

vitality

WHERE HEALTH MEETS HEART

Spring | 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

Your Impact

da Vinci Xi robot arrives at Austin Health

Walk for Wellness

Olivia's Walk and Run for Wellness returns

Patients at Heart

Meet Elisabeth and discover why she chose to leave a gift in her will

Austin
HEALTH

Contents

02

WELCOME FROM CEO

04

FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

06

YOUR IMPACT IN ACTION

08

ONJ WALK FOR WELLNESS

10

PATIENTS AT HEART

11

VOLUNTEERS

COVER IMAGE

Precision in action

Jo and Amanda in theatre preparing the da Vinci Xi robot for surgery.



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.



“

I have known for a long time Austin Health's commitment to excellence in care, teaching and research, and its values and culture align with my personal values and priorities. It is a deeply respected organisation, and it is a privilege to join it.”

Welcome



As the new Chief Executive Officer of Austin Health, it's a pleasure to introduce myself and to thank you, our generous giving community, for the vital role you play in shaping this organisation.

Over the past few months, I've had the privilege of hearing from many people who've shared their personal connection to Austin Health. The sense of community here is quite profound. It's something I felt even before stepping into this role, and it's only grown stronger with each story I hear.

I was very deliberate in choosing to come to Austin Health. I chose this organisation because of its culture, its purpose and its commitment to excellence in care. That was a personal decision – but as more people share their stories, I'm realising something deeper. It really does take a community to deliver a health service.

You are that community. Over the past six months, your support has helped us enhance spaces in our Spinal Unit and fund a new FibroScan through our Tax Appeal – technology that will help detect and prevent serious liver disease, potentially saving lives through earlier diagnosis and treatment.

In this edition of *Vitality*, you'll see just how far-reaching your impact is – across research, wellness and care. I'm proud to now be part of this journey with you, and I look forward to what we can achieve together in the months and years ahead.

Jodie Geissler

Chief Executive Officer, Austin Health



**NELSON ALEXANDER
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

Extended support to our Ngarra Jarra Aboriginal Health Unit to enable culturally appropriate comfort packs for young Indigenous children during hospital admissions.



**ROBERT C BULLEY
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

Recognised the challenges for staff working in our Emergency Department and is supporting an enhanced wellbeing program, giving staff access to coordinated wellbeing initiatives year-round.

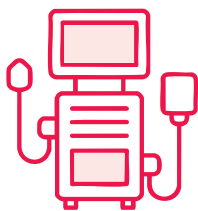


**COLLIER CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION**

Supporting a pilot of an online memory rehabilitation program, extending treatment for patients with memory impairment at the Health and Rehabilitation Centre, Repatriation Campus.

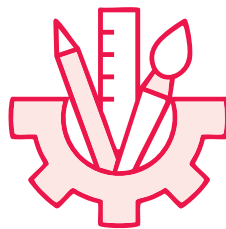
Trusts and Foundations Helping Austin Health Thrive

The generosity of Trusts and Foundations continues to drive important initiatives across all areas of Austin Health. Here is a glimpse of how these contributions are making a real difference to patient care and the work of our dedicated staff.



**COLLIER CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION**

Together with a significant donation in memory of Rachael Angelotti-Casey – funding new portable ventilation equipment to help ICU physiotherapy staff better reach and support patients in acute respiratory distress across the hospital.



**EVELYN MARGARET
WATERWORTH ENDOWMENT**

Enabling enhancements to the machinery used in the Talbot Maker Space program at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre, where creative therapy in woodwork, art and design aids cognitive and physical rehabilitation.



**JOHN CUMMINS MEMORIAL
FUND, A SUB-FUND OF
AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES
FOUNDATION**

Supporting the Brain Tumour Support Service and funding the updated Building the Bridge to Life with Brain Cancer resource for patients, carers and health professionals.
buildingthebridge.com.au

We are grateful for the continued support from all our generous Trusts and Foundations who enable us to extend our patient care initiatives with new equipment, programs, research and staff support across Austin Health.

MANY CONTRIBUTIONS, ONE MISSION: SAVING LIVES

Thanks to the incredible generosity of three philanthropic partners, Austin Health's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is saving more lives by transforming how we train for emergencies.

Every year, over 4,000 patients suddenly deteriorate and need the urgent help of our Medical Emergency Team (MET). With the support of a \$35,000 grant from the Collier Charitable Fund, we launched a two-day simulation-based MET Course so staff can practise and perfect their response in a safe, realistic setting.

A \$100,000 grant from the H.T. Pamphilon Fund allowed us to purchase the SimMan Critical Care manikin – a remarkable training tool that simulates



Clinicians using
SimMan Critical
Care Manikin

life-threatening emergencies. The SimMan Critical Care is the first in use in Victoria and only the second in Australia. The volunteer-run Diamond Creek Opportunity Shop, a generous supporter for 50 years, contributed a further \$135,000 to bring this technology to life.

The manikin is used during the MET Course and in weekly ICU training sessions.

Together, these partners are helping our teams respond faster, work smarter and give critically ill patients the very best chance of survival.

NURSING SCHOLARSHIP – NATALIE McCALL

For 45 years, patient Stephen Meese received dedicated renal care at Austin Health. In gratitude for the care he received, Stephen's family has made a generous gift to establish the \$10,000 Stephen Meese Renal Nursing Scholarship.

The inaugural recipient, Natalie McCall, is using the opportunity to further her skills and knowledge in renal nursing. This scholarship adds to existing professional development opportunities, including the Beverley Briese

“This scholarship will give us the opportunity to delve deeper into understanding our patient's experiences and explore ways we as dialysis nurses can improve that experience.” – Natalie

Nursing Scholarship, creating one of the most comprehensive suites of nursing development programs in Australia.

Through this gift, Stephen's legacy will live on – supporting the growth of renal nursing and improving care for countless patients into the future.





A WELCOMING, CULTURALLY SAFE SPACE FOR OUR MOB

The Ngarra Jarra office has been transformed into a space that reflects the strength, identity and purpose of Austin Health's mob.

Thanks to a \$40,000 gift from Jemena, the environment is now more welcoming, functional, and culturally safe for staff, community, and our mob. Jemena also contributed to the striking outdoor Mural by Wurundjeri artist Alex Kerr, telling a story of connection to Country, culture and community.

"This vibrant artwork sets the tone for all who enter – one of respect, pride and belonging," says Danella J Webb, Aboriginal Health Manager. "We deeply appreciate Jemena's commitment to creating spaces that feel safe, seen and culturally grounded. Their impact will be felt for years to come."



HELPING DETECT LIVER DISEASE EARLIER, THANKS TO YOU

The 2025 Tax Appeal raised nearly \$180,000. Combined with a \$100,000 grant from the H.T. Pamphilon Fund, we can now secure a new FibroScan liver scanner – a vital, non-invasive tool for detecting and monitoring liver disease. "With another FibroScan, we hope that we can stem the tide of liver disease in Australia," says A/Prof Christopher Leung.

Thanks to your generosity, we're able to deliver earlier diagnoses and achieve better health outcomes for people at risk.

Your gift in **action**

Because of our community's kindness, we're able to turn donations into real and lasting improvements for patients, families, and staff.

What your gift made possible

Thank you for your generous support in the 2024/25 financial year, which included:



\$366,300
Appeals



\$161,000
Regular Donors



\$770,000
Major Gifts



\$504,233
Trusts and Foundations

Robotic surgery arrives at Austin Health

Austin Health has reached an exciting milestone in surgical innovation with the arrival of the da Vinci Xi robot, a state-of-the-art robotic-assisted surgery system that enhances precision, safety and recovery outcomes.

Our first robotic-assisted procedure – a minimally invasive prostatectomy – was successfully performed by Urology surgeon Dr Yee Chan. The patient was discharged the very next day, demonstrating the robot's potential to shorten hospital stays and ease recovery for patients.

This \$5 million investment in surgical innovation was made possible thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our donor community, including bequests from Hugh Rayson Davies, Rosanna Schiavone and former patient Mary Schofield, as well as the wonderful fundraising of the Diamond Creek Opportunity Shop and many other committed donors.



Donor support enables us to go above and beyond what is possible as a public healthcare provider through government support alone.

“Your support has made a huge difference,” says Professor Damien Bolton, Head of Urology. “You’ve brought cutting-edge surgical care to our community.”

The program is currently focused on Urology and Colorectal Surgery, with plans to expand in the future.

Thanks to your support, patients at Austin Health are gaining access to world-leading surgical care. Because of you, Austin Health can deliver the best in modern care, today and for years to come.



\$332,350
Friends of Austin
Diamond Creek
Opportunity Shop



\$2,039,140
Gifts in Wills



\$139,000
Community
Fundraising



\$1,100,000
Olivia's Walk
for Wellness
campaign



56,980 hrs
Contributed
by Volunteers



Step into Wellness

Olivia's Walk and Run for Wellness returns

Each year, Olivia's Walk for Wellness brings people together to honour those affected by cancer and support the therapies that bring healing, strength and peace. This year, you can also run for wellness with new 5km and 10km run options alongside the much-loved walk.

It's a powerful way to step out in support of people like Paulette, who was diagnosed with follicular lymphoma and says the wellness therapies at the ONJ Centre helped her through.

"For me, wellness therapies were about truly being heard. Most of my other hospital appointments were all about times, dates and treatments, but wellness was about letting go and learning to accept your 'new normal' - even though that's not easy at first," says Paulette. "In art therapy, I didn't know what to say or how much to share, but the more I opened up, the more my creativity returned. That process gave me strength, hope, and a way to heal."

Oncology massage, mindfulness, music and art therapy gave her a sense of calm and control at a time when so much felt uncertain. These therapies are at the heart of what makes the ONJ Centre special and what Olivia Newton-John was so passionate about offering.

Olivia's Walk ^{→ and run} for Wellness

**Join us on Sunday
5 October, 2025.**

Sign up now!

walkforwellness.com.au



Paulette taking part in an art therapy class at the ONJ Centre.



Funds raised through Olivia's Walk and Run for Wellness go directly towards delivering these evidence-based wellness therapies to more patients, ensuring no one has to face cancer without comfort and holistic care.

Tottie Goldsmith, Olivia's niece and ONJ Centre Ambassador, says the event holds a special place in her heart.

“This was one of Olivia's favourite events and favourite days because she loved seeing everyone come together to show their support for people with cancer.”

– Tottie Goldsmith, ONJ Centre Ambassador

Whether you walk or run, do it in honour of someone you love. Join us in Melbourne and 'Let's Get Physical' or take part from wherever you are as a virtual participant. Sign up today at walkforwellness.com.au.

LIFE AND LEGACY

Make sure to catch *Olivia Newton-John: Hopelessly Devoted to You*, streaming on Netflix soon. It's a beautiful tribute to Olivia's life and legacy and features real people from the ONJ Centre, including clinicians and patients, who carry her vision forward every day.

Step into something meaningful. Walk or run with us and help make wellness part of every person's cancer journey!



A life of care and giving

Why Elisabeth chose to leave a gift in her will

Elisabeth, a former midwife in her early 80s, speaks with warmth, grace and deep gratitude.

Nearly a decade ago, during what she calls her 'hour of need', she was transferred to Austin Hospital for specialist care. After 11 weeks in hospital and intensive new treatment, she continues to receive regular scans and check-ups.

"I was overwhelmed by the care. From the hospital stay to the ongoing support, the staff have been just lovely," she says. "The treatment worked, and I've had a few good years of maintaining my lifestyle."

Elisabeth recently became a monthly donor and has also included a gift to Austin Health in her will. "Having experienced the care, I'm happy to know there will be something left when I go."

She's chosen to leave her gift untied, so it can support the areas of greatest need. "Public appeals help shine a light on things people don't often hear about. It's important to help where you can."

Through Austin Health's partnership with Safewill, you can write your will online with discounted or free access, including a legal review. Even a small gift can make a big difference.

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



“

It's nice to know something will be left when I go.”

— Elisabeth White

DONOR SUPPORT HELPS US REACH GROUNDBREAKING TRANSPLANT MILESTONE

Austin Health has reached a major milestone – completing 100 hypothermic oxygenated machine perfusion (HOMP) cases through our Australian Centre for Transplantation Excellence and Research (ACTER).

With donor support, we became the first hospital in Australia to offer this life-changing kidney transplant technology and the first to deliver it statewide.

HOMP keeps donated kidneys viable for longer by pumping cold, oxygen-rich fluid through them, improving transplant timing, access and outcomes across Victoria and Tasmania.

More than half of these 100 cases supported other transplant centres – demonstrating the power of shared innovation. As CEO Jodie Geissler says, ***“Innovation in healthcare isn’t just about technology, it’s about the people who believe in what’s possible and choose to support it.”***



Thank you for helping make this possible. Your generosity is helping more patients receive successful transplants sooner.



Learn more about ACTER at austin.org.au/acter

SHREYA BRINGS HEART AND CONNECTION TO THE STROKE WARD

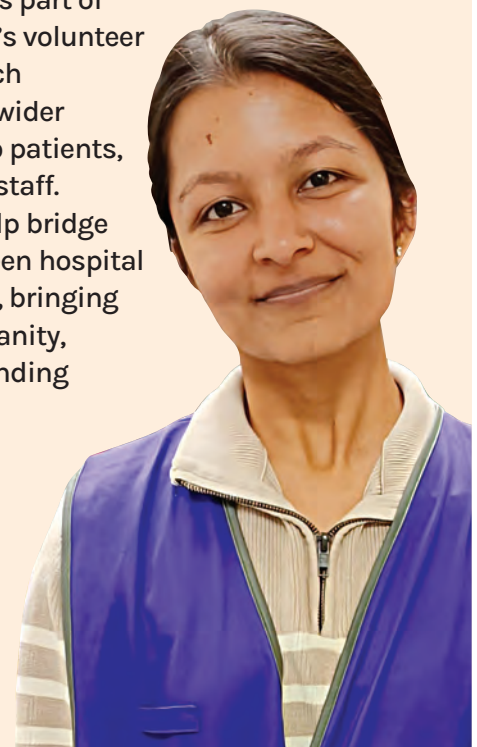
For Shreya, volunteering at Austin Health’s stroke ward is about more than lending a helping hand. It’s about being present, listening, and creating moments of connection that make a hospital stay feel less lonely. She has seen how a kind word, a shared memory, or even quiet companionship can ease the fear and uncertainty patients often face after a stroke.

One of her most meaningful moments came early in her role, when she met an older patient who had no family and had no visitors. She began visiting him regularly, listening to his stories, and encouraging other volunteers to stop by. Over time, he began to smile more and look forward to their chats. “Talking to you

makes it feel like I’m not invisible,” he told her – words that have stayed with her.

Shreya’s role is part of Austin Health’s volunteer program, which connects the wider community to patients, families, and staff. Volunteers help bridge the gap between hospital and home life, bringing warmth, humanity, and understanding into a clinical environment.

“The most rewarding part is knowing that even the smallest gestures can make someone’s day a little better. Connection is at the heart of healing – and that’s why we’re here.” – Shreya Goswami



"I have donated because of the exceptional care my father Mario is receiving from your specialist doctors. I wish to pay it forward and bless others."
– Felicia

"Austin is our trusted local hospital since 1979 that continues to deliver great service when we require emergency visits."
– Ray

"Austin Hospital and its community of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals have saved, served the community with full dedication and care. I'm a current patient and this is my small contribution to this cause."
– Rajat

Thank you!




The motivations behind our donors' support are both meaningful and inspiring. We are honoured to share a selection of these with you. Thank you for your ongoing generosity and commitment – it is sincerely appreciated.


"The Austin have looked after me and I want to give a small token of my appreciation in return."
– Peter

"I have donated to Austin Hospital in the past because I believe the work you do is vital. I will continue to donate on an ad hoc basis."
– Cheryle

"Research is key in finding cures and new medicines and equipment for the future."
– Kristy


Stay in touch

 **Austin Health Foundation**
Locked Bag 25
Heidelberg VIC 3084
 **(03) 9496 5753**
 **foundation@austin.org.au**

 **@austinhealth_**
@onjcancercentre

 **Austin Health**

 **@austin.health**

 **Austin Health**
Olivia Newton-John
Cancer Wellness
& Research Centre

ABN: 96 237 388 063

☐ If you do not wish to receive further communication from us, please call or opt out by ticking this box.

Privacy Statement: Austin Health Foundation respects your privacy. We collect personal information to respond to your enquiries, process donations, issue tax receipts, and keep you informed through relevant communications. If you would like to update your communication preferences, please contact us using the details above.



Join our Regular Giving Program

– a simple, secure way to make a lasting impact.



Start your regular gift today and help deliver better care, every day, for every patient.

Regular giving provides a reliable and sustainable source of funding to support world-class healthcare, innovative research, and vital education initiatives.

By making regular gifts, you'll help shape the future of patient care.

☒ Yes! I would like to donate to Austin Health today.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200

☐ My best gift \$ _____

☐ Monthly ☐ Give once

☐ Please find enclosed my Cheque / Money Order*
(payable to Austin Health)

☐ Please debit my
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX

Card Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Cardholder Name

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expiry

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Signature

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



Biller Code:
Ref:

Telephone & Internet Banking – BPAY®

Contact your bank or financial institution to make this payment from your cheque, savings, debit, credit card or transaction account. More info: www.bpay.com.au

MY DETAILS

Donor ID _____

Name _____

Address _____

Suburb _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Email _____

☐ I prefer to be contacted by email

GIVING IN YOUR WILL

☐ I am considering a gift to Austin Health in my Will.

☐ I have already mentioned Austin Health in my Will.

Other ways to give:



Austin Health Foundation
Locked Bag 25, Heidelberg VIC 3084



(03) 9496 5753



austin.org.au/donate