

# St Vincent's Voice

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

NOVEMBER 2014 — ISSUE 03

## St Vincent's makes transplant history

Inside this edition:

When art and  
science combine

St Joseph's, hands down  
best in class for hygiene

St Vincent's Sydney  
takes home the SVHA  
Chairman's Award



## A message from Anthony Schembri



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

Wow, what a great edition of St Vincent's Voice! It's not often that our hospital story on innovations in our heart/lung programme not only makes the front cover of our humble newsletter but is also front page news from Barcelona to Antwerp, Boston to Kathmandu. As CEO, it makes me very proud to see St Vincent's on the world stage like this.

Another article that I'm particularly encouraged by is the story of St Joseph's Hospital's success in achieving an 85.5% hand hygiene compliance rate – the highest across SVHA. As those of you who know me can attest, I am committed and passionate about preventing hospital acquired infections. This is a terrific and important achievement for the St Joseph's team. Well done St Joseph staff.

Finally, the story on 3D imaging and the collaboration between St Vincent's and COFA is extraordinary. If you haven't already, I would encourage you to visit our Facebook page and explore the wonderful visuals reaped by this interesting collaboration. Enjoy

## Short & Sharp

### Golden years

Congratulations to Sister Anthea Groves and Sister Margaret Fitzgerald who recently celebrated their Golden Jubilee anniversary within the order of the Sisters of Charity. Two iconic Sisters who have had a huge impact on our endeavors at St Vincent's.



SR ANTHEA GROVES RSC (LEFT) & SR MARGARET FITZGERALD RSC (RIGHT) WITH CONGREGATIONAL LEADER SR ANNETTE CUNLIFFE RSC.



### St Vincent's receives Honour Award for service to HIV community

Former staff from St Vincent's HIV Ward (formerly known as 17 South) were recently recognised at the 2014 ACON Honour Awards - NSW's annual celebration of outstanding achievements within the gay community.

ACON President Mark Orr (pictured left), presented a very proud A/Prof Schembri with the 'President's Award' in recognition of the significant role St Vincent's has played over the decades in improving the health and wellbeing of people affected by HIV and AIDS.

### St Vincent's dragon boat team wins gold



The St Vincent's dragon boat team with members from both the Private and Public Hospitals, recently competed in the Dragons Abreast Festival 2014, claiming GOLD for the Darlinghurst Campus. The annual Festival is run by Dragons Abreast – a national organisation comprised of breast cancer survivors. The St Vincent's team completed the Hospital race in an impressive 55 seconds, against five other hospitals. Collaboratively the St Vincent's team not only won gold for the Campus but were also the fastest boat in all other categories. Go team!

FRONT COVER: PIONEERING PATIENT ON THE WORLD STAGE, MR JAN DAMEN, ONE OF THE FIRST RECIPIENTS OF A CIRCULATORY DEATH HUMAN HEART, WITH HIS WIFE SILVANA.





## WORLD FIRST

# St Vincent's announces to World transplant of *circulatory death heart*

OUR PROUD TRANSPLANT TEAM WITH MINISTER JILLIAN SKINNER AND CEO ANTHONY SCHEMBRI.



“  
The use of DCD hearts, where the heart is no longer beating, represents a paradigm shift in organ donation and will herald a major increase in the pool of available hearts for transplantation.  
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St Vincent's recently held a packed media conference with Health Minister Jillian Skinner to announce that the St Vincent's Hospital Heart Lung Transplant Unit carried out the world's first distant procurement of hearts donated after circulatory death (DCD). These hearts were subsequently resuscitated and then successfully transplanted into patients with end-stage heart failure.

Until now, transplant units have relied solely on donor hearts from brain-dead patients whose hearts are still beating. The use of DCD hearts, where the heart is no longer beating, represents a paradigm shift in organ donation and will herald a major increase in the pool of available hearts for transplantation.

The DCD transplants were carried out following pioneering basic and translational research undertaken by St Vincent's and the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, who have jointly developed a special preservation solution that together with the use of a novel

portable console to house, resuscitate and transport donor hearts, has made this milestone achievable.

The ex-vivo Organ Care System involves the transplant retrieval team connecting the donor heart to a sterile circuit where it is kept beating and warm thereby limiting the detrimental effects of cold ischaemia that occurs with the standard organ preservation mode of packing the heart on ice in an esky. Once housed inside the portable device, the heart is reanimated, preserved and able to be functionally assessed until it is ready to be placed inside the recipient.

In acknowledging the significance of this milestone Professor Peter MacDonald, Medical Director of the St Vincent's Heart Transplant Unit said, "In many respects this breakthrough represents a major inroad to reducing the shortage of donor organs. As we mark the 30th anniversary of the St Vincent's Heart Lung Transplant Unit and the 20th anniversary of the Victor Chang Institute this year, this is a timely breakthrough. In all our years, our biggest hindrance has been the limited availability of donor organs."

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY AT ST VINCENT'S

# Patient communication goes 3D

In collaboration with the 3D Visualisation lab at UNSW, A/Prof Steven Faux is working with ground-breaking technology that will radically change the way clinicians communicate complicated health issues with their patients.

By taking complex data from CT & MRI scans and transforming them using art, design and 3D visualisation techniques, it is now possible for patients to view their condition in a way that is more meaningful to the average person. By communicating a patient's condition visually, we are able to help them better understand their illness or injuries and enable them to feel more engaged with their bodies.

"A lot of people don't really understand how the brain works," Steven says. "Trying to communicate really complex ideas of networks and synapses in the brain is usually really difficult, so using

3D visualisation allows people to actually imagine how things might be going on in their brain, how things might be repairing themselves and how the brain responds to damage."

What's more, using gaming technology and computer graphics, data from patient scans are being translated into a 3D virtual reality experience. Using sophisticated headsets, both the clinician and the patient can not only see inside, but journey through the patient's actual condition together, taking communication with patients to a whole new dimension.

ST VINCENT'S ALCOHOL & DRUG SERVICE

## Milestone reached in drug and alcohol treatment at St Vincent's

Mr Jai Rowell, Minister for Mental Health, recently joined current and former St Vincent's Alcohol and Drug staff to celebrate 50 years since St Vincent's opened NSW's first Alcoholism Clinic.

With our frontline health workers often the ones left to deal with the impact alcohol use has on our community, St Vincent's has been instrumental in guiding the existing NSW Government in driving new legislation to dramatically reduce alcohol harms.

Similarly, St Vincent's has often found itself at the epicentre of the community's problems with illicit drug use over the decades.

Leading these innovations was Rankin Court – Australia's first coordinated methadone clinic established thirty years



A/PROF NADINE EZARD, DIRECTOR OF ALCOHOL & DRUG SERVICE, MINISTER JAI ROWELL & A/PROF ANTHONY SCHEMBRI, CEO SVHN

ago, the needle exchange program which started in 1986 in the midst of Sydney's HIV crisis, as well as supporting the safe injecting room soon afterwards.

These three initiatives alone have served to transform the health landscape in Australia and internationally, pioneering models for harm minimisation to the benefit of hundreds, perhaps thousands.

The Minister congratulated all involved, particularly the innovative leaders of the Alcohol & Drug Service over the years including Carole Pederson, Alex Wodak and Nadine Ezard.

ST VINCENT'S CURRAN FOUNDATION

## 2014 St Vincent's Curran Foundation Life Ball

Recently St Vincent's Curran Foundation hosted the glamorous 2014 Life Ball where a major fundraising campaign was launched to raise \$5.5million to build a new Bone Marrow Transplant Ward for St Vincent's Hospital.

The campaign is being run in the lead up to the 40th Anniversary of the first Bone Marrow Transplant in Australia, in October 2015.

Thanks to wonderful donations and pledges by a number of individuals and Foundations, corporate sponsorship, a recent Cancer Care bequest and the generosity of guests, our CEO

Anthony Schembri was able to announce on the night that \$1.2million had been secured to kick start the campaign.

See [www.supportstvincents.com.au](http://www.supportstvincents.com.au)



REBECCA BENISCHKE & GIULIETTA PONTIVIVO

## The 2 of Us



REBECCA BENISCHKE, PRODUCT EVALUATOR FOR SVHA  
& GIULIETTA PONTIVIVO, MANAGER FOR INFECTION CONTROL

Giulietta Pontivivo, Manager for Infection Control and Rebecca Benischke, Product Evaluator for SVHA NSW, often finish each other's sentences. It's a pretty good indication of a solid working relationship, but what does infection control have to do with product evaluation? Apparently, quite a lot.

"The two of us? We work together pretty much all the time", explains Rebecca. "Every time we bring in a new clinical product it inevitably involves infection control".

Together, Giulietta and Rebecca review all of the products that come in to our Hospital to ensure they are suitable for purpose, compliant with national quality standards, safe for our staff, cost effective and have minimal environmental impact. That's quite a lot to consider but despite being from different departments, their individual objectives are one and the same.

"We bounce things off each other, I know that Rebecca is an ally. To make an impact it's really important to have someone that is on the same page as you", said Giulietta.

Recently the unlikely pair conducted extensive trials to introduce more efficient clinical curtains and as well

as hand hygiene products better suited to our staff and our needs. Large scale projects such as these can take up to six months from trial to implementation and the results speak volumes.

The new antimicrobial coated polypropylene disposable curtains will not only reduce hospital acquired infections but will lessen the load on other services. Where previously curtains were washed and changed every three months, the new disposable curtains will only require annual replacement. And, since implementation of the new hand hygiene products staff compliance is at an all-time high.

"We both have differing clinical experience and I know I can rely on Giulietta anytime for her extensive infection control knowledge, there isn't any hesitation", Rebecca said.



SVHA QUALITY AWARDS



PAULINE DEWEERDT, MARGARET BRAMWELL AND DR BRETT GARDINER ACCEPTING THE CHAIRMAN'S AWARD ON BEHALF OF THE ABORIGINAL HEALTH COMMITTEE.

## St Vincent's Sydney excels at SVHA Quality Awards

Congratulations to all finalists and recipients of the 2014 St Vincent's Health Australia Quality Awards. The annual awards recognise leadership in quality, excellence and innovation in health care across all 41 facilities across the St Vincent's Health portfolio nationally.

"Our awards theme this year – Raising the Bar – is very fitting given that SVHA has so many remarkable people across our health service. Our talented teams really do raise the bar every day in the care that they provide, in their dedication and commitment and in their ideas and innovation. Their work has a very real impact on people's lives" said SVHA Group CEO, Toby Hall.

In the category of Mission & Social Justice, Advocating for the poor and vulnerable in our community, St Vincent's Aboriginal Identification in Hospital Quality Improvement Project (AIHQIP) took the prize.

St Vincent's Sydney shared the glory with St Vincent's Melbourne in the Exceptional Care, Effective Clinical Governance category for our submission 'Pain assessment and management in elderly patients – implementing evidence based practice in the acute care setting'.

And the coveted Chairman's Award – the highest award acknowledging exceptional service, was awarded to the very proud AIHQIP team for their achievements in addressing the health inequalities our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities face.

Congratulations to all involved.

ST JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL



## You've got to hand it to St Joseph's!

St Joseph's Hospital officially has the highest rate of hand hygiene compliance across the St Vincent's Health Australia Group nationally, rated at 85.5%.

With a team of dedicated hand hygiene auditors across multiple disciplines of the Hospital implementing strategic activities to promote and educate all St Joseph's staff, this result is a wonderful testament to the effort made to ensure best in class quality control and reduce the rate of hospital acquired infection for our patients.

To acknowledge the efforts of the auditors and all staff who have contributed toward this amazing result, St Joseph's Hospital received a one-off grant of \$10,000 from Group CEO Toby Hall in recognition of their outstanding performance in hand hygiene. Nice work Team St Joseph's!

## RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

## St Vincent's stroke research among the best of the best

St Vincent's is very proud to have been nominated for a NSW Health Award, for our joint project with NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation – 'The Quality in Acute Stroke Care Implementation Project' (QASCIP).

Nominated under the Translational Research category, the landmark project achieves better service delivery by providing multi-disciplinary clinician education, barrier assessments and clinical support.



A/PROF ANTHONY SCHEMBRI, PROF SANDY MIDDLETON AND CHAIR OF THE SVHA, NSW REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL, SANDRA MCPHEE AM.

The QASCIP introduced three clinical protocols to manage fever, hyperglycaemia and swallowing after strokes across NSW. It was the result of a collaboration with clinicians, the NSW Agency Foundation, and all local health districts from April 2013 to June 2014.

The findings of this collaboration demonstrated how spread of proven interventions can be achieved on a large scale and within a short time to the betterment of stroke patients across NSW. Congratulations to Professor Sandy Middleton and team. The NSW Health Awards are extraordinarily competitive and to be nominated as a finalist is a wonderful achievement.

### JEANETTE, HEALTH EDUCATION OFFICER & PRACTISING YOGA TEACHER

## What I know about... Jeanette Cudmore

Jeanette is a Health Education Officer within the Primary Health Team in the Inner City Health Program. She has a background in community development and is passionate about physical activity in the disadvantaged population.

I have been practising yoga for more than 10 years – and decided to train to be a teacher about 5 years ago. The more I practice the more benefits I discover!

Yoga is an ancient practice that began in India – it is believed to be thousands of years old. Yoga means "yoke" or "bind" – so the aim is work with the body, mind and breath in a mindful way.

The part of yoga most well known in the West is the practice of postures "asanas". Asana just means "comfortable seat".

There are actually 8 limbs of yoga – which include breath and meditation practices as well as philosophy.

We often see yoga portrayed as people standing on their heads or looking like contortionists, but really

yoga is about learning to move, stretch and understand your body so your practice might be very gentle and can even be done sitting in a chair. I find it really helps with stress and the ups and downs of day to day life. Being on the mat is instantly calming.

Something I have become more interested in is that there is some really exciting research showing clear benefits for people who have more serious mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder – and there is developing interest in using yoga in conjunction with other counselling or pharmaceutical therapies. I hope the use of yoga with all ages and different populations continues to grow.

I find it an endlessly fascinating practice!



“  
*I find (yoga) really helps with stress and the ups and downs of day-to-day life.*  
”



## FEATURE INTERVIEW

## KNOW YOUR PRODUCT

## Interview with Kathryn Tonini

Kathryn is a Clinical Nurse Consultant on Xavier 10 North and is dedicated to running Cardiac Rehabilitation educational sessions for our female patients recovering from cardiac episodes



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

I believe with ongoing support we can change the poor attendance rate of women amongst our cardiac rehab groups – some simple lifestyle changes could mean the difference between life and death. Research shows that women are more likely to die from a second heart attack than men, and yet attendance at our Women's Rehabilitation Clinic continues to be poor.

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

Getting the message through to our patients. Women are 3x more likely to die from heart disease compared to breast cancer. In fact, the National Heart Foundation identify that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in women, and yet less than half of our female patients attend cardiac rehabilitation, so they're less likely to make lifestyle changes and manage stress, increasing their risk of another cardiac episode. Women often present with symptoms that differ from the "typical" experience of cardiovascular disease frequently described in the past, so it is vital that they understand when to seek advice.

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

It's very rewarding seeing patients develop! While in hospital we see them at their most vulnerable and they are often overwhelmed with their diagnosis, leading to a loss of confidence in returning to "normal" life. We get to watch and nurture a growing confidence each week they attend cardiac rehab and provide an environment where patients from different backgrounds support each other with a similar experience.

*What motivates you on a daily basis?*

Being instrumental in helping people make lifestyle changes that could potentially save their life. At St Vincent's, we've now adopted a blanket referral system across the public and private hospitals, where all patients are referred to their closest cardiac rehab program, reducing the possibility of women being missed.

Additionally, because women experience "a-typical" symptoms and have differing post-operative concerns and expectations when compared to men, we offer women's discussion groups to enable a comfortable sharing environment to identify and address issues relevant to each individual.

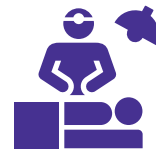
## Facts & Figures

For the Financial year 2013



# 41,954

**Presentations to ED**



# 39,900

**Patient admissions**



# 527,132

**Occasions of outpatient service**



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