vitality

WHERE HEALTH MEETS HEART

Spring | 2026

Walk for Wellness

Join us for the final walk

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER

Austin HEALTH

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands we live and work on, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders and the ongoing connections of the oldest living culture in the world. We support the important role First Nations Peoples continuously hold in our society and are committed to providing culturally safe services that will assist us in achieving our vision for reconciliation.

The **power** of giving

Thank you for being part of our generous donor community.

Because of you, Austin Health can go above and beyond what is possible as a public healthcare provider. Your support helps us better meet our purpose of helping people live healthy, productive, and fulfilled lives.

Our community turns to Austin Health, seeking not only excellent clinical care but also compassion, dignity, and hope. Your generosity helps make this possible. It ensures that our teams can deliver patient-centred care that is inclusive, respectful, and safe.

Your giving supports leading-edge clinical care, vital training programs, and groundbreaking research, all of which contribute to better outcomes for people facing some of life's most complex medical challenges. From the emergency department to specialist wards, your impact is felt in every corner of our hospitals.

We are truly grateful for your continued support. Philanthropy is essential to driving innovation and ensuring excellence in care.

You are a vital part of Austin Health community. We warmly invite you to continue your support. Together, we can achieve even more.

"Your support helps make progress possible."

Hello, and welcome to the Spring edition of Vitality.

Whether you have supported Austin Health for many years or have only recently joined our giving community, I'd like to begin with a heartfelt thank you. Your generosity is a meaningful show of support for our patients, their families and the dedicated teams who care for them.

As I spend time with people across Austin Health, I continue to be inspired by the expertise, compassion and commitment behind the care we provide. I'm also hearing about the opportunities ahead, from improving access to care, to advancing virtual care, research, cancer wellness and transplantation.

We are committed to ensuring Austin Health is a future-focused health service. In just seven months, Austin Health has cared for 450 patients through the Victorian Virtual Hospital, enabling more people to receive specialist care in the comfort of their own homes.

Your support is helping make progress possible too. This year's Tax Appeal raised almost $400,000 for our Intensive Care Unit, significantly exceeding its target. This remarkable result shows what we can achieve when our health service and giving community come together.

Throughout this edition, you'll see the very real difference your generosity is making across Austin Health. I hope you feel proud of the part you play in each story.

Thank you for being part of our community and for sharing our commitment to exceptional care.

Warm regards,

Jodie Geissler
Chief Executive Officer, Austin Health

One grant transforming care across different areas

The Collier Charitable Fund supports initiatives that improve the health and wellbeing of patients and staff in Victorian public hospitals. A generous $39,285 grant to Austin Health has helped bring three important initiatives to life, supporting patients of different ages and needs across our health service.

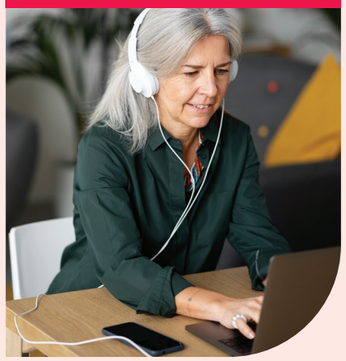
CREATIVE SUPPORT DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The Adolescent and Child Eating Disorders School Holiday Program provides therapeutic activities for young patients when the Austin School is closed. Over the past year, five facilitators delivered 44 sessions featuring art, ceramics, jewellery making, music therapy and more. These activities help young people cope with the stress of being in hospital, stay engaged with their treatment and experience moments of creativity, enjoyment and connection.

SUPPORTING SAFER BREATHING CARE

A new portable Airvo 3 Non-Invasive Ventilation machine is helping Austin Health's Critical Care Outreach Physiotherapy team support patients experiencing respiratory deterioration outside the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). The device has already enabled four patients with high spinal cord injuries to safely move from ICU to a calmer ward environment. It has also helped three critically unwell patients transition successfully from ventilators to breathing independently, allowing them to leave ICU sooner and continue their recovery on the ward.

MAKING MEMORY REHABILITATION MORE ACCESSIBLE



MemoRehab is a six-week memory training program for people with acquired brain impairment whose memory concerns affect daily life. Collier's support funded a two-year software licence, laptop and headset, helping patients participate online or onsite. To date, four groups have completed the program through a flexible hybrid model, with participants gaining practical memory strategies and greater confidence. Every participant said they would strongly recommend the program to others.

Unveiling of Impella machine with clinicians

Helping hearts when every moment counts

Last month, our Cardiac Unit received new Impella equipment, made possible by the generosity of our donors. Valued at approximately $138,000, the Impella is a small device that temporarily helps the heart pump blood around the body. It can support patients experiencing severe heart failure or undergoing high-risk heart procedures.

The device provides another treatment option when our existing form of heart support may not be suitable. It will help our cardiac team safely care for a broader range of patients and may reduce time spent in hospital and intensive care. We are deeply grateful to our donors for helping bring this advanced, life-saving technology to Austin Health.

Giving back with gratitude

After spending more than 100 days receiving treatment for Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia at the Olivia Newton-John Cancer & Wellness Centre, Stefan Mason knows firsthand the difference compassionate care can make. Today in remission, he is passionate about ensuring others facing cancer have access to the same life-changing support.

To give back, Stefan recently hosted *With Stefan*, a special community fundraising event that brought together family, friends and business partners for an evening of generosity, great food and heartfelt connection. Thanks to donated auction items, generous supporters and an incredible community spirit, the event raised an extraordinary **$66,682.18** for the ONJ Centre.

"Cancer care isn't just about medicine," Stefan said. *"It's about people, how you're supported mentally, emotionally and physically every step of the journey. This is exactly why we chose the ONJ Centre to fundraise for."*

> ***They are not just focused on treating cancer; they treat the whole person. They deliver wellness and supportive care programs that help patients and their families throughout and beyond."***

Stefan with staff presenting a cheque

Community fundraisers like Stefan play a vital role in helping fund patient care, wellness programs, research and equipment, ensuring more people facing cancer can benefit from the same compassionate care that supported Stefan throughout his treatment.

HELPING SAVE LIVES WHEN EVERY SECOND MATTERS

We are blown away by the generosity shown toward our Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Tax Appeal. Your compassion and generosity are helping ensure our ICU team has the resources to deliver life-saving care when ever second matters.

This year's appeal shared PJ's story. At just 22 years old, PJ was a healthy young man who suffered a sudden cardiac arrest while driving to work, despite having no underlying health conditions. Surviving an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is extremely rare, and thanks to the expert care he received in our Intensive Care Unit, PJ was given a second chance at life.

Because of the generosity of supporters like you, this year's ICU Tax Appeal raised an extraordinary **$394,393.**

Every donation made a difference. On behalf of PJ, our patients, their families and our dedicated ICU team, thank you for making stories like PJ's possible.

PJ and mum Silvana

Thank you

To every member of our donor community, thank you for your generous support throughout the 2025/26 financial year. Your kindness is helping us deliver exceptional care today while investing in the future of healthcare. Every gift supports innovation, advances patient care, and ensures we can continue to meet the evolving needs of our community for generations to come.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR ENDOSCOPY AT AUSTIN HEALTH

Thank you to everyone who supported our 2025 Christmas Appeal. Your generosity is helping bring a new purpose-built Consolidated Endoscopy Suite to Austin Hospital.

Designed to enhance patient experience, improve clinical workflow, and increase efficiency for our healthcare teams, the new suite will bring endoscopy services together in one central location. This will help streamline care and support efforts to reduce patient wait times.

Thanks to the incredible support of our donor community, the appeal raised **$121,395** towards essential equipment for safe, anaesthesia-supported endoscopy procedures.

The new Consolidated Endoscopy Suite is expected to open on 1 October. This important project has been made possible through the combined support of the Australian Government, our generous donors, and the wider community.

Together, you are helping create a better experience for patients and enabling our clinicians to deliver the highest standard of care.

LEAVING A LASTING GIFT

Would you like to create a legacy that reflects your values and helps provide exceptional healthcare for generations to come? Our Gifts in Wills Manager is available for a confidential conversation about leaving a gift to Austin Health or the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre in your will. If you prefer to create your will independently, our partnership with Safewill allows you to write your will online for free during 7 September to 21 September 2026, including a legal review. Even a small gift can make a meaningful difference for future patients and families.

For a confidential discussion, please contact bequests@austin.org.au or 9496 5753.

What your gift made possible

Thank you for your generous support in the 2025/26 financial year, which included:

$543,000 Appeals

$158,000 Regular Donors

$1,970,000 Major Gifts

$240,000 Community Fundraising

$537,000 Trusts and Foundations

$1,800,000 Gifts in Will

$1,250,000 Olivia's Walk for Wellness campaign

$356,700 Friends of Austin-Health Diamond Creek Opportunity Shop

28,322 hrs Contributed by Volunteers

Participants at the walk

Join us for our **final** Olivia's Walk for Wellness

A place to breathe and begin again

This October, our community will come together for the very last time for Olivia's Walk for Wellness, celebrating Olivia Newton-John's extraordinary legacy and raising funds to ensure people facing cancer can continue to access vital wellness support.

For Elise Cameron, that support has made an immeasurable difference. Looking out over the gardens from the Wellness Centre, Elise found something she desperately needed during treatment: a place where cancer did not consume every part of her day.

Elise was diagnosed with breast cancer in early 2024. Since then, the 46-year-old has faced six weeks of radiation therapy, four rounds of chemotherapy, a double mastectomy, full lymph node removal and, more recently, breast reconstruction surgery.

Cancer changed almost every part of her life. Elise lost her business, her fitness and many of the social connections that had once filled her world. With long periods spent at home alone, she often felt isolated.

Throughout her treatment, Elise accessed psychology, massage, exercise physiology, yoga and medical acupuncture through the Wellness Centre. She continues to use some of these services today.

Yet the Centre offered her more than a program of care. On long days between appointments, it gave Elise somewhere calm and welcoming to go. Other parts of the hospital became connected with chemotherapy and some of her most difficult experiences. The Wellness Centre felt different. It was a place to take a breath, look out over the gardens and find comfort away from the clinical side of treatment.

Often, it was the simplest gestures that meant the most. A conversation with a staff member, a cup of tea offered by a volunteer or a safe place to sit helped Elise feel less alone during the darkest period of her life.

While her medical team treated her cancer, the Wellness Centre helped her rebuild her confidence, reconnect with others and gradually rediscover a sense of normality. Elise believes she would not be where she is today without that support.

> ***The wellness center gave me back being a person again. My whole life has changed. I am a completely different person to who I was when I first walked into the hospital to who I am today.***

I am only functioning as a person because of the support I received during my treatment. Getting my mobility back has given me a chance at life again."
- Elise

Although this is the final Walk, the need for cancer wellness care continues. Every step taken and every dollar raised will help ensure people facing cancer can access the compassionate, whole-person support that made such a difference to Elise.

JOIN US ON SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER AND HELP CARRY OLIVIA'S VISION FORWARD.

Patient Elise Cameron

Hospital in the home

Specialist care, **delivered at home**

Austin Health's Virtual Hospital is helping patients access specialist care from the comfort of home, reducing the need for travel while easing pressure on hospital beds. In just seven months, Austin Health has cared for 450 patients through the program.

For Garry, 70, from Colac, the model has made a significant difference. After presenting to his local hospital with heart failure, he was short of breath, had fluid around his lungs and struggled to walk across his backyard.

Previously, Garry may have needed to travel to a larger city to see a cardiologist. Instead, he received specialist care at home.

Each morning, Garry recorded his weight and blood pressure before speaking with his care team. Over 11 days, a cardiologist, doctor, nurse and pharmacist monitored his progress and adjusted his medication daily, with prescriptions sent directly to his local pharmacy.

What might normally have taken months was managed in days. Garry is now walking half a kilometre and feeling like himself again.

> ***I can't praise it highly enough. Being able to stay at home while they checked on me every day and adjusted my treatment made all the difference."***

Delivered in partnership with the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the Virtual Hospital is demonstrating how coordinated care can improve access to specialist services and provide a better experience for patients, wherever they live.

A wrap around moment for the Elasmar family

You may remember Silvana, PJ's mum, from our recent ICU Appeal. After Austin Health saved her son's life, Silvana felt inspired to give back to the community that had supported her family through their most difficult days.

PJ suffered a sudden cardiac arrest at just 22 years old. He too chose to give back by sharing his incredible story of survival in support of our ICU Appeal.

"I hoped my story might change at least one person's life and highlight the critical work the ICU team does," PJ says.

Caring for PJ throughout his recovery was not easy, but Silvana says the experience taught her patience, resilience and compassion.

"The nurses and doctors at Austin Hospital supported us through the toughest days of our lives. Most importantly, we felt seen and supported by the staff," she says.

After PJ shared his experience at an event in July 2025, Silvana realised she wanted to continue making a difference. Eight months later, in March 2026, she began volunteering at Austin Health.

"It felt like a natural next step because it gave me the opportunity to share that same care, empathy and understanding with others," Silvana says. *"Knowing that even a small act of kindness or a little of my time can brighten someone's day is what continues to inspire me."*

For Silvana, one of the greatest rewards has been forming meaningful connections with patients, hospital staff and fellow volunteers. Whether she is offering a smile, sharing a conversation or simply being there for someone, she knows these moments can have a powerful impact.

PJ remains Silvana's greatest inspiration and continues to motivate her to give back to others.

Thank you **Silvana and all our amazing Austin Health Volunteers!**

> ***I hoped for my story to change at least one persons life, and highlight the critical work the ICU team do!"***
>
> **– PJ**

Staying Connected with Austin Health Foundation

Every day, generous supporters help make a difference across Austin Health. From funding the latest equipment and medical research to enhancing patient experience and supporting innovative new models of care, fundraising helps improve the experience and outcomes of people in our community.

As Austin Health Foundation continues to share stories of impact and opportunities to support this work, we want to be transparent about how we communicate with patients and supporters. Austin Health may provide limited contact information to Austin Health Foundation so that we can keep people informed about our work, the impact of donations, Foundation news, events and opportunities to support Austin Health. This information may include your name and contact details such as your postal address, email address or telephone number. Importantly, Austin Health Foundation does not receive access to your medical records, diagnosis, treatment information or other clinical details.

We recognise that not everyone wishes to receive communications from the Foundation. If you would prefer not to hear from us, you can opt out at any time and we will promptly update your preferences.

To learn more about how your information may be collected, used and managed, please visit our Privacy Statement: **www.austin.org.au/privacy-statement**

To update your communication preferences or opt out of future Foundation communications, please visit: **www.austin.org.au/contact-foundation**

Thank you for helping us improve the lives of patients and families across Austin Health. Whether through giving, participating in events or simply staying informed, your connection to Austin Health is making a difference in our community.

Stay in touch

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FIA ORGANISATIONAL MEMBER CODE COMPLIANT

We comply with the Fundraising Institute of Australia Code of Conduct and are committed to upholding the highest standards of professional and ethical fundraising practice.

Austin HEALTH

Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre

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