

# St Vincent's Voice

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

JUNE 2014 — ISSUE 01

## 30 Years of Innovation

St Vincent's Heart  
Lung Transplant  
Program turns 30.

## The 2 of Us

Sara Shaw &  
Amanda McLaughlin

## And the Logie goes to...

## What I know about...

Dr Jonathan Baskin



**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

Welcome to St Vincent's Voice, I am really proud of this new information portal for our staff.

It is rare that a newsletter masthead gives true meaning to its purpose, but this newsletter is genuinely about giving our staff a voice to express ourselves and to learn about the huge scope of endeavours across the St Vincent's Health Network in a frank and timely way.

In my few months at SVHNS, I've really had a wonderful opportunity to get to know many staff members, to see some of our novel approaches to tackling vexing problems and hear concerns and suggestions. In many ways I hope that St Vincent's Voice will become a continuum of this; a medium where staff are communicated *with* not *at*. Together with our Public Affairs & Communications Department – we're keen to get your feedback as to how we're tracking in achieving this objective.

This edition is packed with some significant news and milestones. You will notice there are several templated articles that appear regularly in each edition, my favourite is "What I know about..." as it gives us an opportunity to see a different side to our colleagues.

Enjoy

## Short & Sharp

### Accreditation Update

"St Vincent's puts patients first"... one of the observations reported by the surveyors at the recent St Vincent's accreditation summation. Following the Hospital's two year periodic review, the survey team will be recommending to the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards that St Vincent's achieved all the mandatory core criteria with no high priority recommendations. The team will also recommend we continue with our status as an "accredited health service". **Congratulations team!**

DUKE & DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE RUBBING SHOULDERS WITH NICK WEBB



Digital mischief

### St Vincent's Royal visit on the cards?

"I was recently honoured to represent St Vincent's Hospital at a welcome reception for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at the Opera House. The function hosted a cross-section of young Australians and I was joined by St Vincent's colleagues Andrew Jabbour and Steven Tisch. The Royals seemed an approachable and authentic couple, and I took the opportunity to invite them to visit St Vincent's when they're next in town. Fingers crossed!"

Dr Nick Webb, Junior Medical Officer, St Vincent's Emergency

### St Vincent's Gambling Clinic secures major funding

Minister for Hospitality, Gaming and Racing Troy Grant MP recently visited St Vincent's Hospital Gambling Clinic to announce funding of \$541,000 annually – allowing this vital service to continue serving this vulnerable group in our community for the next four years.

"Today I had the privilege to visit the St Vincent's Hospital Gambling Treatment Program to meet dedicated staff and hear



CAMERON MCINTOSH, TROY GRANT MP & ABIGAIL KAZAL

first-hand about the invaluable work they do to assist those affected by problem gambling and their families," Mr Grant said. "I congratulate the program and its staff on 15 years of outstanding service to make a positive difference to many lives – not only those directly affected by problem gambling, but also their families and loved ones."



SARA SHAW &amp; AMANDA MCLAUGHLIN

# The 2 of Us



SARA SHAW &amp; AMANDA MCLAUGHLIN.

**TKCC and Heart Lung Transplant Unit work together in an unlikely partnership to save lives.**

Amanda McLaughlin  
Clinical Nurse Consultant at  
the Kinghorn Cancer Centre  
(TKCC) is one of four nurses  
at St Vincent's to specialise

in Apheresis, a blood  
centrifugation process designed  
to separate whole blood into  
different layers. Amanda's  
patient profile mainly comprises

patients with malignancies  
requiring adult stem cell  
transplantation, and patients  
with autoimmune disorders.  
But recently there has been  
a significant increase in the  
number of patients she  
treats from the Heart Lung  
Transplant Unit.

Transplant patients face  
many challenges including  
possible organ rejection,  
or Antibody Mediated  
Rejection (AMR). In recent  
times, tests have been  
developed that can diagnose  
AMR at an earlier stage and  
consequently Amanda and  
her team are able to swiftly  
commence Apheresis  
treatment, limiting the impact  
of what was previously a life  
threatening situation.

The complicated process  
removes plasma from the  
body, separates the plasma  
blood component and in doing  
so discards the antibodies  
that reject the organ, before  
replacing the healthy plasma

back in to the patient -  
ultimately allowing the body  
to accept its new organ.

Sara Shaw, NUM and  
transplant coordinator at  
the Heart Lung Unit says that  
if a transplant recipient begins  
to show signs of rejection,  
they immediately make the  
call across to Amanda.  
Working together they plan  
and coordinate this relatively  
new treatment, providing a  
new level of care for transplant  
patients who previously faced  
more uncertain outcomes.

Amanda and her team  
help bolster the extraordinary  
work the Heart Lung Unit  
do, achieving survival  
rates that surpass that of any  
international benchmarks.  
"We're very much reliant on  
Amanda and working with  
TKCC. We now have patients  
in common. This treatment  
definitely increases our  
survival rates" said Sara.

## KINGS CROSS ER

# Logie Award Winning Emergency Department

Season 2 of 'Kings Cross ER:  
St Vincent's Hospital' has won  
the Most Outstanding Factual  
Program Logie, as voted by  
the television industry.

The ten-part series, screened on  
Foxtel's Crime and Investigation Network,  
follows the incredible team of doctors,  
nurses and specialists in the Emergency  
Department. The series showcased some

of the health challenges our ED staff have  
to contend with 24 hours a day, seven days  
a week, particularly the extent of alcohol  
related injuries they see.

Critically acclaimed, Kings Cross ER  
rated highly on Foxtel and recently the  
Nine Network acquired the rights to  
screen Seasons 1 and 2.

Congratulations to all of the ED staff  
for their outstanding work.

ANOTHER AWARD FOR ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL:  
**MOST OUTSTANDING FACTUAL PROGRAM LOGIE.**





CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

## St Vincent's Keep Hearts Beating in a Box to Radically Increase Transplants

St Vincent's Heart Lung Transplant Unit is pioneering the use of a novel portable console to house and transport donor organs, significantly expanding the pool of organs that can be used to increase the number of heart transplants performed in NSW.

The ex-vivo Organ Care System (OCS) involves the Transplant retrieval team connecting the donor heart to a portable circuit where it is kept beating and warm. This limits the detrimental effects of cold ischaemia which occurs with the standard organ preservation mode of packing the heart on ice in an esky.

At a packed media conference, members of the Transplant team Prof Peter MacDonald and A/Prof Kumud Dhital pointed out that the greater versatility provided by the OCS is projected to see St Vincent's increase its heart and lung transplants by as much as 50% in the near future.

Already the Unit has conducted four heart transplants using the OCS. All four gravely ill patients received marginal donor hearts that previously could not have been utilised were it not for the availability of the OCS device.

## 30 years of innovation

This year marks 30 years since the late Dr Victor Chang launched the St Vincent's National Heart Transplant Program and performed life-saving surgery on Australia's youngest heart transplant recipient, Ms Fiona Coote.

Today, Fiona is the longest surviving transplant recipient in the Southern Hemisphere, and the expanded Heart Lung Transplant Unit has performed more than 870 heart, 763 lung and 84 combined heart-lung transplants with survival rates that surpass international benchmarks.

To mark this significant milestone, A/Professor Phillip Spratt, Director of the Heart Lung Transplant Unit and original member of Fiona's transplant team, was recently reunited with Fiona along with other members of the Transplant Unit at a media conference to mark the 30 year milestone.

At the event, Health Minister Jillian Skinner acknowledged some of the remarkable achievements and Australian firsts at St Vincent's Hospital including:

the first bilateral lung transplant, the first heart/lung transplant, the first single lung transplant, the first implantation of mechanical assist devices and the first implant of a total artificial heart.

"The pioneering efforts of Dr Victor Chang - which have been continued by the Unit's multi-disciplinary approach to patient care - have ensured that St Vincent's Hospital is recognised internationally as a leader in heart/lung transplantation", she said.

Fiona graciously recounted her extraordinary story that began as a 14 year old girl, who, with the dedication of the doctors, nurses and support staff, overcame all odds to go on to live a full and healthy life. "St Vincent's has supported and cared for me for 30 years, and for that I will be forever grateful", she said.

*“St Vincent's has supported and cared for me for 30 years, and for that I will be forever grateful”* MS FIONA COOTE

ST VINCENT'S & THE SOLOMONS

SRS CLARE & DEIRDRE WITH SOME OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDER PATIENTS



## Solomon Islands patient becomes part of St Vincent's family

As part of an agreement between St Vincent's Hospital, the Ministry of Health Solomon Islands and NSW Health, St Vincent's provides free specialised care to ten men and women from the Solomon Islands, who can't get the treatment they need at home.

Sr Clare Nolan and Sr Deirdre Hickey rsc, treasured long term managers of Hospitality House (providing a home for rural women to stay whilst they or their loved one receives treatment in Hospital) are also the caretakers of the Solomon Islands patient accommodation. As part of this project they provide a welcoming and loving environment, extending the patients' medical care to include comfort, support and company while they are away from home.

For one such patient, Lakoa Lakoa, this program was a god-send. Lakoa travelled to St Vincent's two years ago for treatment of his kidney stones but his condition worsened and renal failure followed, leaving him dependant on haemodialysis.

As treatment continued and time passed, Lakoa and his family formed a deep bond with Srs Clare and Deirdre as well as his medical and support teams. The longest patient stay as part of this program, Lakoa made a big emotional impact on many St Vincent's staff stretching the breadth of the Campus.

Then Lokoa was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Lakoa's specialist team of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, social workers, palliative care, executive staff and the Sisters worked together to ease Lakoa and his family through to the end of his illness. The genuine exchange of care and compassion between Lakoa and his family, and the St Vincent's team looking after him was extraordinary for all involved. More than a patient or part

of a program, Lakoa became part of the St Vincent's family.

"In two years there has never been a door closed to me at St Vincent's", he said in his final days.

In the end, Lakoa made the decision to die at home. With the help of an anonymous donor described by Sr Clare as "an angel", it was arranged for Lakoa and his family to be flown home along with a nurse to support him, managing his pain and allowing him a peaceful passing within his home surrounded by his loving family.

Before he left, Lakoa presented the Sisters with a beautiful collage of his family photos to remember him by, as well as a hand-made rosary made from shells of his homeland. Go gently Lakoa.



ST VINCENT'S RESEARCH

## Sobering Statistics

A recent study by the St Vincent's Hospital Plastic Surgery Department revealed that approximately 2/3 of the 146 patients undergoing surgery for major fractures of the skull over the past two years, were caused by alleged violent assaults. Of those, 1/3 were specifically "king hit".

Of these patients, 96% were male, and 70% were deemed intoxicated. This figure grew to an alarming 90% intoxication rate amongst the group who were specifically "king hit". St Vincent's has been a vocal supporter of the recent Government legislation to limit alcohol availability to reduce such injuries.

STAFF PROFILE... ST VINCENT'S INTERN & KEEN SWIMMER

## What I know about... Dr Jonathan Baskin

Dr Jonathan (Jono) Baskin is an Intern at St Vincent's Geriatrics Department

"They say that the sun rises every day. Three times a week I'll be at Icebergs in Bondi collecting evidence of this fact.

The water temperature is warmer than you'd expect for most of the year, otherwise the frosty sting will assert your existence. I'll try to reflect on patients or plans for the day but very quickly my attention is focused exclusively on my stroke and breathing.

I'm training for the Ocean Swim season. Forget the City 2 Surf, I'm all about swimming beach to beach, particularly the Bondi to Bronte. As I swim from Nth Bondi past McKenzie's beach and Tama, I think about the incidental reward gained from enjoying each stroke. Swimming teaches me that enjoying the process puts you in a better position to succeed. When I emerge from the ocean onto the craterous beach, the force of gravity seems stronger and my magnetic gait pulls me over the finish line.



Digital mischief

After my swim, I'm in the sauna and my perspective is being reset. The sauna faces north east and has a glass front so I can see the sun rising above the ocean. I visualise the earth's surface barrel-rolling and diving towards it. I think about the curve of the first red light rising up over the ocean, bending towards my eyes, creating the illusion that the sun is now above the horizon.

And I feel the "heat" of the sauna. I wonder which of the four methods of heat transfer are most significant here: convection, conduction, radiation or evaporation. I see the sweat failing to evaporate from my skin and notice the bulging veins of the old overweight man next to me, so I visually cannulate him, making a mental note of the anatomy. Collecting more evidence".

**POSITION:** INTERN AT ST VINCENT'S GERIATRICS DEPARTMENT

**LIVES:** REDFERN

**LOVES:** OCEAN SWIMMING, VISUAL CANNULATION





THE LATE DR RAYMOND SEIDLER / ICONIC LOCAL KING CROSS GP

ST VINCENT'S INNER CITY HEALTH PROGRAM

## Hotline to mental health

In memory of the late Dr Raymond Seidler, iconic local King Cross GP who passed away last July, St Vincent's Inner City Health Program (ICHP) will be launching a crisis hotline in his name.

After a career spanning more than 30 years in Kings Cross, Dr Seidler's commitment to working with the disadvantaged was palpable. At the time of his passing, he had been working with St Vincent's to establish a mental health hotline, giving GPs direct access to one of our consultants in instances of acute patient mental health crises.

As a colleague and friend of St Vincent's, ICHP will continue his work with the hotline, launched in May.

ST VINCENT'S INNER CITY HEALTH PROGRAM

## Brain Training for a Better Life

St Vincent's Hospital Inner City Health Program has partnered with the Schizophrenia Research Institute (SRI) to launch an innovative new Mental Health Service initiative: *Brain Training for a Better Life*

The program offers a new suite of cognitive remediation interventions for people with psychotic and mood disorders accessing the Mental Health Service. Cognitive remediation is a behavioural learning-based intervention that aims to improve neurocognitive (memory, attention, problem-solving) and social cognitive (emotion recognition) skills.

For people in our community with mental health issues who may have found themselves marginalised or isolated, the Brain Training Centre will support them in developing skills to reconnect with society. The skills learned will provide clients with the possibility of living a life

that is meaningful to them - whether that be by returning to the workforce; maintaining employment; completing their education; or even just to be able to make new friends.



SVHN CLINICAL COUNCIL

A/PROF TONY GRABS



## St Vincent's Health Network establishes new Clinical Council

St Vincent's has launched an innovative new Clinical Council to provide more effective and efficient clinical governance, ensuring the quality of care provided is measured, monitored, improved and properly reported.

The Council, led by co-chairs A/Prof Tony Grabs and A/Prof Anthony Schembri, shares representation with peer medical, nursing and allied health groups to ensure thorough consultation. Representatives include Speech Pathologist, Shaun Deery; JMO, Dr Jacinta Perram; and CNC, Kate Weyman.



## FEATURE INTERVIEW

# Interview with Natalie Mohr

Natalie Mohr is a Speech Pathologist working in the Motor Neuron Diseases (MND) Clinic at St Joseph's Hospital. MND is a neurological disorder that affects voluntary muscle activity including speech, walking, swallowing, and general movement of the body. MND is progressive in nature, causing increasingly debilitating disability and eventually, death.

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

Most people with MND will lose their ability to communicate at some point in their disease. As well as loss of speech, the ability to write as an alternative is also lost. Patients can hear & experience their surroundings, but are unable to respond. The biggest changes we have seen are in assistive technology and alternative communication. Adaptations to mouses, computer screens, developments in software, head & eye access, text-to-speech apps, have all made a monumental difference to how we can help people with MND. Having the ability to communicate has a huge positive impact on our patients' quality of life.

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

I think the biggest challenge for everyone working in health is probably the same. To consider how I work 'smarter' so I can continue to deliver high quality & compassionate care to people with MND in the context of increasing demand, but with the same or possibly even less resources.



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

I'm passionate about facilitating communication for people who would otherwise not be able to express themselves. The gradual loss of the physical self is extremely difficult for people with MND. Offering a person the opportunity to communicate allows them to grieve and hopefully move through the disease with greater peace.

*What motivates you on a daily basis?*

I especially enjoy working with patients & their families in the terminal phases of the disease. It is an absolute privilege to be able to facilitate communication to a person who is dying from MND. I hope I allow people at this time in their life to be as physically & emotionally comfortable as possible through communication with their medical teams, pastoral support, family & friends.

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

I've worked in lots of places all over the world and nowhere has ever been such a pleasure. The spirit of SJH is captured in the work that we do with patients, but also the fun we have. My proudest moment working for SVHA is winning the title of 'Best Dressed Team' at the staff Christmas party for our Christmas cracker costumes!

## KNOW YOUR PRODUCT

## Facts & Figures



### 82%

Worldwide benchmark for survival rate post lung transplant

### 92%

St Vincent's patients' survival rate post lung transplant



### 28,500

Slices of bread consumed on Darlinghurst Campus each week



### 19,130

Number of hours worked each year by our dedicated Volunteers



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