

A close-up photograph of a woman, likely a nurse, wearing a colorful patterned surgical cap and blue scrubs. She is smiling warmly at the camera. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a clinical setting.

**A day in the life of
a perioperative nurse**

Alzheimer's new drug hope

**An inspiring young
Paralympian**

Vitality

SUMMER 2016

Acting CEO's message for you

Having said farewell to outgoing CEO Brendan Murphy who has taken up his new role as Australia's Chief Medical Officer, I am honoured to be Acting CEO for Austin Health.

I was delighted to re-join this wonderful organisation in 2015 as Executive Director of Performance and Innovation, having previously worked here as the Director of Surgical Services from 2003 – 2008, prior to taking up the role of CEO at Orbost Regional Health. I am thoroughly enjoying acting in the CEO role and continuing the amazing work that happens in this hospital. Recruiting is underway for a permanent CEO and I will keep you updated on this as we progress.

At Austin Health our vision is to change healthcare for the better through world class research, education and exceptional patient care. Associate Professor Michael Woodward is doing this by leading world-first research and clinical trials into a new drug which could slow or halt the progression of Alzheimer's disease - right here at Austin Health.

I was so inspired to read the story on page four about young Paralympian, Emma Booth, member of the 2016 Australian Paralympic Team in Rio. Emma spent time at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre after a devastating accident, taking part in an intensive rehabilitation program. Her determination, perseverance and hope is a lesson for us all.

The Diamond Creek Op Shop, run by the Friends of Austin Health, has undergone a renovation and expansion, just in time for Christmas! You can see the new look shop on the reverse side of the donation coupon in this newsletter.

As we move into the festive season, I thank you sincerely for your kindness and generosity for patients and families at Austin Health. Because of you, we are able to make a difference to thousands of people who need our help. I'd like to wish you and your families a happy and safe holiday season.

With sincere appreciation,

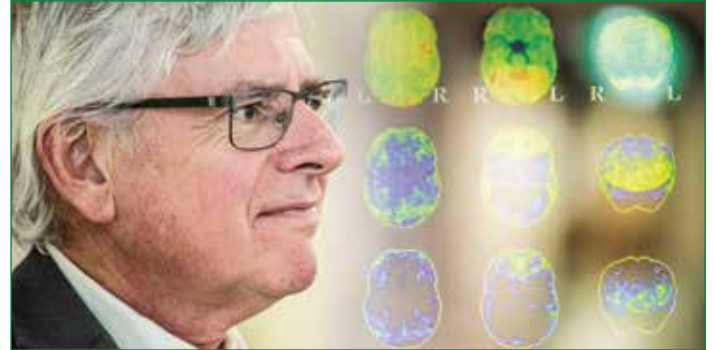


Bernadette McDonald
Acting CEO, Austin Health



Serious hope for people with Alzheimer's

Human trials began in Melbourne in October for a new drug that has been shown to halt the progression of Alzheimer's disease in mice and reverse memory loss.



The study's lead researcher, Austin Health Associate Professor Michael Woodward, said the drug had been found in mice to negate the effects of the toxic protein amyloid beta – which causes Alzheimer's - and to improve memory.

"This new drug could slow or halt the human progression of Alzheimer's, that currently affects 350,000 Australians, with one million projected to have this devastating illness by 2050," he said.

Previous therapies have focused on trying to eliminate plaques caused by the build-up of amyloid beta in the brain. This new approach focuses on how amyloid beta proteins link together to form clumps which bind to receptors responsible for communication between brain cells. This binding process kills parts of the receptors and in turn, disables communication between brain cells. The process of memory formation fails, and Alzheimer's symptoms start to appear.

"This new therapy is about protecting cells from the effects of these amyloid beta clumps – a new and very refreshing approach," said A/Prof Woodward.

The new drug, called CT1812, has been found in mice to shield the receptors from the effects of these binding clumps of amyloid beta proteins. It does this by the drug itself binding to a receptor and changing the receptor's shape so the clumps are either unable to take hold or are displaced.

A selection of drugs similar to the one being studied, and CT1812 itself, were shown to reverse memory loss in mice bred to make excess amounts of the human amyloid beta. This occurred after one month of treatment and memory improvement was sustained for six months.

Reference: 'New drug could slow or halt Alzheimer's', The Age, by Carolyn Webb, 17 October 2016.

A day in the life of a perioperative nurse



Above: Perioperative nurses gather for the morning briefing.

Each day, Austin Health's perioperative nursing team swipe their way into a secret world the rest of us may never get a chance to see. They're a committed team that fit their lives around the need to sustain or save the lives of others. Although integral to every surgical patient journey, their work is mostly invisible due to the effects of anaesthesia.

"You never know what's going to happen, what's going to unfold for the day. The staff all have the training and skills to deal with it if all hell breaks loose, but they still provide the utmost care to the routine cases. It's about that consistency of care." Fiona Winckens, Perioperative Services Manager.

Once surgery begins, the perioperative nurses support the surgeon, while the anaesthetic nurses support the anaesthetist. The nurses are in charge of all the instrumentation. They make sure that every instrument that goes into theatre is counted and accounted for before and after surgery; that they have the correct patient, the correct procedure, the right body part.

However, they're always ready to act in rapid response when a patient deteriorates, and it's in an emergency that the perioperative nurses come into their own. In the last week, they've responded to

unexpected haemorrhages, airway difficulties and anaphylactic reactions. In each situation, everyone has a role. People seem to materialise in theatre with the right equipment, almost as if the team can communicate telepathically.

Once surgery is over, the patient moves into Recovery. Their care is taken over by a Recovery Nurse, who will continue to monitor them until they are well enough to move into a ward. They complete the circle of the incredible nursing care team operating in the secret world of Austin Health's operating theatres.



Thank-you to Austin Health's perioperative nurses for all you do to care for patients.

Always striving to do better

A committed group of Austin Health medical staff are working together to reduce waiting times for elective surgery and improve the care of patients who have major surgery.

More than 10,000 people each year visit The Surgery Centre (TSC) at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital for elective surgery. Currently, any elective surgery patients who potentially need higher level care must undergo their surgery at the main Austin Hospital, which can mean a longer wait and a higher likelihood of cancellation due to emergency cases.

A dedicated group of Intensive Care Unit doctors, anaesthetists, general and renal doctors, cardiologists and surgeons have formed a unique Perioperative Medicine Unit. Together, they are working hard to identify higher needs patients, who with more intense management, can be safely operated on at TSC, reducing the demand for operating theatre space at the Austin Hospital.



“Our perioperative collaborative is committed to providing excellent care to our patients,” says Associate Professor Douglas Johnson, Director, Department of General Medicine and part of the Perioperative Medicine Unit.



Above: Associate Professor Douglas Johnson, Director – Department of General Medicine and part of the Perioperative Medicine Unit.

“There are thousands of patients undergoing surgery who might have multiple medical problems. Our goal is to determine the risk of surgery, optimise pre-existing medical problems before surgery and decide whether TSC or the main Austin Hospital is the ideal place for their surgery.”

There is currently a fundraising appeal raising money for a portable cardiac ultrasound machine, which will help this group of doctors to assess heart failure patients and surgical patients more thoroughly, and identify more patients who can safely have surgery at Austin Health.

“Assessing the heart function and fluid status of patients with this portable ultrasound machine would enable our group of doctors to rapidly assess surgical patients before and after surgery,” says A/Prof Johnson.

“Before surgery we can use the information gained to help determine the risks of surgery, to help our surgeons determine what surgery is appropriate, to aid decisions regarding the type of anaesthesia given during surgery and whether patients can be safely managed at TSC. The cardiac ultrasound machine would enable us to provide state of the art care to this group of surgical patients who need more intense monitoring and care after their surgery.”

“It would be quite unique to have access to a machine like this in a perioperative setting,” says A/Prof Johnson.

If you would like to support the appeal for the Cardiac Ultrasound Machine please fill in the tear-off donation coupon attached to this newsletter or call 03 9496 5753.

Thank You

You make a world of difference

The generosity and kindness of every one of our supporters is inspirational.

We'd like to give special mention to:

- The staff of Ward 11 at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital who raised \$5,555 to help make improvements to patient experience. Great effort Ward 11!
- Amgrow Home Garden who raised \$2,769 at their display at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. This money will be used for the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre Horticultural Therapy Program and gardens.
- The Estate of Jerry Jaroslav Vajtauer
- The Estate of Dorothy Muriel Ennis

“A disability doesn’t define a person”

Seven students from Alphington Primary School joined patients recently at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre to participate in gardening therapy, library borrowing and playing card games. The students were proud to be able to help others and appreciated the opportunity to see a different side to life.

“I felt really good helping the people and making them happy. Just because people have a disability, it doesn’t mean that they can’t have fun.” *Ashlee*

“Patients at Royal Talbot didn’t let their accident stop them from doing things they enjoyed.” *Lachlan*

“A disability doesn’t define people; they have great opportunities available to them.” *Hannah*



To find out ways you can help Austin Health and the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre please call 03 9496 5753, email fundraising@austin.org.au or visit our website at www.austin.org.au

Immunotherapy trial successes provide new hope in the battle against cancer

“It may sound a bit rough, but this is a really good time to have cancer. I’m really lucky to have got cancer at this time when these treatments are available” says Andrew Howard, 29.

While part of a six-month immunotherapy trial at the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre (ONJ Centre), Andrew’s tumours shrank at a “great rate” and nearly three years later, he is cancer free. For all the hope that immunotherapy provides, the fact remains that not everyone benefits from the treatments.

“There’s a real task to try to identify the patients who are going to benefit from treatment, and to understand why others don’t,” Andrew’s oncologist and Medical Director of the ONJ Centre, Professor Jonathan Cebon says.

Andrew calls himself one of the “lucky” ones. He is just one of an increasing number of patients with so-called incurable cancers who have beaten the odds with immunotherapy. Since the first immunotherapy drug – ipilimumab, for metastatic melanoma – was approved by the US Food and



Above: Andrew with his wife and daughter.

Drug Administration in 2011, a clutch of others have been approved to treat cancers including melanoma, lung renal cell carcinoma, Hodgkin’s lymphoma, bladder, head and neck cancers.

“I was very lucky to have melanoma at this time because a few years ago I would have had little to no chance of survival,” says Andrew. “I am very grateful for the dedication of all those in medical research who have given me the opportunity to get better.”

Source: ‘Cancer doctors embrace drugs that boost immune system to beat disease’, South China Morning Post, by Jeanette Wang, 6 September 2016

Royal Talbot helps Paralympian on her journey

Spending time at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre is part of a recovery journey for over 800 inpatients and 8,000 outpatients every year, including a special 2016 Rio Paralympian.

Heading home after an eventing competition in Albury in 2013, talented equestrian rider Emma Booth, then 21, suffered life-threatening injuries in a horror smash including a shattered spine and damaged spinal cord. She spent ten days in the Intensive Care Unit, three weeks in the Spinal Care Unit and then finally, the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre.

Emma had to learn to do everything again – from sitting up unsupported, to rolling over in bed, even putting socks on was a challenge. Seven months after her accident, through sheer grit and determination, Emma found the strength to get back on her horse, but this time as a Para-equestrian. She set her sights on being selected for the Rio 2016 Australian Paralympic Team, and in July her dream was realised.



Emma and her horse Zidane finished fifth in the Grade 2 Individual Championship.

“We’ve experienced some incredible highs and lows but ultimately it has been the most amazing experience of my life and a privilege to have worn the green and gold uniform and forever be known as a Paralympian,” Emma Booth

Photo: Simon Schluter Fairfax Syndication.

Everything old is new again

After operating for more than twenty years and contributing in excess of \$1 million to help patients and families, the Diamond Creek Op Shop has undergone an expansion just in time to fill the fabulous new space with stock for Christmas.



If you haven't made the trip to Diamond Creek to visit the Friends of Austin Health Opportunity Shop, now's the time! In addition to expanding into the neighbouring building to provide more space, it was decided to also renovate the original shop. The result, after six months of building work, is a large, spacious shop with the capacity to stock larger items – like furniture and paintings.

With Christmas just around the corner, the shop is well-stocked for gift ideas at very reasonable prices. With a team of helpful Friends of Austin volunteers who will welcome you with a warm smile, make sure you drop in for a visit and a spot of Christmas shopping!

The Diamond Creek Op Shop is open Mon – Sat from 9.30am until 4pm. Closed Sundays. 42-44 Main Hurstbridge Road, Diamond Creek, VIC, 3089. Telephone 03 9438 2426.



YES! I will help patients at Austin Health this summer.

Title: Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms (please circle)

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ P/code: _____

Email: _____

☐ I would like to become a regular supporter of Austin Health.
Please send me more information.

Please accept my tax-deductible donation of:

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$_____ *my choice*

☐ Enclosed is my cheque/money order made payable to Austin Health

OR Please debit the amount I have indicated from my:

☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ AMEX

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____ Expiry: _____ / _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Thank you!

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

AHxx00

Please send me information about:

- ☐ Making a bequest in my Will to Austin Health; OR
☐ I have already included Austin Health in my Will



Austin Health

ABN 96 237 388 063

Locked Bag 25, Heidelberg VIC 3084

Ph 03 9496 5753 Email fundraising@austin.org.au

Austin Health is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect your personal information so that we can contact you regarding your donations to Austin Health and the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre and our other programs that you may be interested in. We may share your information with similar organisations, including the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute. To review our Privacy Policy please visit austin.org.au/privacy-statement. If you would prefer Austin Health to not share your information and/or if you prefer not to receive mail from Austin Health, please let us know by writing on this coupon and return in the reply paid envelope provided.