

# St Vincent's Voice

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

MARCH 2015 — ISSUE 05

## **Matters of the heart:**

*St Vincent's  
pioneering  
cardiovascular  
surgery*

**Inside this edition:**

**We catch up with  
Sr Clare Nolan**

**St Vincent's facilitates  
stem cell transplant  
treatment centre in  
Sri Lanka**

**Our new clinical streams**



**ST VINCENT'S  
HOSPITAL**  
SYDNEY



**SACRED HEART  
HEALTH SERVICE**



**ST JOSEPH'S  
HOSPITAL**

## A message from Anthony Schembri



**CEO, ST VINCENT'S HEALTH NETWORK SYDNEY**

This is now the 5th edition of St Vincent's Voice, and maybe it's just that I'm particularly proud of our staff's achievements, but each addition seems to be getting increasingly filled with extraordinary stories of care and inspiration.

We've certainly hit the ground running in 2015 and I'm happy to say that the establishment of our new clinical streams has commenced and congratulations to our Clinical Stream Directors and Managers on their appointments. What's more, there's already been a host of Australian firsts being performed at the Hospital this year – it seems that the trail-blazing legacy of the Sisters still resonates strongly on the St Vincent's Campus.

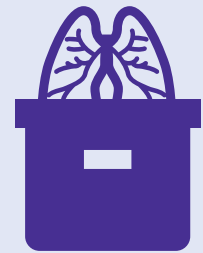
For me there's one particular story in this edition that I hope you have a chance to read, the page 5 story on the team of clinicians from Sri Lanka who are currently visiting us, learning the skills required to run a bone marrow transplant unit. At present in Sri Lanka there isn't a BMT unit and the fact that through our stewardship and training, we will be able to make such a difference is extraordinary.



## Short & Sharp

### Lungs in a box

St Vincent's Lung Transplant team has recently performed their first successful transplant using OCS (organ care system) or 'lungs in a box' to transplant lungs from a marginal donor. This new technology allows previously unusable organs to be safely resuscitated post retrieval and revitalised in an external environment before transplantation. Congratulations to all involved.



### SydPath secures accreditation

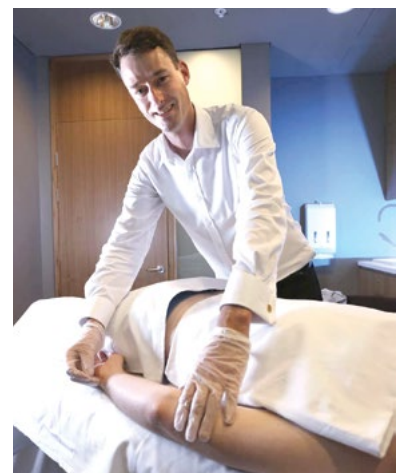


Congratulations to SydPath, who recently underwent 10 days of rigorous peer reviewed assessment focussing on technical competence required for accreditation. The criteria for determining a medical laboratory's competence includes the qualifications, training and experience of staff; correct equipment that is properly calibrated and maintained; adequate quality assurance procedures; appropriate sampling practices; systems for resolution of complaints, document control and internal audits.

SydPath secured its ongoing accreditation for a further four years, with several laboratories receiving commendations.

### Wellness Centre Opens

The Kinghorn Cancer Centre's Wellness Centre has officially opened its doors with a dedicated Accupuncture Clinic operational two days per week. While the Centre anticipates further holistic healing services to join us down the track, the Accupuncture Clinic is a welcome start and is not only available to our Cancer Services patients, but staff and the general public as well.







## PIONEERING SURGERY



## St Vincent's Cardiac Team *don't skip a beat*

St Vincent's surgeons have pioneered another procedure that will give a new lease of life to people with cardiovascular conditions.

Until now, doctors have had to stop a patient's heart from beating in order to repair or replace defective aortic valves, causing considerable burden on the body and reducing the number of heart surgery candidates who are well enough to tolerate such a dramatic procedure. But in a revolutionary advancement in cardiothoracic surgery, the St Vincent's transplant team recently successfully

implanted artificial valves inside a patient's leaky ones – all while the patient's heart continued to beat.

The second such successful surgery at St Vincent's, both patients suffered from mitral valve regurgitation, a common condition where the valve between the left ventricle and left atrium doesn't close properly, and the blood moves into the lungs instead of the aorta.

"The significant thing is that we don't have to stop the heart, so we don't have to put the patient through all the extra rigors of heart surgery," Cardiothoracic Surgeon, Dr Paul Jansz, told the Sydney Morning Herald. Interventional Cardiologist, A/Prof David Muller, concurred saying "there should be no downside. It's a much less invasive, much better tolerated procedure for patients who are not well."

HOME GROWN CELEBRITIES

## Kings Cross ER: St Vincent's Hospital

St Vincent's will once again be the shining stars of prime-time television on the Nine Network.

Kings Cross ER: St Vincent's Hospital has already gained international acclaim with Series One and Two, while closer to home the Series won a Logie Award for the Most Outstanding Factual Program of 2014.

Filming has already commenced on Series Three, a twelve-part observational documentary style program that will showcase the work our ED colleagues do every day, dealing with an incredibly diverse demographic and complex medical presentations.

We're looking forward to seeing our colleagues on Channel 9, later this year.



DENTAL OUTREACH SERVICES

## Big smiles in St Vincent's Dental Department

St Vincent's Dental Department will commence a new program, funded by the Commonwealth government and in collaboration with SESLHD to support Dr Peter Foltyn in the provision of an oral health clinic for our marginalised community members.

The Clinic will cater to people who are homeless, those with physical disabilities, are mentally unstable and/or drug and alcohol users who may otherwise be unable to effectively manage their oral health. Referrals will come from the

Kirkton Road Centre, Mission Australia and from St Vincent's Emergency Department. The funding will allow Dr Foltyn to employ two part-time dental assistants, and cover the costs of theatre time and general anaesthesia



for the removal of teeth for 30 referred patients in the first stage of the agreement. Congratulations to Dr Foltyn in successfully attaining this important funding, which will provide a much needed service to those most in need.

## ORGANISATIONAL REDESIGN

## Our New Clinical Streams

Following careful consultation and review, February 2015 saw the commencement of St Vincents' new clinical streams, which in essence shifted our services from five programs to four clinical streams. Each stream is now led by a Clinical Director in partnership with a Clinical Manager.

Congratulations to our colleagues on their appointment to these roles. This is an exciting new organisational design and structure that will best support the extraordinary care that all of our staff provide every day.

New appointments include:

- Dr Richard Gallagher – Director of Cancer Services.
- A/Prof Anthony Grabs – Director of the Surgical Stream and Ms Kirsty McLeod, Manager of the Surgical Stream.
- Professor Michael Feneley – Director of the Heart/Lung Stream and Mr Dominic Le Lievre, Manager of the Heart/Lung Stream.
- Ms Gabrielle Prest has been appointed the Manager of the Medicine Stream; and the Director of the Medicine Stream will be announced shortly
- The recruitment for the Director and for the Integrated Care Clinical Stream is currently in progress.

## EMMA HAMILTON AND DR CHRISTOPHER MIDDLEMISS

## The 2 of Us



As a part of a nationally implemented health care strategy, St Vincent's runs a Transitional Aged Care Program (TACP) that allows elderly patients who are not quite well enough to be independent but not unwell enough to remain in hospital, to complete their recovery at home.

Run by a multidisciplinary team of physiotherapists, pharmacists, dieticians, nurses, occupational therapists, social workers and community aid workers, the team spend approximately eight weeks with each patient post hospital discharge, ensuring their full rehabilitation.

Emma Hamilton, Community Occupational Therapist handles patients' case management, which involves coordinating all home and medical care once the patient has left St Vincent's. Unlike other hospital transitional aged care programs, Emma's team works in close collaboration with the medical registrars to ensure each discharge package is tailored to the individual – informed by a full acute medical history.

"We have a lot of contact with the rotating registrars who give us all the information we need to get patients back into their homes where they recover much faster. Normally community programs have little contact with the doctors, but at St Vincent's, the way we work is great because the patients are often confused about the acute care they received, so we can get the information straight from the source" Emma explained.

On working with the TACP team Dr Christopher Middlemiss, Advanced Trainee, Geriatric Department added "and if a patient needs urgent medical intervention we can get them admitted straight to the acute medical assessment unit and bypass Emergency. Statistics show that the longer an older person spends in ED the worse their outcomes are, so if they don't go there at all, that's even better".

It's a mutually beneficial relationship for both the TACP team and for the registrars who not only have better discharge options but who can also be kept informed of their patients' recovery progress post discharge. It's our patients however, who reap the most benefits from this unique service with 99% of those surveyed reporting their complete satisfaction with the TACP team.





## St Vincent's helps establish Stem Cell Transplant Unit in Sri Lanka

Cancer is now the third most common cause of death in Sri Lanka, but as it struggles to establish itself as a middle-income country, there are currently few treatment options available for cancer sufferers, leaving those who can afford treatment to seek it in Singapore or India, and those who cannot afford the expense to die without receiving the care they need.

Supporting St Vincent's vision that adequate healthcare should be available to all, our Haematology Department has taken the initiative of supporting the implementation of a stem cell transplantation unit in the Sri Lankan capital city of Colombo. Such a unit will provide care to all Sri Lankans, including low income patients who cannot afford to seek overseas options or raise funds in time for effective treatment.

Working with leaders from Sri Lankan Haematology and Oncology departments, Professors John Moore and David Ma have successfully gained funding and support to establish the program, with the goal of making Sri Lanka self-sufficient in stem cell transplantation – potentially saving hundreds of lives each year.

To this end, St Vincent's recently welcomed 16 medical, nursing and allied health fellows from Sri Lanka to join us for an

intensive mentoring and training program in the field of stem cell transplantation who will return home to become leaders in their field. In time, the skills of the current generation of fellows who attend St Vincent's will be transferred to the next generation.

It is hoped that the program will enhance the medical, scientific and nursing landscape of haematology in Sri Lanka by increasing the technological expertise of staff in apheresis, cryopreservation, chemotherapy and clinical management of seriously ill patients with blood malignancies.

Estimated to perform 600-700 stem cell transplants each year once established, this is expected to incorporate the approximate 50 patients who currently leave Sri Lanka every year to have transplantation procedures in Singapore or India, allowing them to access the procedure closer to their homes and families.

## MEET TINA, ART ENTHUSIAST



## What I know about... Leontina (Tina) Popescu

Tina is an Enrolled Nurse at St Joseph's Hospital, but outside of work, she's an accomplished artist and art enthusiast.

In my spare time, I love to get creative. Whether it's creating a small greeting card for a friend, working on an oil painting or making a clay sculpture, I suddenly feel relaxed! I always feel a certain sense of accomplishment every time I complete an artwork.

I have always loved anything and everything art related. I always frequent art galleries to see different exhibitions. Nothing makes me happier than dragging my daughter along to art galleries around Sydney, however I'm not sure she enjoys it as much as I do!

The artists that have inspired me growing up have been Michelangelo, Rembrandt and Botticelli to name a few. I realised art was one of my lifelong dreams when my daughter and I travelled to Italy together to visit some of the renaissance wonders that I have always admired. My highlight was seeing Michelangelo's Pieta in the Vatican.

I'm currently working on a Byzantine inspired icon that I hope to finish soon.

## COFFEE WITH SR CLARE

## Catch up with Sr Clare Nolan, rsc



Joining St Vincent's in 1967, Sister Clare Nolan is a well-known and much loved St Vincent's Campus treasure who was voted Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity Australia late last year. Officially commissioned to lead the Sisters in December 2014 in what is a very busy role, we recently caught up with her for a chat. Here's how she's doing...

### How have you been since leaving SVH?

Well, I haven't moved house and we are so close to the St V's Campus that I feel I haven't left. It is simply continuing but in a different role. Wherever I go, be it visiting our Sisters who are sick, or meeting people in lifts here or beyond here at Bondi or dining with friends – I continually hear how grateful people are for St Vincents. Staff I meet who have trained at St Vincent's and continue to work here because they love it so much or patients and families who comment on the wonderful care they received and what a great Hospital St V's is. So I enjoy remaining connected by listening to people's stories in my casual meetings in lifts, corridors and coffee shops.

### How has your new role been so far and what are the highlights?

I feel humble, confident and privileged in my role as Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity. In the first couple of months we have been involved in many significant things and one of the most significant was to begin the year united with our Founding Congregation in Ireland in celebrating the birth of our Congregation 200 years ago. Then there were Sister's Jubilees Golden & Diamond to celebrate, which brought us much joy. We visited our Sisters in Queensland, Victoria and Sydney which was an opportunity to connect with them in various places and at different life stages. Wherever I went I found Sisters being a living presence of God's tenderness, love and concern for all. We farewelled one of our Sisters, Sr Joy Ginn rsc who herself was a Theatre Nurse and left her mark here at St Vincent's. And now we have the commissioning of the Sisters of Charity Foundation Accommodation Project for homeless asylum seekers. So there is never a dull moment.

### How much do you miss us!?

I am very fortunate to still be living so near to the Campus, and its people, that I don't have a sense of being away. The great thing for me is to come home from Bondi in the evenings to our home in West St, which is also a house of hospitality, and to hear the events of the day from Sr Dierdre and meet all the ladies who are with us and listen to their stories. I am reminded that there is more to my life than my role and everything gets put into perspective. I feel grounded at West St. I am so very fortunate. I park in the Car Park and often meet old friends and have a yarn. I visit Sisters who are in Hospital and I feel so proud of their care and everyone at St V's, as each one makes it the great place that it is.



## FEATURE INTERVIEW

## KNOW YOUR PRODUCT

## Interview with Ben Maudlin

Ben is a Registered Nurse in our Emergency Department, and is currently studying Medicine.



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

Improvements in pre-hospital care. Particularly the introduction of pre-hospital venoarterial extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) for patients in cardiac arrest. Hopefully with further research and development of the equipment (making it smaller, simpler, more portable and cheaper) we will be able to get more cases to examine whether it is beneficial to out of hospital witnessed arrests.

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

For me, the biggest issue healthcare will face in the future is multi-antibiotic resistant organisms (MROs). Antibiotic resistance (when bacteria change so antibiotics no longer work in people who need them to treat infections) is now a major threat to public health. Without more funding and research into areas of new antibiotic development and strict antimicrobial stewardship, we may enter the post-antibiotic era.

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

Being able to help people during one of the most stressful and vulnerable times of their lives. The trust that is placed in nurses by patients and their families is something that is very special.

*What motivates you on a daily basis?*

The team I work with and the cases we get to see. Our department sees a unique demographic which provides an interesting snapshot of society. We can have a multibillionaire in the bed next to a homeless injectable drug user both with the same diagnosis. It's fascinating. It's always hard work but with the team I have the pleasure of working with it makes any difficult situation easier.

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

Last new years eve, I cared for a drug affected young man, he wasn't agitated or aggressive but needed to stay in hospital for his own safety. He kept on trying to jump out of bed and when we helped him up we found all he wanted to do was to cuddle the giant inflatable reindeer we had up for Christmas.

*What is your proudest moment, professionally speaking?*

During a cardiac arrest last year I was doing compressions as part of the resuscitation team. We do two-minute cycles of CPR, defibrillation and drugs, after one cycle when I had finished doing compressions we got a return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC). It was an amazing feeling to have been directly involved in successfully resuscitating someone.

## Facts & Figures



# 10,000

Outpatient occasions of service at St Joseph's in 2014



# \$90,000

donated just by community support groups alone for our Heart Lung Unit in 2014



# 1,124,409

Bed days nationally in 2014



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