



## **\*\*\*Media release\*\*\***

### **Austin Hospital visitors to help prevent superbug and flu spread**

The threat of SARS, bird flu and swine flu has influenced hospital infection procedures for the better, according to an Austin Health professor.

On Tuesday 5 May, Austin Hospital installed its hand-wash hub, a self-service handwash centre for all hospital visitors arriving and leaving the hospital.

“We know that hand-washing is the most simple and effective way to prevent the spread of infection around the hospital”, Director of Infectious Diseases, Prof Lindsay Grayson said.

“This includes not only superbugs such as 'Golden Staph, but also viruses such as swine flu,” he said.

Introduction of the alcohol handrub program has resulted in a 50 percent reduction in golden staph at the Austin Hospital and the mission of the new National Hand Hygiene Initiative is to achieve a similar result nationally.

Prof Grayson oversees the national roll-out of hand hygiene initiatives in his role as Director of Hand Hygiene Australia (HHA). But like any good scientist, he wanted to measure how bad the problem was before implementing his program.

HHA is now establishing a standardised database of superbugs, especially Golden Staph, across Australia. Grayson’s own state of Victoria is exceeding its own hand hygiene compliance targets and is leading the way nationally, although other states are quickly 'catching the bug' and introducing hand-rub programs to help control their infection rates.

HHA will implement a 5 star system, similar to hotels.

“The more stars, the better the hospital's hand hygiene compliance. Our system will make it easier to choose a hospital that takes infection control seriously” he said.