

**Australian first for
kidney transplants**

14 simultaneous operations across
seven hospitals

A world-first trial

Unlocking the mysteries of the mind

Thanking you

Austin's amazing supporters

Vitality

AUTUMN 2016

CEO's Message

Welcome to your first news update for 2016. I am humbled to be part of the team at this wonderful hospital and I look forward to sharing another year with you. I am so grateful for the continuing support you give to our hospital.

In 2015 we saw the commencement of building for our new Emergency Department Short Stay Unit. Work is progressing very well and we are on-track to finish mid-2016 and hopefully occupy later in the year. This new unit will significantly improve the performance of the Emergency Department.

The Surgery Centre (TSC) continued to help patients in 2015 by performing 25,000 elective surgeries. TSC is an elective surgery centre, designed to separate elective surgery from emergency surgery and complex elective work. This enables the Austin operating theatres to increase emergency surgery capacity. In addition, it aids in decreasing waiting list times for elective surgery, while overall increasing the number of patients undergoing surgery at Austin Health.

We were proud to be involved in an Australian-first seven-way kidney swap in November last year. You can read about this story on page four. In addition to taking part in the exchange, our Renal Transplant Unit carried out a record 50 transplants in 2015 – an almost five-fold increase from a decade ago.

This year we continue to strive toward our vision of outstanding patient care, research and education. 2016 will see us work to develop and grow many areas of care, including the Cardiology Department which you can read about in this newsletter and their need for a very specialised piece of diagnostic equipment.

I'd like to personally thank you for your loyal and generous support, and assure you that your help allows Austin Health to continue to be at the forefront of medical and research initiatives that truly make a difference to people's lives.

Until the next edition!

Yours sincerely,



Dr Brendan Murphy
CEO



43 amazing supporters receive thanks from Denis Walter OAM

Loyal supporters of Austin Health joined for a morning of appreciation and friendship at the annual recognition event on November 12.

Guests enjoyed a scrumptious morning tea of scones with cream and jam, yummy slices, and tea and coffee, while learning about how their ongoing support has and will continue to make a real difference.

Denis Walter OAM, Media Personality and Austin Bequest Patron, was proud to present 43 long-time supporters of Austin Health with certificates of recognition. **He was especially honoured to present Ray and Lyn Blackburn with their certificate for 30 years of ongoing support.**

Special guests baby Charlie and his mum Vanja along with Liver Transplant Surgeon Graham Starkey – who you may remember reading about from a recent Liver Transplant article, were also there to thank the recipients for their support. Vanja shared her moving story of saving her son Charlie from liver failure with the support of Austin Health Liver Transplant Surgeons by donating part of her own liver to him.

Graham explained how important state-of-the-art equipment is in improving the outcomes for patients and thanked caring supporters for their commitment to Austin Health, which has helped to purchase key pieces of equipment across the hospital. Their generosity has and will continue to change lives.



Ray & Lyn Blackburn accepting their 30 Year Recognition Certificate from Denis Walter OAM.

Unlocking the mysteries of the mind

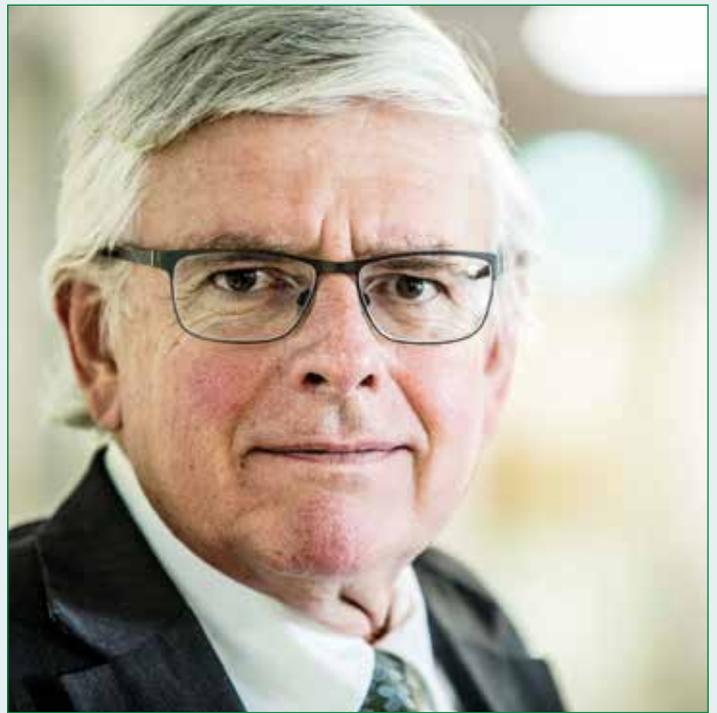
A world-first trial into a rare genetic form of early-onset dementia could lead to an effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

Approximately 200 Australians suffer from the rare Autosomal Dominant Alzheimer's Disease (ADAD).

Austin Health, alongside the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, is one of three Australian sites participating in the Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer's Network Trial (DIAN-TU), which tests drugs that could prevent, delay or possibly even reverse Alzheimer's changes in the brain.

Associate Professor Michael Woodward OAM says the combination of Austin Health's drug trials and Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanning expertise make Austin Health one of the world's leading dementia research centres.

PET scanning is integral to the DIAN-TU study. Using small amounts of radioactive material, the scanning highlights the existence of amyloid plaque build-up in the brain – a substance that is thought to cause the damage that ultimately leads to Alzheimer's. Antibody medication can then target the build-up of amyloid protein to potentially prevent Alzheimer's from developing in the first place.



Professor Michael Woodward OAM.

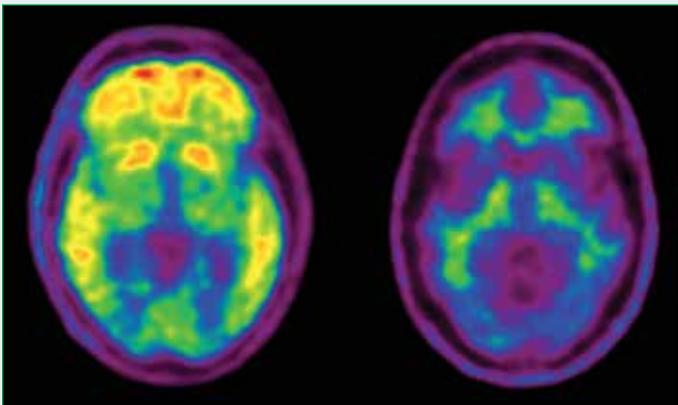
"It will hopefully prove what has been a hypothesis – that amyloid causes Alzheimer's – but also that amyloid is potentially a way to diagnose dementia early so we can stop people from getting it in the first place. If this works, we'll have an effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease not only for people with this rare young-onset form but also for Alzheimer's patients more broadly" said Prof Rowe.

Trial results should be known in two years.

"If this works, we'll have an effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease not only for people with this rare young-onset form but also for Alzheimer's disease patients more broadly."

The Medical and Cognitive Research Unit at Austin Health is the largest dementia clinical trials site in the southern hemisphere. Currently we are conducting 27 trials with patients with various stages of Alzheimer's disease.

To find out more about these trials visit: www.austin.org.au/cognitiveresearch



A PET image used in the study.

Austin Health's Professor Chris Rowe is one of the world's pioneers in PET. Prof Rowe says the study is unique because it is among the first to attempt treatment in people who don't have dementia symptoms.

STOP PRESS: Michael Woodward receives Australia Day Honour.

Associate Professor Michael Woodward has been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his long and distinguished contribution to health, especially in the area of dementia research. Congratulations Michael!

Record breaking year for the Renal Transplant Unit

Austin Health's involvement in an Australian-first series of kidney transplants capped off a record-breaking year for our renal transplant unit.

Hundreds of staff across Austin Health, Monash Medical Centre, the Royal Melbourne and NSW's Westmead, Prince of Wales and John Hunter hospitals were involved in the exchange which has given seven transplant recipients a new lease of life.

On 19 November, 14 simultaneous operations were carried out across the seven hospitals to remove the kidneys from their donors before the precious organs were either couriered across town or flown interstate to be transplanted into recipients.

Austin Health had one transplant-donor pair. Forest Hill mother Veronica Reid received a kidney while her sister Eleanor Canning donated one of her kidneys.

Veronica was suffering from end-stage renal disease.

"I am so grateful. If the transplant didn't happen I would probably be on dialysis by now," Veronica said. "I used to feel like there was cement in my body. I always felt heavy and tired. All of the symptoms have totally gone now which is great," she said.

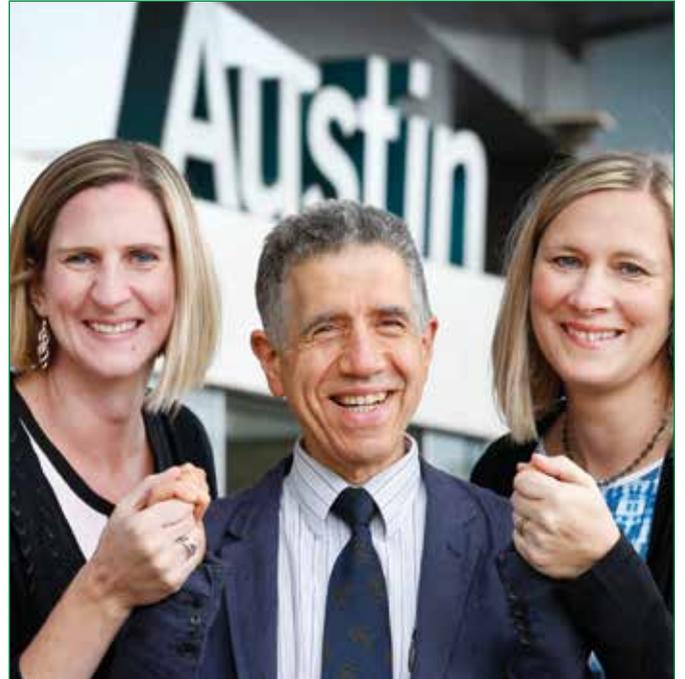
Austin Health Renal Transplant Unit Deputy Director Assoc Prof Frank Ierino said he felt fortunate and proud to be part of the exchange.

"To see our health system working in such a collaborative way is just fantastic," Assoc Prof Ierino said. "It's a great thing to see patients having the opportunity to have a renal transplant where they would otherwise be on a transplant list for long periods of time."

The Australian Paired Kidney Exchange organises organ transplants when a person in urgent need of a

kidney has a loved one willing to donate their kidney but has an incompatible blood or tissue type. The recipient-donor pair's details are placed into a pool and are matched with other donor-recipient pairs until each is matched with a suitable swap.

Assoc Prof Ierino said thanks to initiatives such as the Australian Paired Kidney Exchange and the work of the Organ and Tissue Authority he was confident that Austin Health's renal transplant program would continue to grow.



Assoc Prof Frank Ierino with donor and recipient sisters Eleanor Canning and Veronica Reid. Pic courtesy of Herald Sun.

Gifts from the community make it possible for us to purchase new equipment helping us to better support people in need of our care. If you wish to support Austin Health's renal transplant program please visit www.austin.org.au/supportus

"It's a great thing to see patients having the opportunity to have a renal transplant where they would otherwise be on a transplant list for long periods of time."

HEALTH FACT

Regular exercise is the single most important key to heart health. And it's FREE.

Reference: The Cleveland Clinic



Helping people breathe easy

Ten years ago there was no medication available for pulmonary hypertension, but treatment has come a long way in the last decade, and now a new piece of equipment could help extend the lives of people with this challenging condition.

Pulmonary hypertension is a severe type of high blood pressure with serious health and survival outcomes for patients. The arteries that carry blood from the heart to the lungs become narrowed, making it difficult for blood to flow through the vessels. As a result, the blood pressure in these arteries - called pulmonary arteries - rises far above normal levels.

The heart has to work much harder, trying to force the blood through to the lungs. If the pressure is high enough, eventually the heart can't keep up, less blood circulates through the lungs to pick up oxygen and heart failure is the end result.

It affects mainly adults, and is more common in women, particularly younger women. The average life expectancy for patients attending the Pulmonary Hypertension Clinic in the Cardiology Department at the Austin is three to five years.

Symptoms include severe and debilitating breathlessness – meaning patients can barely walk, stairs are impossible and patients often need an oxygen cylinder 24/7. Shortened life expectancy is one of the most devastating outcomes of pulmonary hypertension.

Olive Nelms was diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension in 2012. An energetic and independent lady, Olive began to experience unusual breathlessness – from dancing (which she loves) to pulling the garbage bins up her driveway. She recalls learning about the seriousness of her condition:

“I heard the life expectancy for untreated pulmonary hypertension was two years and eight months,” says Olive. “According to that statistic, I could have been dead by now.”

But Olive is doing well with the support and treatment of an expert team of doctors, led by Dr Mark Horrigan, Head of the Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratories at Austin Health. The Cardiology Department at Austin Health is a centre of excellence for the management and treatment of this debilitating condition.

“Unfortunately there is no cure, but treatment is all about management of symptoms and prolonging life by using medication,” says Dr Horrigan. Patients currently undergo a diagnostic test in the Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory to measure pressures in the heart. Based on results from this test, doctors then formulate an effective drug therapy program for the patient.

There is a diagnostic tool – called the Metabolic Cart - which can give far more detailed information about the heart and lung function of each patient, leading to a greater understanding of the usefulness of a patient's current drug therapy program.

The Cardiology Department currently does not have this piece of equipment.

“The Metabolic Cart would give us a far more detailed and sophisticated view of each patient at rest and especially under the added stress of exercise conditions”, says Dr Horrigan. “This has enormous implications for the patient's drug therapy program as more specific diagnosis allows us to tailor and monitor their medication much more effectively. In some cases therapy can prolong life significantly.”

We are currently raising funds for the Cardiology Department to help purchase a Metabolic Cart at the cost of \$35,000. If you would like to help the Cardiology Department to be able to purchase the Metabolic Cart please complete the gift coupon attached to this newsletter and send it to the Fundraising & Development Department's address listed on the coupon.

“I heard the life expectancy for untreated pulmonary hypertension was two years and eight months.”



Dr Horrigan (second from right) and the Cardiac Team ready to help patients.

Thank You



Thanks H T Pamphilon Fund for rehabilitation equipment in Austin Health Physiotherapy.

You make a world of difference

The generosity and kindness of every one of our supporters is inspirational. So before anything else, we want to say “Thank You!”

Thank you to those who donate in memory of a loved one or friend, to those who run community events, and to those who pick up the phone and donate “just because”.

A special thank you to our committed monthly givers who help us plan for the future, and to those who make the visionary choice to leave a bequest to Austin Health in their will.

And thank you to those in the corporate world who value giving support to community health and medical research.

Here are just a few of you that we would like to highlight this month:

- Ivanhoe Girls’ Grammar School: \$3,000 for the Acute Spinal Unit. Thanks to students for their outstanding effort in raising funds at their annual Year 9 Walkathon. Funds raised will go towards purchasing items – such as iPads – to help improve patient experience during lengthy hospital stays.
- Gandel Philanthropy: \$18,277 for Ashkenazi Jewish Genetic Screening - An Education Program.
- Collier Charitable Fund: \$20,000 for IntelliVue Patient Monitors for Respiratory Medicine and a Bariatric Walking Frame for Orthopaedics.
- William Angliss Charitable Fund: \$2,000 for The Respiratory High Dependency Unit Equipment.
- H T Pamphilon Fund: \$99,587 for enhancing the patient environment at Austin Health Physiotherapy through early mobilisation and rehabilitation equipment.
- Slater and Gordon Health Projects and Research Fund: \$25,000 for The Hand That Changes The Brain That Changes Itself, project for Occupational Therapy.
- The estates of Doris Diserens, John Joseph O’Hanlon, Myrtle Marjorie Joyce Webb, Joan Gladys Clarke, Lena Catharina Weysenfeld and Wilma Keir.

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

A bright young advocate for diabetes education

280 Australians develop diabetes every day! That's one person every five minutes. Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic condition in Australia; increasing at a faster rate than other chronic diseases such as heart disease or cancer.

Diabetes education is a critical link between people diagnosed with diabetes and the doctors treating them. Professor George Jerums from the Endocrine Centre for Excellence at Austin Health says "With the increase in incidence of diabetes in the community the doctors need extra help to educate patients. Our diabetes educators play a critical role in teaching patients about diabetes and how to manage it."

Each year an Austin Health nurse is awarded the Liz Baker Memorial Diabetes Education Certificate Scholarship to study and obtain a post-graduate certificate of Diabetes Education. Liz Baker was a diabetes educator who worked at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital for seven years. Sadly, Liz died unexpectedly at the age of 42, and the scholarship was created in her honour.

The scholarship awarded in 2015 (for study commencing in 2016) was made possible thanks to the generous support from:

- Abbott Australasia Pty Ltd
- Eli Lilly Australia Pty Ltd
- Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd
- Sanofi Aventis Australia Pty Ltd

This year's award has been presented to Sonia Mennilli who has worked in the Renal Dialysis Unit for 16 years. Sonia is passionate about working with people with diabetes and feels education is crucial.

"The majority of our renal patients suffer from Type 2 Diabetes which is reversible," says Sonia. "I am passionate about delivering the key message to patients that it is never too late to change your lifestyle. We need to empower them to learn to be proactive, change their habits and improve their life by being more healthy and active."



Liz Baker Scholarship 2016 winner Sonia (pictured middle) with scholarship corporate supporters.

