

CAPTURING THE HEART OF ST VINCENT'S

# PULSE



ST VINCENT'S  
HOSPITAL  
MELBOURNE

May 2021

## BRIGHTER FUTURE 3

World-first epilepsy trial gives life-changing hope for drug-resistant focal seizures

## FEELS LIKE HOME 12

Our brand-new residential aged care facility opens its doors to residents



# Unite & Fight

Leading the charge against COVID-19 at one of Victoria's biggest community vaccination hubs



# Message from the CEO

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne has been at the frontline of Victoria's COVID-19 response and our staff are dedicated to keeping our community safe in the face of the ongoing pandemic.

Our health service is playing a crucial role in supporting the Commonwealth's vaccination program in Victoria, which involves leading one of the State's first high-volume vaccination centres, located at the Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton.

Over 100 years ago, the Spanish influenza pandemic hit Victoria in late January 1919, and the Royal Exhibition Building was transformed into a hospital to treat patients from all over the city.

Fast forward 100 years, and this magnificent building is again playing a key role in a pandemic response. Standing up this centre in record time has taken a momentous effort by a wide range of collaborators and I would like to thank the staff who have been pivotal to getting the program up and running.

I would also like to thank Museums Victoria and the Department of Health for their valuable contribution to this program that is so important for all Victorians.

A little bit longer in the making, but just as exciting for our health service, is the opening of our new residential aged care facility in Kew. Berengarra opened its doors in March, providing an innovative approach to public

residential aged care that values and preserves a person's dignity, independence and identity.

The facility is a comfortable, well-considered and safe home-like environment that allows residents to continue living life the way they would like to live it.

At St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, we believe the transition into a residential aged facility is an important and significant step for many people and should be a positive experience. Fortunately, the Victorian Government feel the same way, and I would like to thank them for the funds to build this \$55 million facility.

You will have noticed something a little different when you started reading this latest issue. We have a new name! Previously known as *The Font*, the magazine of St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne will now be known as *Pulse*, featuring an exciting new look and stories that truly capture the heart of our Hospital and what makes it tick.

I am immensely proud of our health service and I look forward to sharing more stories of what we achieve together throughout the year.

**Angela Nolan**

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St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work. We respect their spiritual connections to country and community and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.



*“I feel like I have been given a second chance... We’re now even talking about starting a family.”*

**Natalie Booth**

Professor Mark Cook and Natalie Booth (left)

# Living the dream

## Epilepsy trial to treat drug-resistant focal seizures enters next phase

When Natalie Booth and her husband, Alex, proudly put up a sold sticker earlier this year on a block of land they’d just bought, they couldn’t stop smiling.

The young couple, who are now building a house together, are happy to finally be realising a dream they thought Natalie’s chronic health condition might never give her a chance to enjoy.

Natalie, 31, was diagnosed with severe epilepsy when she was in primary school. Over the years she became increasingly disheartened as doctors tried every medication available to treat her condition without success.

Her outlook on life is now a lot more positive after participating in Phase 1 of an epilepsy trial led by St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne’s Head of Neurology, Professor Mark Cook.

The world-first epilepsy project developed through ACMD (a biomedical engineering research centre based at SVHM) in conjunction with Cerebral Therapeutics, aims to help people like Natalie who suffer with drug-resistant focal seizures.

It involves a targeted delivery of anti-seizure medication straight to the brain via a long-term abdominal pump implant that eliminates previous issues experienced with drug absorption and uptake barriers.

“I feel like I have been given a second chance,” says Natalie, who has been seizure-free for the past two years. “We’re now even talking about starting a family – something I never considered because of my epilepsy.”

Phase 2B of the trial is currently underway and builds on the promising results of earlier testing. Prof Cook describes it as a very exciting stage that allows them to extend the treatment to much larger groups.

“The first phase is an exploration stage. Now we get to take this treatment out to more people with the view of ultimately it becoming a widely accepted routine treatment for refractory epilepsy worldwide,” Prof Cook says.

Recruitment for this final testing phase is being carried out across national sites based in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney.



# JAB FORCE

St Vincent's joins the fight to make Victoria COVID-safe with the rollout of mass community vaccination hubs

St Vincent's has been on the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 since early 2020. More than a year later, new battles are being won as healthcare workers and the community are finally being vaccinated against the disease.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne is leading two vaccination programs to bolster the target of having as many people vaccinated against COVID-19 by the end of 2021.

Located at the hospital's Fitzroy campus, the COVID-19 vaccination clinic began vaccinating staff in February as part of the Australian Government's phased roll-out strategy. The operation has pulled in hundreds of staff from across the organisation who helped transform a deserted ward into a functional and comfortable environment.

Unknown to anyone at the time, these strategies and processes would soon come in handy when, in March, St Vincent's was enlisted to run one of Victoria's high-

volume vaccination sites. In a challenging twist, they had just under two weeks to set up the operation before critical worker groups of phase 1a would be ready to roll up their sleeves.

*"It's a privilege to share the joy and hope people are experiencing after what has been such a difficult year."*

Just over the road in Carlton Gardens, the Royal Exhibition Building had wavered through a pandemic once before. In 1919, the building was temporarily repurposed as a hospital for patients during the Spanish Flu, treating around 4000 over the course of six months.



Pharmacist Helen Dixon (centre) and Operations Manager Sue White (right)

“The building is a remarkable space,” says Helen Dixon, who runs the pharmacy in the Royal Exhibition Building. “Even at our busiest to date the space feels calm.”

Inside, vaccination cubicles are set up beneath detailed painted murals; pharmacists draw up vaccine doses into syringes; temperature checkers scan for lucky numbers; and hopeful faces fill orderly queues.

With over 70,000 vaccines administered so far, it’s an operation that would not have been possible without the tireless work of St Vincent’s dedicated team. In fact, over 400 staff – some newly graduated, others newly out of retirement – have been recruited for the program.

Of course, an operation of such scale doesn’t come without its challenges, whether that be managing vaccine expiry dates and program changes or the millions still yet to be vaccinated. However, it’s the dedication to a mission even greater than the building itself that creates a strong sense of purpose for all involved.

“It’s a privilege to share the joy and hope people are experiencing after what has been such a difficult year,” says Susan White, the clinic Operations Manager.

As the program continues to push on and capacity increases over the coming months, St Vincent’s is taking a giant leap towards ensuring the safety of all Victorians. This sense of optimism can be felt even in the most unexpected of places, according to Helen.

“One morning I was setting up for the day and I noticed the sun shining through the Royal Exhibition Building windows, hitting the gilt words at the top of the Dome: *carpe diem*. It’s hard not to be inspired by a glowing, golden ‘seize the day’ lighting up your workplace!” she says.

## Our heartfelt thanks

The COVID-19 vaccination program has been brought to life in record time thanks to the St Vincent’s Hospital COVID-19 working group, alongside many others.

## A visit from the Chief Health Officer

The star of last year’s Victorian COVID response, Chief Health Officer, Professor Brett Sutton, rolled up his sleeve to receive the COVID vaccine at our high-volume COVID-19 Vaccination Centre at the Royal Exhibition Building.

Professor Sutton (pictured below) was impressed with what he saw at the high-volume community vaccination hub, and told media in attendance that St Vincent’s Hospital staff members are ready to ramp it up significantly.

“I’m getting AstraZeneca because I know it provides terrific protection for me, and also reduces the risk of transmission to others,” Prof Sutton said. “It will provide substantial protection to me, and to the people around me.”



# Research breakthrough

## A novel treatment for a rare inherited blood disorder

Sherryn Lindsay has been sick since she was six weeks old. Initially diagnosed with neutropenia (low counts of the white blood cells that kill bacteria) she has struggled with a wide range of other health problems and numerous life-threatening bacterial infections.

Recently, Sherryn learned she has WHIM syndrome, a rare congenital immune deficiency that causes warts, hypogammaglobulinemia, infections and myelokathexis, by trapping of neutrophils in bone marrow so they cannot flow into the blood. This has led to her

having warts, hearing loss, permanent lung damage and a chronic cough.

Previously, there was no effective treatment, but Dr Frank Firkin, a Haematologist at St Vincent's, is leading the charge to cure this extremely rare condition.

Sherryn is now part of a world-first trial carried out at two sites across the world, led in Australia by Dr Firkin, using an anti-AIDS drug.

Dr Firkin became interested in the condition when one of his patients, Leanne, a pharmacist at St Vincent's, suffered from eight episodes of pneumonia in eight months. A sputum test identified an opportunistic bacterium as the cause.

"Leanne had suffered from numerous serious infections throughout her life", Dr Firkin says.

He performed a bone marrow test, and it showed typical features of WHIM syndrome.

"It's like you have a car but can't drive anywhere because it is stuck in the garage," he explains.

Later, a special mutation was found that caused neutrophils to be trapped in bone marrow. Leanne was the first in Australia to have the genetic test to confirm WHIM syndrome, which was conducted at St Vincent's.

"There are around 150 cases of WHIM syndrome worldwide, and there is a 50 per cent chance WHIM patients will pass the disorder onto their children, so it is critical we find a cure," Dr Firkin says.

When he heard about Mavorixafor, a drug used in the treatment of AIDS that could work to treat this rare condition, Dr Firkin was keen to bring the trial to St Vincent's for his patients.

"This treatment was very promising, as it interferes with binding of the AIDS virus to cells, but also interferes with the sustained binding that causes neutrophils to stick in the bone marrow in WHIM patients," he says.

The new treatment involves a daily dose of oral medication that releases white blood cells into the blood to fight infection. Now, after two years, they have had more than a 75 per cent reduction in infections, and none have been as severe as in the past. There has also been a reduction in the number of warts in patients taking this drug.

"The patients are so grateful; it has absolutely changed their lives," Dr Firkin says.

The results of the trial have just been published in the medical journal, *Blood*. Dr Firkin says now that the drug has been deemed medically safe, it is hoped the Food and Drug Administration in the US will grant approval for sale.



Sherryn Lindsay (top) Dr Frank Firkin (above)

*“The number one thing I tell young people, particularly young women from my region in the Loddon Mallee, is that if you can’t get in the front door, climb through a window.”*

# 30

## under 30



### Dr Skye Kinder named in Forbes Magazine’s 30 under 30

Dr Skye Kinder, Psychiatry Registrar at St Vincent’s, has broken many barriers to be named in this year’s Forbes Magazine’s 30 Under 30 for social impact across the Asia Pacific region.

No stranger to prestigious awards and accolades, Dr Kinder (pictured above) has previously been named 2019’s Victorian Young Australian of the Year, AFR’s 100 Women of Influence in 2020, and Victoria’s Junior Doctor of the Year in 2017, for her work advocating for the health of people in rural and regional communities.

Dr Kinder is used to people telling her she would never achieve her aspirations, owing to the fact she grew up in a lower socio-demographic. Now, Dr Kinder is a positive role model for Australian youth and hopes to give other young people the confidence to know they can do it, too.

“It’s the old adage of you can’t be what you can’t see,” said Dr Kinder. “The number one thing I tell young people, particularly young women from my region in the Loddon Mallee, is that if you can’t get in the front door, climb through a window. For the most part, people will be too busy underestimating you to ever see you coming.”

Spurred on by her upbringing in Bendigo and watching her father travel to Melbourne to receive specialist healthcare, Dr Kinder has spent much of her career providing a voice for issues that often don’t get heard from the perspective of people who live in regional and rural areas.

“As a young person, I’d often reflect on how deeply unfair it was that even in a large regional centre like Bendigo, my father wasn’t able to receive the sorts of care that he should have had access to. It was a huge driver for me to go into medicine.

“Later, as a graduating doctor, I realised how enormous this problem is. There are many families regionally, rurally, marginalised or disadvantaged for other reasons that face similar barriers.” Dr Kinder says it’s these values that drew her to working at St Vincent’s.

“St Vincent’s mission to serve underrepresented, marginalised, and disadvantaged patients absolutely aligns with my values.

“My St Vincent’s journey has only been enhanced by the culture of the hospital, and the people who have supported me along the way.”



Above: We were feeling the love on Valentine's Day, when flowers originally headed to the Australian Open were re-directed to our Emergency Department for a special Valentine's Day surprise. Thank you to Bud Flowers and Piper-Heidsieck for thinking of our amazing frontline staff.

# OUT & ABOUT

Celebrating life across our different sites



Left: Since the start of the pandemic, our staff has shown courage, teamwork and determination to keep our community safe. Staff on Level 8 were on the frontline, caring for COVID-positive patients.

Right (top): April 23 was St George's Day, otherwise known as the Feast of St George. Staff at St George's Health Service in Kew had their own barbecue feast with burgers, sausages and cupcakes to celebrate.

Right (bottom): Dr Liam Safe and Dr Minting Tan are just two of the 61 interns we welcomed to the St Vincent's family in January.





Right (top): Members of the Sisters of Charity visited our Staff Vaccination Clinic to receive their protection against COVID-19. Pictured in front row, from left: Sister Maryanne, Sister Judith, Sister Josephine and Sister Margaret.



Right (second from top): St Vincent's staff members Christina Hotka (bottom right) and Bridget Murray (bottom left) made history when they joined our Sydney colleagues under the rainbow banner at the 2021 Mardi Gras.



Right (third from top): On International Women's Day, we celebrate the contributions and achievements of women, raise awareness against bias, and take action for equality. Every day, our dedicated female nurses, doctors, researchers, support staff, volunteers and leaders go above and beyond for our people, patients, residents, and the community.



Above: Staff and residents at Cambridge House, in Collingwood, celebrated the 109th birthday of Mrs Ye with cake and traditional Chinese dance. What an amazing achievement.

# Leading the way

## New support for Indigenous Australian graduate nurses

Providing essential clinical, cultural and social support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses is the focus of a new role at St Vincent's that builds on the hospital's ongoing commitment to bridging the gap.

In particular, the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clinical Support Nurse will assist Indigenous Australian graduate nurses in their professional development, including cultural mentorship and working alongside them in clinical settings.

Ruby Tribe, who trained as a graduate nurse at St Vincent's in 2018 and later worked with the hospital's Aboriginal Cadetship program and Aboriginal Health Unit, was appointed to the new support role in April.

"I feel very privileged at St Vincent's. The hospital has really fuelled my professional development, which is something I'd like to see happening more for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses," Ruby says.

As part of SVHM's Education and Learning Unit, the role also works closely with nurse unit managers to create a more work-friendly place for Aboriginal staff, as well as help these staff members identify and navigate future job opportunities around the hospital to strengthen retention rates.

"It's often easy to give Aboriginal nursing staff Aboriginal patients to care for because they have a strong understanding of the cultural needs, but it's important to recognise these staff have scope beyond that and may

be seeking to broaden their strengths in other areas," Ruby explains. Recruitment will be another priority.

"I'll be going out to universities to let them know what St Vincent's can offer so we can continue to grow our numbers and attract a strong and broader group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander nurses," Ruby says.

*"The hospital has really fuelled my professional development... something I'd like to see happening more for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses."*

Jade Murphy, Acting General Manager of Education and Learning at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, says graduate nurse programs are very competitive and places are limited across the state.

"Through this role, Ruby will help the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduate nurses understand what the interview process looks like, prepare and support them for working with us and identify their future goals, so that ultimately we hope to see these staff moving through to senior positions around the organisation," Jade says.



Ruby Tribe and Indigenous Australian graduate nurse Benjamin Berry (left)



# Up close and personal

Virtual reality brings patients closer to home during COVID-19

The Immersive Presence Project, an innovative virtual reality (VR) experience, is helping bring comfort to St Vincent's patients who were unable to see their loved ones in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This project marks the first time that virtual reality has been used to create a completely bespoke personalised experience for patients to reconnect them to everything they miss about their home and family when in hospital.

Two St Vincent's colleagues, Psychosocial Oncologist Dr Justin Dwyer and Psychologist Dr Margaret Ross are leading the project, in partnership with filmmaker Lynette Wallworth, an Emmy and Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts award-winning VR Director. Melbourne-based VR company Phoria has provided support with technical delivery.

*“Having a tailored VR experience really puts the patient right back where they'd rather be.”*

Dr Justin Dwyer and Dr Margaret Ross (above)

Dr Dwyer says the effects of COVID-19 have been felt deeply across the Victorian health sector, where lockdown and visitor restrictions have amplified the intense vulnerability that patients experience.

“It's often the little things that patients miss when they are in hospital,” Dr Dwyer says. “Their favourite spot to sit in the garden, the dog running to them when they open the front door, the chaos of dinner time with kids running around.”

Even the best hospital stay will be full of unfamiliar and stressful events, he adds, and almost universally patients long for anything that brings them the comforts of home.

“Having a tailored VR experience really puts the patient right back where they'd rather be. Patients are deeply moved at finding a sense of home again, even if it's just for a few minutes,” Dr Dwyer says.

With the patient's consent, the team film the patient having their VR experience so it can be watched later by family, who get to see the massive impact the footage can have.

Patients were selected based on their medical condition, mental health and cognitive capabilities and if successful, the team hopes to offer their learnings to other hospitals both in Australia and worldwide to aid with other isolated patients.



## New residents move in

"It's a whole new ball-game, but I couldn't wish for better staff, they have been excellent, and very caring. A fellow resident is actually an old friend of mine; we have known each other since we were 10 or 11. We grew up together and did a lot of travelling together. Unfortunately, she has lost her memory, but she remembers our times together so we talk about that."

Roma Sheldon



"I worked at St Georges Health Services next door for almost 50 years. It's the only place I worked at after leaving school. I just loved it. I did many roles at the hospital, from typing, to making sure patients were OK and had their meals. After retiring, I didn't want to leave entirely, so I stayed on as a volunteer for a number of years."

Mary Gountras

St Vincent's opens new residential aged care facility in Kew

# Home with heart

Berengarra, St Vincent's new state-of-the-art aged care facility in Kew, opened its doors to its first residents in March. The \$55 million facility will eventually be home to 90 people.

Named after the local Aboriginal word for 'the land around Kew', Berengarra will provide best-practice care and integrated health and wellbeing services in a home-like environment. The dementia-friendly facility includes 90 private rooms with ensuites split over three levels.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne CEO Angela Nolan says this new home will allow residents to maintain their dignity and independence.

"What's different about Berengarra is its person-centred model of care," says Angela. "At St Vincent's, we believe the transition into a residential aged facility is an important and significant step for many people and should be a positive experience."

Berengarra Director of Nursing Marg Curtis says that residents who have recently transitioned to living in this new long-term accommodation have already benefited from this model.

"Person-centred care means putting people and their families at the centre of decision-making – listening to them, and empowering them with choice," Marg says.

"People who make Berengarra their home bring with

them the richness of their life story. Getting to know them – both who they are now and the journey that brought them here, not only enriches our ability to provide the care they need, but to do so in the way they prefer."

The facility features comfortable and home-inspired environments, with garden outlooks, natural light and common areas for socialising and other leisure activities.

Berengarra is part of the Victorian Government's plans to modernise public sector residential aged care in metropolitan Melbourne.

"We're thrilled to have partnered with the Victorian Government on this innovative facility that will support Victorians for many generations to come," Angela says.



# Farewell to Aikenhead

Remembering an important part of our nursing history

Over the past 65 years the St Vincent's Aikenhead building on the corner of Nicholson Street and Victoria Parade has been home to thousands of Victorian nurses, playing a pivotal role in the history of St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.

For 30 years, the building's primary purpose was nurses' accommodation. Named after Mother Mary Aikenhead, founder of the Religious Sisters of Charity, the Aikenhead Wing spanned 10 levels, with each floor containing 38 bedrooms, along with training facilities, a chapel, a dining room and shared bathrooms.

The Aikenhead Building will shortly be coming down, brick by brick, to make way for the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD), Australia's first collaborative hospital-based biomedical engineering research centre. When ACMD is completed in 2024 it will replicate the prominence of its namesake, overlooking Carlton Gardens.

Retired St Vincent's nurse and President of the St Vincent's Graduate Nurse Association Clare Dyer, who lived in the Aikenhead Building in the early 1970s, says the building is full of wonderful memories for so many people.

"The Aikenhead Building holds a very special spot in the hearts of our community, especially the thousands of nurses who once called it home," Clare says. "For more than three decades it provided a safe and nurturing environment for student nurses to thrive as they embraced their new career path at St Vincent's."

The bedrooms were humble, yet homely. Each room was fitted out with a divan-style bed and a dressing table, a built-in wardrobe, an arm chair and a stool, which cleverly doubled as a laundry box. Curtains and bedspreads in various prints added an extra layer of softness and a comforting touch.

In the 1990s undergraduate nurse education shifted to the tertiary sector, and the building took on another role – repurposed largely for administrative and storage.

Among the departments that used this section of the hospital were Archives and Heritage, Health Information Services, Human Resources, IT, Nurse Education, Nutrition, Payroll Research Governance and the hospital's switchboard. It has also housed artist-in-residence studios, a cafe, a childcare centre, a gym, a lecture theatre and meeting rooms.



The Aikenhead Building on Victoria Parade in the 1960s (top)

SVHM nurses in 1958 receiving tuition on the model ward in the Mater Dei Training School, part of Aikenhead (above)

## New chapter

ACMD is Australia's first collaborative biomedical engineering facility located within a tertiary hospital – a medical epicentre of groundbreaking research, technology and solutions designed to reduce the burden of chronic disease for our patients. It will bring together medicine, engineering, science and industry to yield powerful economic, patient and healthcare outcomes.

ACMD will eventually be located in a new purpose-built centre to be built on the former site of the Aikenhead Building.

Artist's impression of proposed ACMD building



# Flexible work at St Vincent's

## Making a versatile workplace the new norm

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our staff engaged in flexible working arrangements such as working from home and changes to patterns of work.

Flexible working means different things for different



people – it might mean job sharing, working part-time, returning from parental or carer's leave, different start and finish times or simply working from home.

Flexible work arrangements produce significant benefits for both staff and the organisation.

Staff have found that they can balance work and home life better in flexible working – whether that means being home with the family and pets more, or supporting their own wellbeing.

For many, including John Groves (pictured left), Senior Continuous Improvement Coach, the transition was a smooth one.

"I had a discussion with my manager early on explaining these hours would make my life easier," John says. "On Fridays my wife works a few hours in the morning and I take care of our son. Then, when she comes home I just begin my work day a bit later.

"Also, by working from home and not commuting I have gained two hours of my day back."

## From asylum seeker to Aussie doctor

When Marc Dusengimana moved to Australia eight years ago he didn't know how long he would be staying, but he's very grateful for where he ended up.

Marc (pictured right) worked as a doctor in Rwanda, and came to Australia to further his studies. But in 2015 his plan to return home suddenly changed when his personal safety in Rwanda was put at risk.

Marc and his family sought asylum in Australia. Finding a job was difficult, but needing to find a way to provide for his family, Marc and his wife decided to do a course to work in aged care.

On completing the course, Marc joined the St Vincent's community as a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) at St Vincent's Care Services Eltham. While working with the elderly at this campus, Marc continued to pursue his medical qualifications in the hope he could someday practise in Melbourne as a doctor, just as he had in Rwanda.

After graduating, he applied for what he says felt like



hundreds of roles, but with no luck. Through his own research and networking he learnt about St Vincent's unique Mission. The values upheld through the Hospital Mission really resonated with him and he started to recognise St Vincent's as a place where he would be valued.

"I knew my disadvantages; I was honest about that. But they viewed my application and were so generous," Marc recalls. Marc spoke with Dr Erwin Loh, Chief Medical Officer and Group General Manager Clinical Governance at SVHA, who empathised with his situation and supported him in his pursuit to work as a doctor again.

Marc was later offered a role as a junior doctor at St Vincent's Fitzroy campus and started his new role in November 2020.

"It's a new start for me here in Australia; it is a step forward in my life and learning experience, but importantly, it is absolutely such a great feeling to get back to my medical career."



# Wrapped in Kindness

Students rally together in bid to help Melbourne's needy

In a strong show of generosity, Caulfield Grammar students volunteered their time on the Easter school holidays to lend a helping hand at this year's Wrapped in Kindness campaign.

Now in its second year, the collaborative project inspired by St Vincent's Foundation offers warmth and comfort to vulnerable groups within the community, especially during the colder months and when demand for help is growing.

"Wrapped in Kindness is about bringing the community together to provide a heartfelt gift to those who need it most," says Lyn Amy, CEO of St Vincent's Foundation.

The campaign was generously supported by local and national businesses who donated goods, including underwear, long pants, socks, mittens and toiletries.

*"The Care Packs... give our clients dignity and raise their self-esteem."*

The students helped fill over 2000 care packages with essential winter items, along with positive handwritten messages that were added to each bag to lift the spirits of recipients.

The care packages are being distributed by St Vincent's staff to patients experiencing chronic disadvantage. Items donated also will help to support local charity groups including Igniting Change, Melbourne City Mission, St Vincent de Paul, Rotary and Children's

Ground – a not-for-profit organisation that offers support to Indigenous families in Victoria and Alice Springs.

"The Care Packs are being put to good use in the St Vincent's Care Centre. They give our clients dignity and raise their self-esteem, as well as provide them with useful items which they are in desperate need of," says Judy Clover, Manager of Volunteer Services at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.

## Thank you!

We'd like to thank our generous Wrapped in Kindness Supporting Partners.

### Event Partner

Caulfield Grammar School

### Sponsors

Australian United Retailers, Williamson's Foodworks, Reddrop Group, Hyatt, GIVIT, Colgate-Palmolive, Monde Nissin, Posh Josh, Pinchapoo, Dettol, ACCOR, Peter Sheppard, Pinnacle, Linfox

### Charity Partners

Rotary District 9800, St Vincent de Paul, Melbourne City Mission, St Mary's House of Welcome, Igniting Change, Children's Ground (Alice Springs), Concern Australia.

Photos supplied by Hayden Short



# Love Your St Vincent's

Many people wish to express their gratitude for the exceptional care they've received. If you or your loved one have been treated at St Vincent's Hospital, you'll know how committed we are to providing the best clinical treatment and most compassionate care for our patients.

**You can call us on (03) 9231 3365 or email us at [foundation@svha.org.au](mailto:foundation@svha.org.au)**

**There are many ways to say thank you**

**Share your story  
Make a gift  
Volunteering**

If you would like to find out more please contact the St Vincent's Foundation team. We would love to talk to you.



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