

# ST VINCENT'S Voice

NOVEMBER 2017 — ISSUE 13

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

## ST VINCENT'S PERFORMS 1000<sup>TH</sup> HEART TRANSPLANT

Inside this edition:

SVHNS dominates at SVHA Awards

The Duke of York pays a visit

Dr Sarah Michael wins prestigious award





**A/PROF  
ANTHONY SCHEMBRI**

**CEO, St Vincent's Health  
Network Sydney**

I recently attended a planning workshop where one of the presenters showed an abstract image of what distinctly appeared to me as a duck. When the presenter asked the audience what it was, surprisingly, half the room claimed it was a rabbit. An audience staring at the same image from different perspectives, drawing two very different conclusions.

Similarly over the past few months, many of us have been immersed in our efforts to respond to unprecedented demand on our services during winter. For several of our departments, this has involved additional pressures, and despite our success in coping with these pressures, the outlook can sometimes appear challenging.

Yet, having read through this edition of St Vincent's Voice, I am provided with a timely reminder of just how much our health service is thriving. Be it the 1000th heart transplant, our new work-place giving program or our success at the SVHA Innovation & Excellence Awards – when you stand back and look at the big picture of how much we've achieved – our future is bright and promising.

I am sure you will share the same outlook after reading this edition.

# + SHORT SHARP



## Prof Middleton inducted into nursing research hall of fame

Congratulations to Prof Sandy Middleton, who was recently inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame. Our multi-award winning Director of Nursing Research works across the St Vincent's Campus, continuously working to improve outcomes for our patients as well as the broader community. We congratulate Sandy on this wonderful international recognition, which is so very well deserved!



## St Vincent's Stroke Nurses achieve highest level of certification

Registered Nurses, Kirsty Page and Rachael MacKinnon recently achieved Board Certification from the US-based Association of Neurovascular Clinicians. With no similar accreditation in Australia, Kirsty and Rachel are two of just 14 Registered Nurses in the country to have achieved this level of accredited expertise. We're extremely proud to have them on our team. Congratulations.



## Scabies research trial wins prestigious Eureka Prize

Congratulations St Vincent's Dermatologist Dr Margot Whitfield and her team of collaborators from The Kirby Institute, Murdoch Children's Research Institute & the Menzies School of Health Research, who have won a prestigious Eureka Prize for Infectious Diseases Research. Their world-first trial looking at the prevalence of scabies in both Fiji and the Solomon Islands, saw a reduction in scabies infestation from 33% of the population, to just 2%.

**SEV** *Inspired to care*

## All the cool staff are at St Joseph's

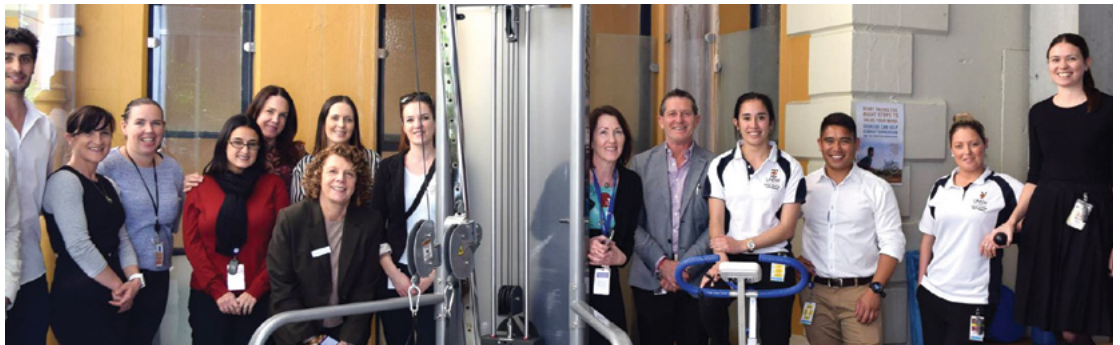


Toby Hall, CEO SVHA gets iced.

For the 4th consecutive year, St Joseph's has participated in the Ice Bucket Challenge, raising money for Motor Neurone Disease treatment and research, a cause very close to their hearts, with one of the largest multidisciplinary MND clinics in the State.

This year, the team introduced the 'Ninja Warrior MND challenge' to the event, challenging staff to complete physical and cognitive tasks such as counting backwards, designed to raise awareness around the challenges a person with MND faces.

Accepting the challenge from A/Prof Anthony Schembri last year, Group CEO Toby Hall joined the St Joseph's team in getting 'iced' and raising the profile of an often forgotten disease.



St Vincent's Mental Health and UNSW teams.

## New gym for mental health patients

**Research tells us that people with acute mental illness die on average 16 years earlier than the average population, primarily from heart disease.**

Often medication can cause weight gain, contribute to diabetes and other physical health issues. That's why our metabolic monitoring program for our mental health patients is so important.

As part of that program, a long-term goal was realised recently, with the official opening of our new onsite gym for our mental health clients.

We're thrilled to be able to extend our metabolic monitoring program to include on-site exercise facilities, along with UNSW Exercise Physiology experts to help our patients in their recovery process.

Special thanks to University of NSW for partnering with St Vincent's on this project, and for providing the exercise bike and cable machine. Thanks also to Elixir Health Clubs for donating the treadmill, and to St Vincent's Curran Foundation for funding our Exercise Physiologist.



# St Vincent's celebrates 1000<sup>th</sup> heart transplant!

The St Vincent's Heart Lung Transplant Unit recently performed the 1000th heart transplant on Margaret Blunden, a 63 year old Dapto local.



NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian MP with Dr Mark Connellan and the recipient of the 1000th heart, Margaret, cutting the heart shaped cake.

*“Now I can see a future, travel, reconnect with family and friends, just doing things I couldn't do – even hanging out the washing was a trial. Now I feel like I can hang mine and mum's out... It's just a whole new beginning that I never thought six months ago I would see, even friends that came to see me would leave and say we don't think she's going to last, so this to me is the most amazing gift anyone could give me”, an emotional Margaret said.*

In recent years, the Transplant Unit has been performing record numbers of transplants and in February, performed the 1000th lung transplant.

Having pioneered several surgical firsts since its establishment in 1984, the Unit under the long-term leadership of A/Prof Phillip Spratt, achieves internationally leading patient outcomes with amongst the highest post-transplant survival rates in the world.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian joined us on the day along with Margaret and members of the Transplant Unit to cut a special heart-shaped celebratory cake.

## St Vincent's introduces Workplace Giving

**St Vincent's Health Network Sydney has established a dedicated Workplace Giving Program which will support our longstanding outreach to the people of the Solomon Islands.**

Over the past two decades St Vincent's has been providing critical healthcare support to the Solomon's, including continual provision of a St Vincent's resident medical officer to run the Gizo emergency department and each year bringing 10 critically-ill Solomon patients to St Vincent's to receive life-saving treatment.

Our support has had a profound impact on the Solomon's health landscape, where access to healthcare is poor. While St Vincent's has been able to save and enhance the lives of thousands of patients over the years, we know there is so much more we can do to help.

In light of this, we have expanded our relationship with this beautiful country via our new workplace giving program, where all of our staff can now directly get behind the work of the Hospital.



All funds raised will go directly towards the provision of healthcare, the acquisition of essential diagnostic equipment and the delivery of medical education to local care providers.

This is our opportunity to get directly involved by donating as little as \$1 a week from our weekly pay, we're in a great position to make a huge difference! Staff can visit <https://workplacegiving.stvincents.com.au> for details.

**SVV** Inspired to shine

# St Vincent's Sydney excels at the annual SVHA Awards

This year St Vincent's Health Network Sydney took home four of a possible 11 trophies at the SVHA Innovation & Excellence Awards. With 13 finalists this year, it's easy to deduce that our staff are our greatest asset. The incredibly high standard of work, be it in innovation, clinical excellence or safety and quality, really has proven how much can be achieved through staff initiated change. Continuing to raise the bar in caring for our patients, the winning projects include:



Category:  
**Leaders in  
Catholic Healthcare**

## Project: Tierney House – Evidence for advocacy and commitment to tackling homelessness

Since 2012, Tierney House has been a leader in delivering health services to our homeless communities. A recent evaluation identified that the service is improving access and engaging clients in their care, as well as making a difference to the health dollar. Data over a two year period demonstrated that there was an \$8,276 saving per resident per year, through implementing interventions, treatments and psychosocial support that reduced the incidence of Emergency presentations from this cohort of our community.



Category:  
**Leading Reputation**

## Dysplasia and Anal Cancer Services

Led by Professor Richard Hillman, the team have been able to identify individuals with HIV and at risk of developing HIV related cancers at pre-cancer stage, to intervene and prevent them from developing advanced cancers. The team have been leaders in setting international standards in diagnostic techniques and establishing international benchmarks for the diagnosis of these conditions.



Category:  
**Clinical Improvement**

## Improving sepsis recognition and treatment in the Emergency Department

With Sepsis being a leading cause of death in hospitalised patients worldwide, CNC Julie Gawthorne and her team in the Emergency Department saw an opportunity to improve the treatment of septic patients quickly and effectively. Adopting the 'Sepsis Kills' program developed by the Clinical Excellence Commission, the team have made a major impact on the wellbeing and safety of patients, with early detection improving from 67% to 98%; a decrease in time to antibiotics of 31 minutes; and intravenous fluid administration increasing from 40% to 96%.



Category:  
**Group & Divisional  
CEO's Excellence  
Award for Individuals**

## Lisa-Jayne Ferguson, Alcohol & Drug Service CNC

Lisa-Jayne works as the Alcohol and Drug Health Care leader CNC to ensure patients have access to interventions and care to manage their substance use. Her commitment and holistic approach to each individual is an inspiration to all who work with her.

Congratulations to all.



Minister for Health & Medical Research, Brad Hazzard and A/Prof Anthony Schembri.

**StV** *Inspired to serve*

## Life Ball raises \$2.45M for St Vincent's Mental Health Services

St Vincent's Curran Foundation recently hosted the annual St Vincent's gala Life Ball, raising an impressive \$2.54 million to support the building of a new Prevention and Recovery Centre (PARC) at St Vincent's Hospital.

**P**ARC will provide short to medium term residential support for people with a mental illness. For people with a mental illness this live-in support will provide additional care throughout a difficult period, or help them get back to living independently in their own home. It's a service that will help people who might not be unwell enough to warrant a

hospital admission, yet still need support. PARC will also provide care for people who have just been discharged from acute inpatient care.

Thank you to all of our generous supporters and friends who have helped us on our way to achieving our goal of providing this vital service to our community. It was a great night!



St Vincent's Mental Health team members.



Barry & Lynda Hodge, winners of the 2017 Volvo, proudly donated by Volvo Cars Rushcutters Bay.



Special thanks to The Order of Malta, for their generous donation of \$1.9m.




*Inspired to care*

## Dr Sarah Michael wins prestigious award



St Vincent's Psychiatrist Dr Sarah Michael, who serves as the Hospital Director of Prevocational Education and Training (DPEYT), recently won the Geoff Marel Award – an annual prize that recognises the work of an individual who has made a substantial contribution to the education and support of prevocational trainees. The winner is then the NSW nomination for the Confederation of Postgraduate Medical Education Councils (CPMEC) Clinical Educator of the Year Award.

**T**his is an extremely prestigious award in the NSW medical education space and is significant recognition for the work Sarah has done.

In acknowledging Sarah's award, St Vincent's CEO A/Prof Anthony Schembri said "I am so thrilled that Sarah's commitment, passion and expertise in supporting JMO education has been recognised in this way. I know from talking with our JMO's how much they value and appreciate Sarah's support, advice and mentoring."



The Duke of York meets 16 year old heart transplant recipient, Ryan Gibbons.

## Duke of York visits St Vincent's

His Royal Highness, The Duke of York, KG, recently conducted a roof-top tour of the St Vincent's Campus overlooking Sydney Harbour and the CBD.

**T**he Official Party then met with 16 year-old heart transplant patient Ryan Gibbons and A/Prof Phillip Spratt, Director of the St Vincent's Heart Lung Transplant Unit.

The Duke was the guest of honour at the St Vincent's Curran Foundation Annual Spring Reception, held at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

## Feature interview with

# A/Prof MUNJED AL MUDERIS



After fleeing Iraq, A/Prof Munjed Al Muderis arrived in Australia on a leaky boat seeking asylum as a refugee. Following his release from the detention centre, he completed his Australian training and went on to become one of the Australia's leading orthopaedic surgeons, having performed more prosthetic osseointegration surgeries than anyone else worldwide. St Vincent's recently had the privilege of having him present for Diversity Health Day, and we asked him about his experiences joining the Australian medical fraternity as a refugee.

*“When you enter a field like orthopaedic surgery, which is a very closed field, you face resistance. You face ‘you didn’t go to the right school, you didn’t play rugby’. Up until recently, when I went to meetings - and they know where I come from, and they know who I am - they still always asked, ‘what school did you go to?’”*

*Do you think there is a lot of xenophobia amongst surgeons?*

It's not just xenophobia, there is stereotyping, nepotism, and there is sexism and they are very well embedded in the culture. I don't look at it as being particularly against me or where I'm from, it's a widespread culture. But this is becoming more transparent, and the Royal College (of Surgeons)

is trying its best to move away from that and make the selection criteria more transparent.

People should be judged by their merits rather than what they look like or where they come from. I didn't choose the way I look. I didn't choose to be born in Iraq. I didn't choose my family. None of us did. But ironically, a lot of people are so fanatic about

their beliefs and their colour and race, despite the fact that they didn't choose any of it.

*What's the next breakthrough in your field?*

I think the next breakthrough will be merging nerves with machines, and there is a lot of work that we are doing on that aspect. I'm in conversations with researchers from Sydney University and we've reached a symbiotic relationship between the body and the metal – so the robot doesn't get eroded by the body, and at the same time, the implant is not influencing infection in the body. If we figure out how that can be translated to other implications in medicine, like implantable heart valves, joint replacement and things like that, there is potential for a lot of research that can be undertaken to open wide gates of applications that may benefit human kind.

## FACTS & FIGURES



**\$47,905**

Raised in Dry July  
for Cancer Services



**\$300+K**

Raised by All for Trace  
for new Bone Marrow  
Transplant Unit



**1,000**

Heart transplants performed  
at St Vincent's Hospital  
as of Sept '17

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JOIN THE CONVERSATION  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA



FRONT COVER: CELEBRATING OUR 1000TH HEART TRANSPLANT WITH SPECIAL GUEST, NSW PREMIER, GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN.