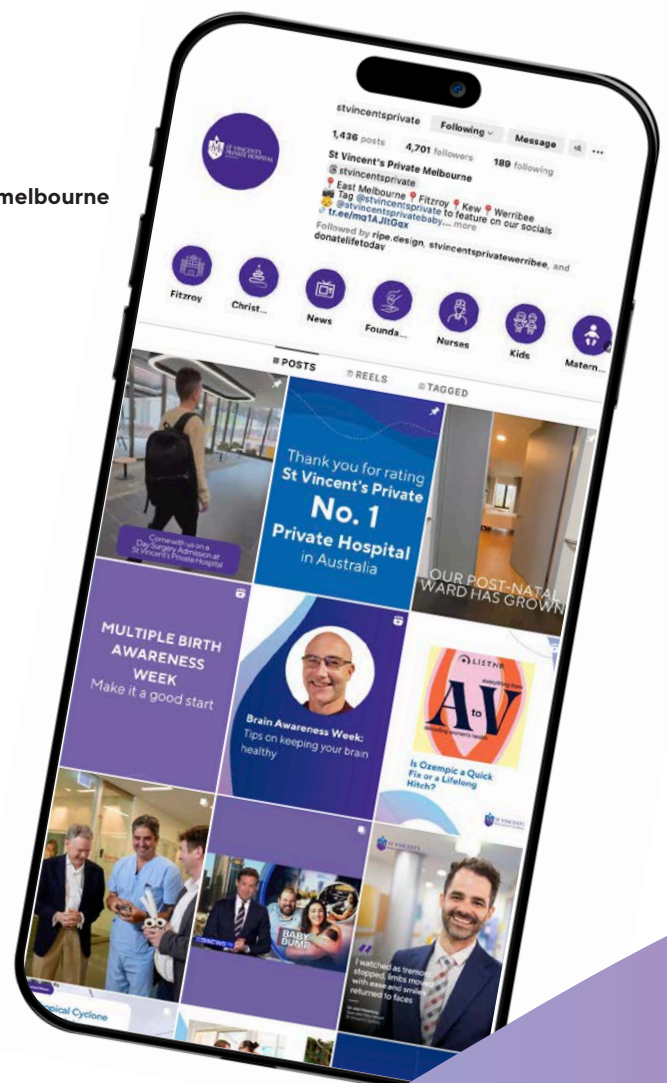
We welcome your feedback to ensure our Quality of Care Report is engaging, easy to read and relevant to the community.

Scan the QR code to provide feedback or email [diana.smith@svha.org.au](mailto:diana.smith@svha.org.au)



## Distribution

St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne distributes copies of the Quality of Care Report to patients, staff and key stakeholders. The publication can also be downloaded from our website.



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