

# ST VINCENT'S Voice

JULY 2019 – ISSUE 19

The latest staff and community news from  
ST VINCENT'S HEALTH  
NETWORK SYDNEY

## ST VINCENT'S LAUNCHES MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

Inside this edition:

- St Vincent's leading the way with High Risk Foot Service
- New service available for young substance users
- New MRI Guided Focused Ultrasound Unit launched





A/PROF  
ANTHONY SCHEMBRI AM

CEO, St Vincent's Health  
Network Sydney

We are starting to talk increasingly at St Vincent's of "healthcare at the edge" - that throughout our 162 year history, we've always sought to be at the edge in supporting the poor and vulnerable as well as pushing the boundaries when it comes to clinical innovation.

This edition of *St Vincent's Voice* captures our pursuit of healthcare at the edge to a tee. From the launch of our Mental Health Strategy which aims to improve accessibility and service integration for our unique patient population, to our work using theranostics to prolong the lives of men with metastatic prostate cancer, to the launch of the Burton Street Centre providing stimulant treatment services for young people.

These stories might be eclectic, but they share an important theme in that each service is being delivered at the edge – just as our founding Sisters would have liked it!

Enjoy,  
Anthony



# + SHORT SHARP



## Archibald Prize Portrait

St Vincent's Endocrinologist – Professor Katherine Samaras was the subject of a 2019 Archibald Prize portrait. "Endocrinologist – Professor Katherine Samaras" by Sinead Davies captured Katherine's grace and strength all at once, as one the country's leading endocrinologists.



## Nursing Trailblazer

Congratulations to Prof Sandy Middleton who was one of four finalists in the inaugural Australian College of Nursing, Health Ministers Award for Nursing Trailblazers in 2019. This award is the first of its kind in Australia and acknowledges the vital role nurses play in transforming our country's health and aged care system.

Sandy was recognised for her contributions to evidenced based nursing care for stroke patients.



## Congratulations Pauline

Congratulations to our Director of Aboriginal Health, Pauline Deweerdt who recently graduated from Macquarie Graduate School of Management (MGSM), making her the first Aboriginal woman to graduate from MGSM. We're so proud of her achievement, and proud to have her on our team.



## Supporting our Defence Reservists

St Vincent's was recently recognised amongst eight organisations across NSW by the Defence Reserves Support Council for 'Exceptional Support of Australian Defence Force Reservists' at the 2019 Employer Support Awards for NSW, winning the Large Public Sector category. St Vincent's is fortunate to have a number of Army Reservists among our ranks, many of whom serve in leadership roles throughout the hospital.

Inside front cover: L-R Dr Nicholas Babidge, Clinical Director Mental Health; Mr Paul Robertson, Chair SVHA Board; The Hon. Bronnie Taylor, NSW Minister for Mental Health; A/Prof Anthony Schembri AM, CEO SVHN; Dr Murray Wright, NSW Chief Psychiatrist; Mr Alex Greenwich, MP Member for Sydney.

## St Vincent's opens new MRI Unit



We've officially opened the MRI Guided Focused Ultrasound Unit, the first in the Southern Hemisphere.

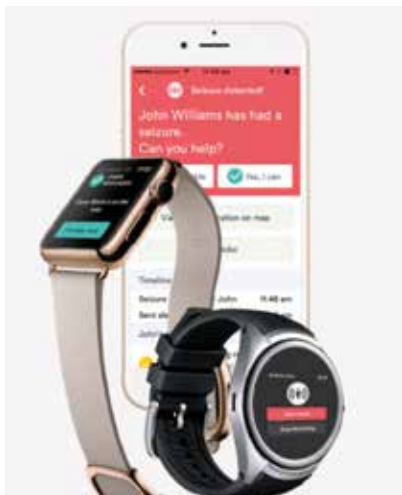
This amazing new technology treats patients with neurological disorders such as essential tremor and Parkinson's disease without surgery, and with immediate results.

Thank you to the Governor of New South Wales Her

Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO who joined us to officially open the Unit. We're so excited to be able to offer this service to the community.

For details, see <https://www.svhs.org.au/focussed-ultrasound>

## iAward for Innovation in digital health care



**Congratulations to the team, led by Professor Bruce Brew who recently won the 2019 iAward in the Consumer Markets product category for the development of a life-saving app that coordinates immediate assistance when you need it.**

**T**he iAwards is Australia's longest running digital innovation recognition program. It recognises and rewards excellence in Australian innovation that makes a positive contribution to the community, locally and globally.

The app known as My Medic Watch provides software applications for smart watches that detect falls and seizures, and subsequently alerts caregivers of such an event including the location of the wearer, even if they are unconscious.

A world first, clinical trials were conducted at St Vincent's under Prof Brew's leadership, with funding provided by the NSW Government. The team are now in the running for National iAwards.

## Minister Bronnie Taylor Launches St Vincent's Mental Health Strategy

**NSW Minister for Mental Health recently launched the St Vincent's Campus Mental Health Strategy – an innovative plan to improve accessibility and service integration for the unique patient population that St Vincent's has long served.**

**T**hroughout Australia mental illness poses one of the greatest challenges on the health landscape. Each year almost 1 in 5 Australians experience mental ill health, and 45 per cent of Australians aged 16 to 85 experience a mental health condition in their lifetime. Furthermore, it is estimated that around 20,000 people in the local St Vincent's catchment area have identified themselves as suffering from a mental health disorder within the last 12 months.

The St Vincent's Campus Mental Health Strategy focusses on the provision of high quality mental health services to preferentially care for the vulnerable, particularly those who are homeless, those with mental health conditions, those with drug and alcohol addiction, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and those in the justice system.

A focal point of the Strategy is the commitment to providing person-centred services that meet the needs of our population, by ensuring coordination and integration with other health care services, and responding to the needs of families and caregivers.

To this end, the Strategy endeavours to work with the St Vincent's community and community partners to co-design an Urban Health Centre to deliver an early intervention approach to meeting the unique health care needs of our local population. The Urban Health Centre will be a central extended 'hours' hub to support consumers and their families, and provide connectivity and



*Minister Taylor toured the Emergency Department.*

access to other services.

Furthermore, the Strategy focusses heavily on community outreach by growing services beyond the hospital walls, through the development of a Prevention and Recovery Centre, to provide step-up and step-down care, as well as an expanded community team, Older Person's Mental Health Service and USpace (youth mental health) Program.

Additionally the Strategy focusses Precision Mental Health, using precision diagnosis and targeted treatment and care for patients to deliver the best possible outcomes for them. Personalised treatments will range from individualised wellness programs through to tailored drug treatment and procedure based programs. It will likewise ensure that St Vincent's will continue to take a leadership role in the digital space, leading the way in innovative new eHealth programs for Anxiety and Depression through CRUFAD, and expand this to other patient groups.

## Prolonging the lives of men with metastatic prostate cancer

A/Prof Louise Emmett and team have received funding of \$5 million to lead a randomised trial which looks at whether combining Lu-PSMA technology with hormone therapy drug enzalutamide will prolong the lives of men with metastatic prostate cancer.

The St Vincent's team joins with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and the University of

Melbourne to form Australia's first Prostate Cancer Research Alliance.

With total funding of \$12 million from Movember Foundation Australia and Australian Department of Health, this project will focus on ways of predicting the risk of further prostate cancer and improving treatments for men with advanced forms of the disease.



*A/Prof Louise Emmett*

 Inspired to care

# St Vincent's STP launches youth service

St Vincent's Stimulant Treatment Program (STP) recently opened a brand new service, providing free and confidential counselling for young people aged 16 to 25, who are using methamphetamine, cocaine, ecstasy and other drugs.

Opening in late 2018, the Burton Street Centre has seen more than 70 clients, starting as young as 14 and including concerned others, be they parents, siblings or partners. The centre's inclusive model of care provides individual therapy for both the young person and concerned others, via family or network based therapy. Individuals can access or cease these supports at any given time as part of a stepped model of care.

To date Benzodiazepine (often known as 'benzos') which provides a sedative affect for the user, is trending as a drug of concern for clients of the service, with polysubstance use, where more than one type of drug is consumed at the same time, is proving to be a commonality amongst young people accessing the service.

To find out more, see [svhs.org.au/burtonstreet](http://svhs.org.au/burtonstreet)

**BURTON  
STREET**  
*Centre*

## Case study

Vince is a 19 year old man who came to the Burton Street Centre with significant difficulties with polysubstance use, in particular injecting methamphetamine. Prior to contacting the service Vince had attempted an inpatient detox in another facility which was unsuccessful due to aggression.

Vince had unstable accommodation, frequently moving from hostel to hostel which was paid for by his mother, the only significant person in his life. Vince has a history of complex trauma and difficulties in developing meaningful relationships which plays a significant role in his substance use. He initially self-referred through the Burton Street Centre's drop in space and started one-to-one counselling to address his substance use and other issues.

As Vince continued in individual therapy, his mother was in frequent contact with the service and became increasingly concerned about the impact Vince's problematic behaviour was having on himself, the family, and his wider social circle. Consequently, the Burton Street Centre Team were able to offer family therapy for Vince and his mum. Following two family therapy sessions it was identified that Vince's mother would benefit from individual support, and the service was able to offer Vince's mother separate counselling sessions to strengthen her ability to deal with her family situation and effectively support Vince.

Vince is currently still accessing the Burton Street Centre's drop in service with the plan to soon enter a private rehabilitation facility.

# A new era for St Vincent's High Risk Foot Services



HRFS team members



Dr Joel Lasschuit

**The St Vincent's High Risk Foot Service (HRFS) delivers interdisciplinary care to people with diabetes-related foot complications. Already catering to a wide demographic, the service aims to utilise Telehealth to support rural areas, and has identified Indigenous people as a priority area of need.**

A recent audit of the service showed a rapid expansion in occasions of service and case complexity over five years, signalling a need for improved efficiencies and support for ongoing research. In response, the service has developed an innovative digital system whereby data, clinical notes and correspondence are seamlessly generated, saving clinicians' valuable time and making real time audits and historic records available at their fingertips.

This project required the collective input of HRFS endocrinologists and podiatrists, including A/Prof Katherine Tonks, Dr Joel Lasschuit, Jill Featherston and Darcie Jonas. In essence, a free database product known as REDCap was transformed to integrate clinical use. With few resources, but a vision to establish a reputation as a leading HRFS internationally and desire to improve patient experience, Joel led the development of this system in his own time over a period of six months.

Advanced features provide ready access to relevant historic

records and clinical resources, and templates using elaborate 'merge fields' allow extracted data to auto-populate clinical documentation. By using electronic tablets, clinicians use one point of entry for data collection, clinical notes and correspondence, all at the patient-side.

With the vast majority of HRFS across Australia unable to meet the data collection accreditation standard set by the NADC (National Association of Diabetes Centres and The Australian Diabetes Society, 2018), this project has attracted national interest.

Consequently, the service is collaborating with the NADC to develop the first national HRFS database, supported by key organisations, including the Australian Diabetes Society and Diabetic Foot Australia.

While only in the early stages of use, this innovation locally has increased service efficiency, standardised clinical assessment, enabled regular audit and improvement projects, and created opportunity for collaboration.

## Finance paying it forward

Having spent 79 days as an in-patient with heart failure, Mr Cao and his wife Linda were already at a very vulnerable time of their lives, but in addition to having the anxious wait for a new heart, Mr Cao's hospital expenses had mounted to almost half a million dollars having been fitted with two interim devices to keep his own heart pumping.

Justine Tang, Manager of Private Patient Services within the St Vincent's Finance team, was Mr Cao's Case Manager during this time and looked after Mr Cao's care expenditure. As the Finance team are renowned for doing, Justine stepped outside her role to deliver a service beyond the expected, translating complex information in his primary language, and hand-making chocolates for his wife Linda when Mr Cao was unconscious and unable to communicate with her.

In April this year, Mr Cao received a life-saving heart transplant, performed by Dr Jansz and his team and was well enough to be discharged after three weeks. Recently, Mr Cao made a return visit to St Vincent's bringing coffee for the Finance team, in appreciation of the care that they showed during his health crisis,



Mr Cao (third from left) with Justine & members of the Finance team.

demonstrating how simple gestures of care and compassion can go such a long way in making a difference to the experience of our patients and loved ones. Normally reserved for clinicians, this patient's appreciation made a huge impact on the team, who said they felt "overwhelmed" by his kindness and rewarded in seeing him recover so well.

## Queens Birthday Honours



We're delighted to share that our CEO, A/Prof Anthony Schembri was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours, for his significant service to medical research and hospital administration.

It is fitting recognition of the passion with which he serves our health service and communities every day, since he began his career in his twenties as a social worker on our HIV ward.

Additionally, Dr Gregory O'Sullivan, Director of Anaesthetics was also awarded a Member of the Order of Australia, for significant service to medicine in the field of anaesthesiology. Greg has served on many committees and boards and is dedicated to our organisation and the greater anaesthetist community.

Congratulations to both Anthony and Greg.

## Feature interview with

# CATHERINE MARLEY

*Catherine is a Senior Social Worker and Youth Counsellor*

**She joined St Vincent's in October 2018 to work with young people seeking help with substance use at the newly established Burton Street Centre.**



### *What major breakthroughs in your field do you think hope we will see in the future?*

I hope to see more research and treatment options for young people with co-occurring complex childhood trauma and addiction. Delivering trauma care informed for young people in this way could significantly improve positive and sustainable outcomes.

### *What are the challenges you see now and in the coming years?*

Ensuring that all professionals who work with young people have adequate knowledge and understanding of developmental trauma and how that impacts an individual across their life span - particularly in relation to intergenerational trauma within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It would be great for services to provide more integrated treatment in relation to complex trauma and substance use.

### *What do you love the most about what you do?*

The staff and young people I work with. I find the young people I work with amazing, and always have done.

Given the traumatic childhood experiences many of them have had, notwithstanding limited supports and significant people in their life, they are extremely resourceful, resilient and can survive which is very humbling. I often hear the phrase 'I couldn't do the work you do', and I definitely couldn't do the work I do if it wasn't for my colleagues who work with the most hard to reach and disenfranchised individuals in society.

### *What motivates you on a daily basis?*

Continually trying to improve my practice to achieve positive outcomes for young people. And being able to support new clinicians to develop their professional skills, knowledge and understanding is also really rewarding.

### *What is your proudest moment, professionally speaking?*

I always feel very proud of the teams and colleagues that I have worked with, both in St Vincent's and in other organisations, particularly being at the front line of service delivery.

## FACTS + FIGURES

### 800+

Staff who have attended Mission Formation in the past 12 months



### \$7,206,974

FY 18-19 spend on capital-value equipment & accessories

### \$45,000,000

Spent providing care for vulnerable groups in the last financial year



[www.svhs.org.au](http://www.svhs.org.au)

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