

# ST VINCENT'S Voice

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

Inside this edition:

- SVHA Awards - St Vincent's Sydney's time to shine
- St Vincent's farewells Prof Ingham after 42 years of service
- Diabetes Service recognised as a Centre of Excellence

HELP AFTER  
HOURS.  
A NSW FIRST.



St Vincent's Hospital Sydney  
St Joseph's Hospital  
Sacred Heart Health Service  
St Vincent's Correctional Health



A/PROF  
ANTHONY SCHEMBRI AM

CEO, St Vincent's Health  
Network Sydney

As CEO of a Mission based health care organisation, barely a day goes by that I don't feel some level of genuine pride in our people and our services. But sometimes these opportunities are presented in a particularly unmistakable way – such as traveling to the SVHA National Innovation and Excellence Awards, and watching our colleagues being recognised for the extraordinary work they do.

It's not so much that they've won awards that makes these projects extraordinary, it's the people who drive them, who see an opportunity for improvement, and think outside the box to change it. It's the people who put themselves in the shoes of our patients and ask how things can be done better, and then deliver on that purpose.

I hope you'll take the time to read about some of the wonderful projects going on, in and around our facilities. From award winners, to quiet achievers, we never need look too far for inspiration, and to know that we're working in an organisation we can all be proud of.

Enjoy,  
Anthony



# + SHORT SHARP



## Academy Award

Congratulations to Prof Sandy Middleton who has been elected to the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences, recognising her outstanding contribution to health & medical research. Sandy's extensive work has changed health policy & improved patient outcomes, particularly for those who have suffered stroke. Well done Sandy.



## Diabetes Centre of Excellence

The wonderful work of our Diabetes Service has seen them recognised as a Centre of Excellence by the National Association of Diabetes Centres!

There are only five centres nationally who have received this prestigious award, which acknowledges the high standard of care provided by our diabetes educators, dietitians, administrative and medical staff. Congratulations team!



## NSW Health Awards Finalists

The St Vincent's/NSW Health Dried Blood Spot Pilot project was recently recognised as a Finalist in the 2019 NSW Health Awards, in the Research and Innovation category. The project involves HIV and HCV testing on blood samples self-collected at home or in community settings. As a result the team have increased testing rates in hard-to-reach vulnerable groups and correctional settings. Amazing achievement.



## Living well with MND

The Joey's team recently presented at the 'Living well with MND' workshop run by the MND Association of NSW. Senior Speech Pathologist Clare McCluskey and Senior Dietitian, Amal Owaimrin provided patients and carers with education and advice on maintaining optimal nutrition while living with MND, as well as communication and assistive technology. Go team!

## Farewell Prof Jane Ingham

St Vincent's recently farewelled Professor Jane Ingham whose association with St Vincent's has spanned the last 42 years.

Jane commenced her career as a medical student at St Vincent's and following completion of her Fellowship in Palliative Care Medicine, worked in the Consultative Palliative Care Service at the Sacred Heart Hospice, as it was known at the time.

In 1992 Jane moved to the USA where she worked at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre in New York, was appointed the founding Director of the Palliative Care Program at Lombardi Cancer Centre, Georgetown University then was appointed Associate Professor in the Department of Oncology and Medicine at Georgetown University Medical Centre.

Back in Sydney in 2006, Jane worked as a Senior Staff Specialist in Palliative Medicine at Westmead and St Joseph's Hospitals. From 2007 to 2015 Jane was appointed as the Director of the Cunningham Centre for Palliative Care with clinical appointments across St Vincent's Hospital, Sacred Heart Health Service, The Palliative Care Service in Wagga Wagga and at Calvary Hospital.

As the St Vincent's Health Network Associate Director for Clinical Governance - Advance Care Planning, Jane led the program of education, quality improvement and organisational alignment to the ACSQHC's National Consensus Statement for Safe and High Quality End of Life Care.



Throughout her career Jane has researched, taught, published and developed the skills of health professionals with particular emphasis on fostering advance care planning and person centred care at the end of life. Jane truly embodied St Vincent's mission through her leadership, sensitivity and responsiveness to the individual needs and dignity of the dying.

We wish her the very best for the future and thank her for 42 years of exceptional service.



## From little things, big things grow

Patients of St Joseph's Aged Care Psychiatry & Neurosciences Unit are now able to enjoy the sunshine and fresh air in their newly upgraded courtyard, complete with flower beds, herb garden and bright, comfortable seating.

Evidence suggests that gardening has a therapeutic effect on patients recovering from mental ill-health, and this lively new space is aimed at aiding their recovery.

Since the refurbished area opened, patients have been taking advantage of the new space and have been visibly more engaged with staff and each other. Nice work!

# Time to shine at the 2019 Innovation & Excellence Awards

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney won five major awards at the 2019 SVHA Innovation & Excellence Awards in Brisbane.

Each year, St Vincent's Health Australia hosts an event that aims to more formally recognise and showcase a cross-section of excellent and innovative initiatives developed and implemented by colleagues from many and varied professions, departments and teams. These awards served to highlight the extraordinary commitment on the part of our staff - with both individuals and teams being acknowledged for a cross-section of awards that really demonstrate our commitment to our Mission.

Although it is our Mission and Values that drive our innovation and the calibre of care that we provide, ultimately it is our staff who bring these values to life. St Vincent's Sydney took home five of a possible ten awards across the SVHA network, which goes to show just how talented and passionate our people are, congratulations to the following teams and individuals.



## Chairman's Award for Excellence

The highest award in the SVHA innovation and excellence awards 2019 recognises leadership by an individual or a team within the SVHA community that best illustrates our Mission Vision and Values.

**Project: Digital Innovation – Telehealth**

**Project Lead: Majid Shahi**

**Team Members: Todd McEwan**

We've made great advancements in adopting Telehealth across our network, to provide outreach services to patients in remote and regional areas; ensuring the opportunity for all patients to access quality specialists and health care. As a result, St Vincent's now has more than 55 departments actively using telehealth to provide care for patients remotely, making us the fastest growing telehealth service in NSW!



## The Deadly Award

Recognises the inspiring story of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff member whose contribution to the community and work of SVHA has been exemplar of our mission and values.

**Winner: Odessa Saukuru**

Odessa has been at SVHS for 4 years and started her journey here as an administration assistant. During this time she trained as an Enrolled Nurse and is now working towards becoming a Registered Nurse. Odessa has a warm and engaging presence with her patients and colleagues and is a role model for our growing numbers of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff.

 Inspired to lead



## Individual and Team Excellence Award

This award is designed to recognise individuals or teams who go over and

beyond their job description to bring the mission and values of our organisation in their day-to-day work.

**Winner: Dr Yael Barnett, specialist Neuroradiologist and Head of MRI at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney.**

Under the guidance of Yael and her team, the MRI Guided Focused Ultrasound service provides improved care, treatment outcomes for a large number of patients suffering tremor, Parkinson's disease and dystonia, delivering an Australian first innovation.



## Person Centred Care

Improving the Care of People with Challenging Behaviours in the Emergency Department.

**Project lead: Sean Evans**

**Team members: Justine Branch (ED Lead), Sinead Blundell (PECC Lead), Aoife O'Mara (PECC Lead), Rachel McFarlane, Ross Judd, Danielle Austin, Julie Gawthorne and Melanie Kelly.**

The Emergency Department restraint project focussed on improving the care of patients who present to ED with challenging behaviours. The project aimed to reduce episodes and length of time of physical restraint, in order to improve patient experience and increase the knowledge and expertise of our workforce.



## Leading Reputation

Advocacy of the NSW Smoke Free Healthcare Policy: A smoke free environment for our patients and staff.

**Project lead: James McLennan**

**Team members: David Hedger, Victoria Malone, drug and alcohol services, security and incident teams**

This project aimed to address the lack of compliance with the NSW Health smoke free healthcare policy, which was reflected in the large numbers of smokers outside the front of St Vincent's Hospital Sydney. Following the implementation of a multicomponent intervention project, a 73% reduction in smoking on hospital grounds has been observed.

***Congratulations to all of our winners!***

# In their footsteps

**The Rona Tranby Trust is an Australian-based not-for-profit organisation which supports the recording and preservation of Aboriginal Australian oral history.**

Angela Stanley, Clinical Support Officer at St Vincent's Stimulant Treatment Centre was thrilled to be one of 12 recipients of the Trust's Light Horse Project grant, which gave descendants of Aboriginal Diggers the opportunity to travel to Israel to honour their family history and ensure their stories are captured to live on for generations.

"I was given a grant to travel to Israel to walk in my grandfather's footsteps and take part in the Unveiling Ceremony of the Statue "Aboriginal Soldier and his Horse" in memory of the Australian Soldiers who fell in Israel in the first World War and in the Battle for the Semakh Train Station on 25th of September 1918".

"My grandfather, Alexander Stanley was in the 11th Light Horse Regiment and fought alongside the 11th & 12th Regiments in this battle where 19 Australian soldiers died. There were four grandchildren of Aboriginal troopers at this commemoration; Mark Pollard, whose grandfather Jack Pollard was portrayed in the statue, Raymond Minniecon, Raymond Finn and myself".

Angela is currently writing a book about Alex Stanley, whose commanding officer was Major AB (Banjo) Patterson – a national treasure, just like Angela's Grandfather.





L-R: Jasmine, Jane &amp; Amy (Nathan absent)

## Outreach after hours

Accessing health care after hours can be challenging for most, but for our homeless community it's even harder. Often GPs who bulk bill will add a co-payment for consults after hours, leaving presentation to Emergency as the only option for these clients.

Following a review of services which found a lack of public resources for homeless people after-hours, St Vincent's Homeless Health team received funding from the Primary Health Network to extend their community outreach service into the after-hours space.

Together, Jane Currie, Nurse Practitioner; Amy Aitkenhead, Clinical Nurse Consultant; Nathan Ryan, Aboriginal Health Worker and Jasmine Yee, Peer Supporter, form the first after-hours homeless health team in NSW. The quartet set out on Friday evenings and weekends providing outreach clinics at a number of inner-city shelters, as well as providing assistance to people at street level as appropriate.

"We turn up and they can come and see us with whatever health problems they have. We stop and really listen to them, sometimes it's a case where we just give them health advice or ongoing management of a long term health issue. But most of the time we deal with acute medical problems like urine infections, skin and wound infections, and nasty chest infections", Jane said.

The team close the circle of care, by handing-over after-hours cases to the weekday team, and reciprocally keeping an eye on clients the weekday team have been caring for. While their role is primarily clinical, the team also act as a conduit to specialist services when needed for ongoing and chronic conditions.

While the aim is to intervene before this population needs to

present to Emergency, Peer Worker Jasmine checks in with the Emergency team every weekend to see if any homeless patients have been admitted and need some additional support.

"We advocate for them. There is a stigma to homelessness. They might have an odour to them, some of their behaviours might seem unusual, or they may not be compliant in taking medications - so we can provide background for the nurses as well as guidance on how to optimise interaction with these patients as individuals. Ultimately we try to ensure the client engages with and stays in the hospital without leaving before their treatment is complete", Jasmine said.

With Jane and Amy able to provide clinical support, write scripts and advocate for gap-free medical tests and treatments, Nathan and Jasmine bring a whole new level of engagement.

"The minute Jasmine says "I know what that's like, I lived in a refuge", you can see their face change, they start engaging" Jane explains. "It makes the world of difference. The same with Nathan, our Aboriginal Health Worker. When we get Aboriginal clients and he engages with them, it's like a miracle, it's amazing".

Making the clinics a safe space for vulnerable people is an integral part of helping them heal, with the ultimate goal of linking them to health services so they can have access to long-term holistic care.

"It's a nice reflection of the service that a number of patients come back and see us, even when they don't have anything to see us about, they'll just come and have a chat, they enjoy the interaction they've had with us and what we've done for them. It's very rewarding. We see people get better, and we see people get involved in other services and start to get well, and it's nice", Amy said.

## Feature interview with GRAHAM KILBY

*Graham has recently come on board as an Aboriginal HR Programs Specialist.*

This role includes assisting St Vincent's with Aboriginal programs, increasing Aboriginal recruitment across the organisation, supporting our current Aboriginal staff members, working on retention and recruitment strategies, working with Learning & Development to implement personal development and career pathways within St Vincent's and supporting management with complex issues surrounding Aboriginal people in today's Society.



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

I not only see an increase in Aboriginal staffing numbers and supported career and personal development, I see us as being known across the country as the leading employer of choice for Aboriginal people in the health industry.

*What are the challenges you see now and in the coming years (with regard to your area of expertise)?*

Ensuring we establish personal and career development opportunities for our staff to grow within the organisation, and to utilise these skills for the betterment of both the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal patients that we provide care to.

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

I love working with people of all backgrounds and especially love working with, and for my Aboriginal Brothers and Sisters. Aboriginal people have that connection to each other and that deep seated connection to try and assist or throw that rope over the wall to help another community member climb the ladder to success, and for their family and community to feel the benefits of that success (the domino effect).

*What motivates you on a daily basis?*

Addressing the disadvantage of Aboriginal people through employment is in my feeling, the true way to close the Gap of Aboriginal disadvantage.

*Tell us one of your favourite stories during your time at St Vincent's?*

I have only been at St Vincent's a short amount of time, but I have met so many people who are focused on improving the health and social disadvantage of all vulnerable people who we come in contact with. The passion of our CEO, directors, managers and supervisors that I have met has been fantastic and infectious. We have some work to do with regards to Aboriginal recruitment and retention, but I am confident that we will meet our targets, as there are a lot of people within St Vincent's working very hard to ensure this happens. I am very happy to be on board to assist in this very important journey.

*What is your proudest moment, professionally speaking?*

I am proudest professionally when I am addressing Aboriginal disadvantage, community engagement and service delivery of programs for the Aboriginal community. I have worked all of my life in positions trying to assist the Mob with employment, training and disadvantage. I will continue doing this in my personal and professional roles until I am laid to rest. Hopefully this will not be in 5 years' time, as 50 is the time frame given for most Aboriginal Males to live in today's society.

## FACTS + FIGURES

**\$1.3 MILLION**  
in grants awarded from  
St Vincent's Curran Foundation  
for SVHNS projects.



**911**  
Staff completed mission  
formation training

**94%**  
of outpatient cancer patients  
would speak highly about  
their care



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