

Vitality

AUTUMN 2009

WORLD LEADING CARE AT YOUR DOORSTEP



Renee Dummett was just 10 when she underwent her 16-hour transplant surgery (pictured here with Professor Jones when Renee was in her mid-teens). Today she is 30 years old and the mother of three children.

Giving new livers a new life

Professor Bob Jones and everyone on his team are passionate about preserving life and committed to quality patient care. They must be. This team of medical professionals know that they are the last stop for their patients. It's a tremendous responsibility and incredibly stressful. But always, they willingly rise to the challenge.

This could explain why the Liver Transplant Unit has saved more than 560 lives since it opened in 1988 and achieved many firsts along the way!

In fact, Austin Health's Liver Transplant Unit is the only team providing liver transplants for Victoria, Tasmania and southern New South Wales. A statewide service, the Liver Transplant Unit has been credited with many milestones including the first liver transplant, the first paediatric transplant, as well as the first split transplant in Victoria. Split transplant is where one organ is shared with an adult and a child. More recently the team successfully performed a living-related procedure, where part of a liver was taken from a mother to give to her baby.

Another first for the unit!

Renee Dummett was just 10 when she underwent her 16-hour transplant surgery. Today she is a 30-year old mother of three children. Renee told Austin Health that she has kept track of Professor Jones, watching him star in the organ transplant reality television program 'The Gift', during which she "cried through every episode".

Professor Jones says that, "a liver transplant requires an extraordinary multi-disciplinary team". He also praises people who donate to the hospital's fundraising appeals. **It's through your ongoing support that such a vital service continues to serve the people of Victoria.**

To celebrate the Liver Transplant Unit's 21st anniversary, Austin Health is running an appeal to fund much-needed new and additional equipment. A transplant for most patients is a matter of life or death, so please ensure this dedicated team has the very best equipment there is, by sending your donation today.

Moving forward

A thank you message from the CEO

A growing number of Victorians are turning to Austin Health each year. Almost 60,000 people came through our Emergency Department in 2008; up from 40,000 a year when we first opened the new Austin Hospital building in 2005.

Despite being as busy as ever, we have continued to provide the highest quality health care – this is thanks to the support of our wonderful donors, volunteers and of course, our dedicated staff.

In this issue you will read about the incredible life-saving work of our Liver Transplant Unit who give many desperately ill patients a new chance at life. Very inspiring.

I am also thrilled that our recently opened The Surgery Centre at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital has treated more than 2,000 elective surgery patients already. You can read more about the Centre in this issue along with the award winning work of our researchers and new developments at Austin Health.

It is thanks to the support you give us each year that enables us to purchase extra medical equipment and further support patient care innovations. I would like to thank you again for your generosity, so that we may continue to invest in our health service – for a healthier future.

Dr Brendan Murphy
Chief Executive Officer



Our Surgery Centre



Premier John Brumby, Dr Brendan Murphy and Health Minister Daniel Andrews at the official opening.

Austin Health's The Surgery Centre has performed more than 2,000 procedures since it opened in July 2008 at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, with its 70 highly motivated and skilled staff.

Based at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, the newly refurbished Centre offers a radical departure from the traditional model of elective surgery health care. The Centre's acting medical director, Lindsay Castles said, "The ability to quarantine our elective surgery workload from emergency cases is a better use of resources and provides for better patient care."

The Centre provides a welcoming and dynamic atmosphere for patients, and includes four operating theatres, two endoscopy suites, a ten-bed recovery unit, a twelve-bed short stay ward, and diagnostic infrastructure. The staff undertake a holistic approach to patient care including music therapy to calm patients' nerves prior to their operation. Other initiatives include staggered patient admission times to reduce unnecessary waiting; and designated patients receive soluble analgesia to reduce post-operative discomfort and promote well-being.

The Surgery Centre is well on the way to becoming a benchmark unit for surgery centres.

Did you know?

- The Surgery Centre will treat 6,000 category two and three elective surgery patients a year, which is an additional 2,000 elective surgery patients.
- The Centre provides treatment options for patients who require day surgery or an inpatient bed of up to 72 hours.
- Surgical procedures performed include: Urology; plastics, general surgery, breast surgery, ophthalmology and some minor orthopaedic surgery.
- The Centre complements the Austin Hospital's recently redeveloped Surgery and Endoscopy Centre, which treats 20,000 patients a year.

New Travel and Tropical Medicine Clinic

The Infectious Diseases Department at Austin Hospital has opened a new clinical service - Austin Travel and Tropical Medicine. The clinic is a referral-based service and provides travellers with access to an extensive range of travel vaccines and medications. Travellers require a letter of referral from their general practitioner to make an

appointment. The clinic is bulk-billed; travel vaccines and medications are billed to the traveller.

Enquiries phone
03 9496 6676 or fax your referral letter to 03 9496 6677.

New research facility for Austin Health

A new bioresources facility will be built at the Austin Hospital site to keep Austin LifeSciences members in the forefront of biomedical research in areas such as cancer, transplants and heart disease.

The Austin LifeSciences represents all research interests at Austin Health, including the various research institutes, The University of Melbourne and hospital-based research groups.

The Austin LifeSciences consists of world-class scientific leaders conducting research into cancer, neurosciences, transplantation, heart disease and high blood pressure, immunology and vaccines, endocrinology and sleep disorders.

The government has granted \$9.2 million to the research infrastructure, with a further \$2 million contributed by both The University of Melbourne (\$1 million) and the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research (\$1 million). The government has contributed \$8.25 million of the total grant towards constructing the first stage of the teaching, training and research (TTR) redevelopment. The new bioresources facility is the second stage of the TTR redevelopment.

This grant continues to build on the government's investment of Austin Health as a world-class leader in medical and allied health care.

The new bioresources facility will consolidate multiple sites across the Austin Health sites to maintain its standing as a world-class tertiary health service.

Austin Health responds to the Black Saturday Bushfires

Saturday 7 February 2009 will live on in our minds for many years to come as Australia's worst natural disaster, which has resulted in more than 200 lives lost and nearly 2,000 homes destroyed.

Many Austin Health staff were personally affected, not knowing if they had homes to go to, or whether loved ones were okay. Tragically, we learnt that we lost one of our most outstanding and long-term staff members, Director of Respiratory and Sleep Medicine, Professor Rob Pierce who remained at his St Andrew's home to fight the bushfires.

CEO Brendan Murphy said, "Our thoughts are with his family and with his many colleagues at Austin Health."

But where there was such devastation and tragedy there was also some good news.

One of the victims of Saturday's bushfires was Vivienne James who was admitted with heart problems and burns to her face, neck, arms and legs. Ms James was one of 30 people who came to our Emergency Department over that weekend, of whom 19 were admitted including seven into Intensive Care.

Ms James was overwhelmed by the response from Austin Health staff. "They're so good in here – they're unreal. I've never been looked at by so many people in my life!" she said.

The response from Austin Health staff has been incredible. Many stopped their weekend activities to come in to assist, whilst others were out there raising money to support the victims.

In addition to the medical care, Austin Health provided patients' relatives with meal vouchers and access to showers and computers.

As part of the emergency relief effort, Austin Health sent an emergency trauma mental health team to assist



Bushfire victim Vivienne James (centre) with nurses Maryanne Kirk and Kathryn Frawley, whose care she described as "unreal".

people in crisis, and Radiology and Pathology staff to join the state forensic medicine unit. We also sent an emergency team to assist in providing care at the Alexandra District Hospital.

We sent packages of dressings and medical consumables, such as Ventolin and eye drops. We also donated red allergy armbands, which were used to identify residents permitted to return to restricted areas.

As Dr Murphy said, "Once again I have been impressed by the compassionate and professional response to the crisis by staff and I would like to thank everyone who helped in meeting the extra demand."

Special support for music therapy program



Former Austin Health patients - predominantly from the spinal injury unit - have written and recorded a 16-track compilation album of songs, in collaboration with a music therapist. Proceeds from the album sales support the music therapy program at Austin

Health's Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre in Kew.

The "Rehab Rhythm & Blues - Songs from the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre" production was generously funded by the Transport Accident Commission. The songwriting patients range in age from 18 to 50.

Adrian, one of the patients who participated, said "Music therapy was great because it gave us a chance to get out of the chair in a way and function as a normal person instead of being looked at as a disabled person... music took us back to normality."

You can order your copy for \$20 including postage, by mail or email. Contact: Nikky Perdikas, Allied Health Secretary at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre on 03 9490 7660; or download a postal order form at www.austin.org.au

Leaving a lasting legacy

Every year hundreds of thousands of people turn to Austin Health for vital medical care and treatment. By leaving a legacy, through the gift of a Bequest in your Will, you will help ensure that Austin Health continues to be a world-class leader in providing medical care and research. You also will leave a lasting legacy of your kindness. When you notify Austin Health of your intention to leave a Bequest you are welcomed as an Austin Health Ambassador.

For further information on leaving a Bequest, please call Maria Longo, Bequest Manager on 03 9496 5753.

Reporting back on your support!

Thanks to the generosity of our Austin Health supporters, more than \$100,000 was raised over the last 12 months. The donations helped to purchase extra equipment for various departments, including the Paediatrics Ward, Victorian Spinal Cord Service and Endocrine Centre for Excellence.

Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) of Paediatrics, Janis Shoesmith said the 2007 Christmas Appeal raised \$30,000 for her ward, including specialised thermometers and monitors; a WeeSight Transilluminator for finding veins on the limbs of a tiny baby; and more. There was even enough money to buy art and craft equipment for the ward.

The Spinal Ward's Nurse Unit Manager, Jennifer Batten said that the 2008 'tax-time' equipment drive raised \$40,000 including air mattresses, ceiling hoists, and an electric wheelchair. "It's absolutely fantastic," Nurse Batten said. "Air mattresses reduce patients' risk of pressure ulcers; and the new ceiling hoists save our nurses from back injuries and is a safer and easier way to transport patients".

Thank you to all our supporters who generously gave to Austin Health's Equipment Appeals. Your help makes a real difference.



Harry Orchard handing over his donation to Nurse Unit Manager of Ward 9A

patients in Ward 9A have the use of a specially designed shower chair thanks to the generous \$10,000 donation from Harry Orchard. This gift has allowed staff to purchase the chair to be able to safely transport patients to the bathroom for a sit-down shower. Previously, less mobile patients could only receive a sponge bath from their bed. Harry Orchard is a treasured supporter, volunteer, and one of our Bequest Ambassadors, having mentioned Austin Health in his Will as

Thank you!

We are grateful for the support we receive from our donors and the many charitable organisations that kindly grant funds for our hospital equipment.

Our Aged Care

a way to continue helping others in future. Thank you Harry!

A \$40,000 grant from the Collier Charitable Fund enabled Austin Health's Cardiac Surgery team to purchase a revolutionary surgical item, a "Focus Scalpel", for specialist operations such as cardiac grafts. The Scalpel is quicker and safer than previous, older equipment and causes less arterial spasm and damage to a patient's body tissue. Thank you Collier Charitable Fund!

The Friends of Austin Health volunteer fundraising auxiliaries raised \$217,000 in the last financial year, under the leadership of President, Mrs Beverly Briese. Austin Health Board member, Joe Manton said that a greeting and a smile from a volunteer can make all the difference to people who arrive at the hospital. To join the Friends of Austin Health, contact the Volunteer Coordinator on 03 9496 2337. Thank you Friends!



The generosity of donors, helped NUM Janis Shoesmith purchase \$30,000 of equipment for the Paediatrics Ward

