

Vitality

SUMMER 2009

WORLD LEADING CARE AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Look who's turned one!

The Surgery Centre celebrates a year of patient-focused excellence, dedication and care.

In August this year The Surgery Centre celebrated its first birthday. And what a year it has been! The goal was to treat 5,000 elective surgery patients. The staff passed the goal, treating over 5,580 patients. Demand for this service is continuing to grow.

It's all about patient-centred care

Clinical Manager Michelle Wood explains, "The Surgery Centre is a unique facility. It's a facility where the focus is on patient-centred care. This care is delivered by a dedicated group of health professionals who are dynamic, confident and highly skilled, and who work to the highest standards."

"Patients requiring short-stay elective procedures are targeted from Austin Health's waiting list – every patient is assured of their surgery being performed not only in a timely manner but also in a safe, healthy and harmonious environment. We have separated short-stay elective surgery from emergency and complex elective procedures, striving to ensure patients receive their procedure on the day that it is booked – we do not cancel patients due to unexpected emergency requirements.

The Surgery Centre conducts a variety of operations including: Endoscopy (for bowel and stomach); Urology (for kidneys and bladder); Ophthalmology (for cataract extraction and insertion of lens); Faciomaxillary (for removal of wisdom teeth or wires/plates from faces from previous injuries); General surgery (including gall bladder surgery, hernia repairs, in-grown toenails and more).

Our aim is to provide the best care always, to continually evolve and improve for the patients

"We have a very specific culture of excellence – we continually challenge ourselves to deliver the best health care available. We listen.

We believe in open and transparent communication between staff, patients, families and carers, and stakeholders. We care a lot", says Ms Wood.

The increase in patient numbers at The Surgery Centre has meant a need for more equipment. Right now, nurses spend time going from one area to the next to find equipment to monitor and regulate fluids and other vital signs. The purchase of additional equipment will ensure nurses spend less time searching for equipment and more time focusing on continuing to provide highest quality care to their patients.

You can help support Austin Health's Surgery Centre Appeal by making a donation today. Your gift will help us purchase additional equipment such as:

Nonin Monitors which are used to take a patient's blood pressure, pulse rate and blood oxygen levels. 10 more Nonin Monitors are required - \$3,250 each

Cardinal IV Pumps which are used to monitor and regulate the amount of intra-venous fluid which a patient receives each hour via a "drip" into their vein as specified by the doctor. 8 additional Cardinal IV Pumps are required - \$2,500 each

Ms Wood knows first-hand what a difference her staff make to patients. "We are making a difference to people's lives every day – to the people who are having pain when they walk and need an arthroscopy, we make a difference; to the people whose vision is severely affected by their cataract, we make a difference; to the people having episodes of severe pain associated with their kidney stones, we make a difference; to the people who need skin cancers removed, we make a difference. Your donation will make a difference and for that we thank you."

To make your donation, simply fill in the giving form attached to this issue of Vitality or call Fundraising on 03 9496 5753.



Nurse Bianca Goulter tends to patient Perry Halkidis.

Moving forward

*A thank you message
from the CEO*

It's been another incredibly busy year for our Health Service. As we look back, much has been achieved. We continue to build for the future, with more world class facilities to match our world class care and research.



Construction has begun on a \$45 million Austin Neurosciences Facility at the Austin Hospital campus, thanks to State and Federal Government funding. The facility will bring together recognised world leaders from the Florey Neuroscience Institutes, the Mental Health Research Institute and The University of Melbourne, to advance research into brain-imaging, epilepsy, stroke and Alzheimer's disease.

Building works continue on the Centre for Trauma Related Mental Health at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital campus.

The old Cancer Services block, Heidelberg House is being demolished to make way for our \$157 million Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre.

Our achievements can only be made possible thanks to the dedication of our skilled staff and through the commitment of our supporters in the community, who help us achieve so much more for our patients. Thank you for your continued support.

On behalf of the staff at Austin Health, I wish you all the best for a healthy and happy holiday season and I look forward to sharing more news with you in the new year.

Thank you
Dr Brendan Murphy
Chief Executive Officer

Minister visits Austin Health to open innovative new ward

Health Minister Daniel Andrews visited Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital to officially open Austin Health's new sub-acute care ward for elderly patients on Monday 12 October.

The new ward – Ward 10 – gives Austin Health patients access to an additional 24 beds, and introduces an innovative new model of care for older people with complex care needs. Patients have access to a ward team that combines acute medical care with the expert knowledge of sub-acute care specialists.

Ward 10 was refurbished thanks to \$2.23 million of State Government funding and is expected to care for approximately 700 patients each year.

"In the next 50 years it is predicted that one in four Australians will be aged over 65, and the number of people over 85 will increase from 1.6 per cent of the population to around 5-7 per cent," Mr Andrews said.

"Austin Health has responded to the challenge by setting up this ward and introducing an innovative model of care for older people with complex care needs," he said.



Minister Andrews talks to patient Walter Stansbury about his experiences as a patient in Austin Health's innovative new aged care ward, Ward 10.

Cancer Ward Moved

Austin Cancer Services building, Heidelberg House is being demolished to make way for the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre.

The Heidelberg House Inpatient wards have been temporarily re-located to refurbished wards on level nine of the Austin Hospital's Harold Stokes building. The Day Oncology Unit has been temporarily moved to Austin Hospital's Outpatients Department on level three.

Due to the enormous size of the project, the Centre will be built in two stages. The Day Oncology Unit, the Cannulation and Apheresis Treatment Services (plasma exchange area), the pharmacy, a portion of the radiotherapy service, information and resource centre and the Wellness Centre will open in 2012.

The Inpatient wards, balance of radiotherapy and final fit out of research laboratories will be completed in the second stage of the project build.

When completed, the specially designed cancer centre will combine the latest in medical treatment and cancer research with the best of wellness care for people with any type of cancer. The Centre will also provide valuable support for loved ones of patients.

To find out more, visit www.OliviaAppeal.com

New surgery offers hope to some diabetics

A new type of transplant surgery to be trialled at Austin Hospital could give some diabetics a new lease on life.

The procedure takes insulin producing islet cells from a deceased donor's pancreas, which are injected in to the recipient's portal vein. The islet cells begin producing insulin when they become embedded in the liver. Patients are placed on immunosuppressive drugs to prevent rejection of the islet cells, after the transplant.

Austin Health Renal Unit Deputy Director, Associate Professor Frank Ierno said that the

procedure is an emergency therapy for type 1 diabetics whose insulin levels cannot be controlled by conventional insulin therapy.

Comprehensive medical assessments are undertaken at Austin Health to determine suitable diabetic patients, who then undergo the transplant at St Vincent's Hospital.

Diabetes 1 is a debilitating autoimmune disease affecting millions of people worldwide. Associate Professor Ierno said, "Once the technique is perfected we would like to make it more broadly available."

Trauma-related Mental Health

More than three per cent of the Australian population are affected by post-trauma stress disorder (PTSD), with symptoms including distressing memories, anger, anxiety, substance abuse and relationship problems.

Austin Health's dedicated team for Trauma-related Mental Health leads Australia in helping people suffering post-traumatic conditions, with more than 60 years experience treating veterans.

The team began treating non-veterans in 2003 and is the only dedicated public program in Victoria that treats community PTSD patients.

A special feature of the service is its focus on high-risk groups, which has included the development of a specialist treatment program for emergency services workers, including police, ambulance and firemen and women. The team was recently acknowledged by the Victorian Government for their work with people affected by the state's deadly bushfires earlier in 2009.

The team will soon have a dedicated Centre for Trauma Related Mental Health that is currently being built at the Austin Health's Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital site.

The new centre will allow the team to come together in one purpose built centre to provide an even better service for the increasing number of people turning to them for help each year.

Australian first surgery helps Austin Health patients to breathe easy

In an Australian first, Austin Hospital surgeon Mr Mehrdad Nikfarjam has performed a procedure that will enable patients on ventilation support to breathe independently.

Mr Mo Roaf, who experienced a spinal cord injury while playing football 12 years ago, was the first person to undergo the procedure on 26 October. Mr Roaf lost his ability to breathe independently, as well as the use of his arms and legs, as a result of his injury.



Dr Mark Howard, Director VRSS, with diaphragmatic pacing patient Mr Mo Roaf, and surgeon Mr Mehrdad Nikfarjam.

To maintain his breathing, Mr Roaf relies on a ventilator machine 24 hours each day. He takes the ventilator everywhere on his wheelchair, even in the shower, breathing via an opening in his throat that is connected to the machine by a flexible tube.

Known as diaphragmatic pacing, the minimally-invasive procedure involved attaching two small electrodes directly onto Mr Roaf's diaphragm. Once implanted, the battery-operated pacing system stimulates the diaphragm with electrical pulses so that it imitates normal breathing. Mr Roaf can carry the unobtrusive stimulation unit without anyone noticing.

The system was developed in the United States of America by Dr Raymond Onders, and has been used on people with spinal cord injuries and other conditions that can affect a patient's ability to breathe independently. On the second occasion that Dr Onders performed the procedure it was to help actor, the late Christopher Reeve, to breathe without ventilation support.

The doctors, nurses and physiotherapists of the Victorian Respiratory Support Service (VRSS), based at Austin Health, will help Mr Roaf to condition his diaphragm muscle and spend increasing amounts of time off the ventilator.

Director of the VRSS, Dr Mark Howard, was behind the push to introduce the procedure in Australia. With funding from the Victorian Department of Health, access to training and the required technology became possible.

"Our team at the VRSS are very excited to be able to offer our patients a new treatment that has the potential to greatly improve their quality of life," he said.

"I am looking forward to being able to go out with my family without the worry and inconvenience of my ventilator," said Mr Roaf.

Meet the Team



Fundraising Projects Officer, Sevi Skaleris joined the fundraising team earlier this year to help run raffles and community fundraising initiatives.

“I came from a background in recruitment, which was all about customer service and relationships,” said Ms Skaleris. “I came to work in the fundraising industry after a personal family experience with cancer. I wanted a change and to help make a difference.”

Ms Skaleris said that the Austin is her local hospital. “For as long as I can remember, if something went wrong my family and I would go to the Austin.”

Ms Skaleris said she loves the fundraising industry. “It’s really rewarding speaking with people out in the community who are fundraising for our hospital. People just want to help.”

Yes! I wish to help more patients continue to receive the very best of patient-centred care!



Austin Health

ABN 96 237 388 063

Locked Bag 25, Heidelberg VIC 3084

Ph: (03) 9496 5753 Email: fundraising@austin.org.au

Title: Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ P/code: _____

Email: _____

Supporter No. (if known): _____

Please send me information about:

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

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 AMEX ID

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____ Expiry Date: ____/____/____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

The Cup Comes to the Austin

There was much excitement through the cancer wards and all areas of the hospital when we welcomed the arrival of the Melbourne Cup, and of course Olivia Newton-John. This year the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre Appeal was the main beneficiary of the 2009 Melbourne Cup Carnivals 'pin and win' fundraiser.

The Cup toured our cancer ward and gave patients the unique opportunity to see this prestigious cup first-hand. Olivia also visited the cancer ward and met with two of our patients. Rita Romanos was absolutely thrilled to meet Olivia. "I'm really flattered she actually wants to sit in the same room as me. And then to touch the cup? It's awesome." She said.

Thank you!

When Thomas Ritchie opened his first grocery store he did so intent on three things – keeping his shop competitive, rewarding staff, and donating part of his profit back to the local community. Through Ritchies Community Benefit Fund they donate 1% of the money spent by customers to community groups. Customers choose the organisation they would like to benefit from the company's philanthropy. Austin Health has been most fortunate to be a regular

recipient of this generosity for which we are truly grateful.

We sincerely thank the Ritchie stores and their customers for the continued support Austin Health receives through this program.

Our thanks goes to the Myer Community Fund – Doncaster Team who raised \$2,347 for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Sensory Room.

ICU Appeal – Report Back

Thank you to the wonderful supporters who responded to our Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Appeal in June this year. As a result of your generosity and goodwill we have been able to purchase the much needed equipment required by this remarkable unit.

John Rogan, the Nurse Unit Manager of ICU was absolutely thrilled when he was given the good news. "We are so grateful for the generosity of the donors who supported our fundraiser for ICU. Having the right equipment gives staff a sense of pride and confidence that they are providing patients with the best care possible", said John.

John confirmed that the newly funded syringe pumps will have additional features that will enable ICU staff to deliver medications more safely. The portable saturation probes that measure a patient's oxygen levels, and the ICU bedside tables, will also enable staff to provide the most appropriate care to their patients in a timelier manner.

You may remember we shared with you our ICU Appeal story about 18 year-old Stephanie, who became the first patient in Victoria with cystic fibrosis to receive a liver transplant. Thanks to the care and support of the ICU and Liver Transplant teams at Austin, Stephanie now has a new lease on life.

More patients to benefit from Austin's Oncology Centre in Ballarat

Upgrades worth \$700,000 to the Ballarat Austin Radiation Oncology Centre (BAROC) mean up to seven additional patients will be treated each day.

Changes were made to the linear accelerator machine which delivers pinpointed radiation therapy to tumour tissue by replacing a portal imagine panel and portal. This is expected to increase the quality of the images available to radiation therapists while treating patients.

A treatment couch which patients lie on during treatment was also replaced. The new couch can be adjusted remotely to millimetre precision. "The upgrades are about quality and efficiency." said BAROC Director Professor Chris Hamilton.

Did you know about our recent winners?

Austin's Victorian Respiratory Support Service won a prestigious gold award at the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards in September this year for its work in reducing the waiting time for patients with breathing difficulties that require ventilation support.

Also awarded was the team for Austin Health's Centre for Trauma Related Mental Health; for recognizing and responding quickly to the impact of the Black Saturday bush fires on affected communities and emergency workers.

Austin Health's renowned obesity expert, Professor Joseph Proietto was made a life member of the Australian Diabetes Association.

