

The Font

*Celebrating
125 years*



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Celebrating
a lifetime of
dedication

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Continuing a
family tradition

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Australia's first
artificial pancreas
a 'game changer'



Message from the CEO

Welcome to the first edition of the Font for 2019. As we begin a new year, we also welcome hundreds of new medical interns, graduate nurses and allied health graduates who are starting their careers at St Vincent's.

We have an enviable reputation for nurturing the talents and skills of our clinical staff, a reputation that attracts the best and brightest graduates to St Vincent's. We are delighted to welcome them to the St Vincent's community.

We know that in their time with us we they will come to display the excellent and compassionate care that sets us apart. The knowledge, memories and experience will be passed down to these new staff members, who will carry forward what it means to approach every day in the St Vincent's way, continually pursuing excellence, while remaining focused on our mission to the poor and vulnerable.

This rich depth of experience is one of the things that makes St Vincent's unique. It makes St Vincent's more than a workplace, it makes us a true community

Our people work together to improve how we care for our patients, help each other out in times of great need, and form lasting friendships. We have a remarkable record of long serving staff throughout our history. Generations of families — siblings, cousins, husbands and wives — have dedicated their working lives to St Vincent's, living our values in everything they do. In February, we acknowledged over 176 staff who collectively have served over 2,750 years.

In what is an amazing achievement, we recognised John Helstroom, who has dedicated his career of 50 years to St Vincent's. Congratulations John, and thank you for dedicating your working life to our health service. We also recognised four staff members who have served St Vincent's for 40 years – thank you to Wayne Gregg, Marg Myers, Dr Leslie Roberts and Anne Smyth for your commitment and loyalty.

St Vincent's has a remarkable heritage and extraordinary potential. This rich depth of experience is one of the things that makes St Vincent's unique. It makes St Vincent's more than a workplace, it makes us a true community.

I am excited about the year ahead and look forward to sharing more stories of what we achieve together in the Font. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of The Font.

Angela Nolan
Chief Executive Officer
St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

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St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne is proud to be part of the St Vincent's Health Australia group, which is the second largest health and aged care provider in the country. SVHA's mission is to bring God's love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus. We are guided by the values of compassion, justice, integrity, and excellence.

Celebrating a lifetime of dedication

In 1969, John Helstroom was fresh out of high school when he applied for a job at St Vincent's.

After a brief interview, he was employed on the spot and commenced work in the Biochemistry department as a trainee Medical Scientist. Two years later, a transfer to the Haematology Department sealed his fate and he has remained a highly valued member of the department ever since.

This year, John celebrates 50 years of dedicated service to our health service. St Vincent's has a tradition of formally recognising staff members who have served our hospital for 10 years or more.

This year's Service Recognition Ceremony was held at the Hotel Windsor where CEO Angela Nolan presented 300 staff members with a certificate thanking them for their service to St Vincent's.

'St Vincent's really does have a remarkable record of long serving staff throughout its history,' Angela said. 'Generations of families — siblings, cousins, husbands and wives — have dedicated their working lives to St Vincent's, living our values in everything they do.'

'This rich depth of experience is one of the things that makes St Vincent's unique. It makes St Vincent's more than a workplace, it makes us a true community.'



According to colleagues, John displayed a great aptitude and interest in all things mechanical and electronic very early into his career. He was soon fixing all kinds of departmental equipment as part of his daily work, which he still does.

John's skill level became legendary amongst his peers – not only did John fix things at work but colleagues began asking John to fix their appliances outside of work.

Colleagues struggle to quantify the dollar value of how much John has saved St Vincent's in repair fees over the years, but estimate it would easily be a six figure sum.

He developed an interest in Health and Safety issues and took on a role, firstly as Fire Warden, then later Health and Safety officer for all of Pathology. This role was performed with great insight and diligence and helped create a safer workplace for all his colleagues.

John is described by his colleagues as a kind and generous soul whose value to the department and hospital as a whole cannot be measured and cannot be replaced.

Congratulations to John, and to four staff members who were also acknowledged for dedicating their careers to St Vincent's, giving 40 years of service!

40 years



Wayne Gregg



Margaret Myers



Dr Leslie Roberts

Welcome our new interns



St Vincent's congratulates the 66 new medical interns who have commenced their medical careers at our hospital after completing years of gruelling study. We warmly welcome each and every one of you to the St Vincent's family and wish you a wonderful start to what will be a very fulfilling career.



Dr Sarah Lum

'After seven years of being a pharmacist I decided to do Medicine because I wanted to be more involved in patient care. My Dad was a patient here five years ago and how the doctors and nurses cared for him and other patients inspired me a lot. That was a clincher. My twin sister was an intern here in 2013 and to see her progress through St Vincent's and succeed in what she is now doing as an oncologist is wonderful. She provides quite an inspiration, so it's quite a privilege to follow in her footsteps.'



Dr Sophie Graham

'I actually first came to St Vincent's as a graduate nurse in 2013 and also completed the Emergency Practice Development program in 2014. I was then accepted into Medicine in 2015 and have now come back to St Vincent's as a doctor. I chose to return because I believe everyone at St Vincent's is so compassionate towards all the patients but also to the staff. That makes a very big difference. I'm looking forward to consolidate my practice and start the next chapter.'



Dr Kate Seaton

'I'm starting my medical career at St Vincent's, but I actually started working here as a physio seven years ago. I worked in this environment for a long time and met all the great doctors – and it made me decide that medicine was something I wanted to go back and pursue. I'm excited to work in different teams again and finally put four years of books into actual practice as a doctor.'

Dr Jonathan Quin continues family tradition



Above: 2019 St Vincent's intern Dr Jonathan Quin with his grandfather, Dr David Quin, who also trained and worked at St Vincent's.

After completing his studies at St Vincent's Medical School, Dr Jonathan Quin has returned in 2019 as an intern. The Quin family has a long association with St Vincent's, and a tragic past.

'I was born at St Vincent's, my grandfather Dr David Quin trained and worked here, and my great-grandfather trained here,' Dr Quin says.

'St Vincent's is a great hospital, with a fantastic ethos. I'm looking forward to the responsibility of caring for patients, which is a bit scary, but also very exciting.'

Dr Quin has been told stories of his great-grandfather Dr Bernard Quin, who is still remembered fondly on the island of Nauru. A street and several Nauruans are named after him, and a monument dedicated to five Australians bears his name.

Moving to Nauru with his wife and five young children to escape the Great Depression, Dr Bernard Quin became fond of his work and the Nauru people, establishing a health service on the island and training several local people as nurses.

When German Raider ships reached Nauru in 1940, it was no place for a family and the Quin family returned to Melbourne. The Australian Government however, asked Dr Quin to return as a medical officer to look after Australian troops and the Nauru people.

At the end of 1941 when Japan entered the war, Australia withdrew its troops. Dr Quin and four other Australians, having come to love the Nauruans, chose to stay.

Tragically, Japanese troops overran the island, imprisoning Dr Quin and his four Australian colleagues. Then, in March 1943, in retaliation for American bombing, the men were beheaded. Dr Quin was 49 years old.

After the medical profession skipped a generation in the Quin family, Dr Quin says his grandfather was very proud he had chosen to follow in his footsteps. 'He gave me his old medical case, a huge case with old stethoscopes and surgical implements,' he says.

'St Vincent's is a great hospital, with a fantastic ethos. I'm looking forward to the responsibility of caring for patients, which is a bit scary, but also very exciting.'

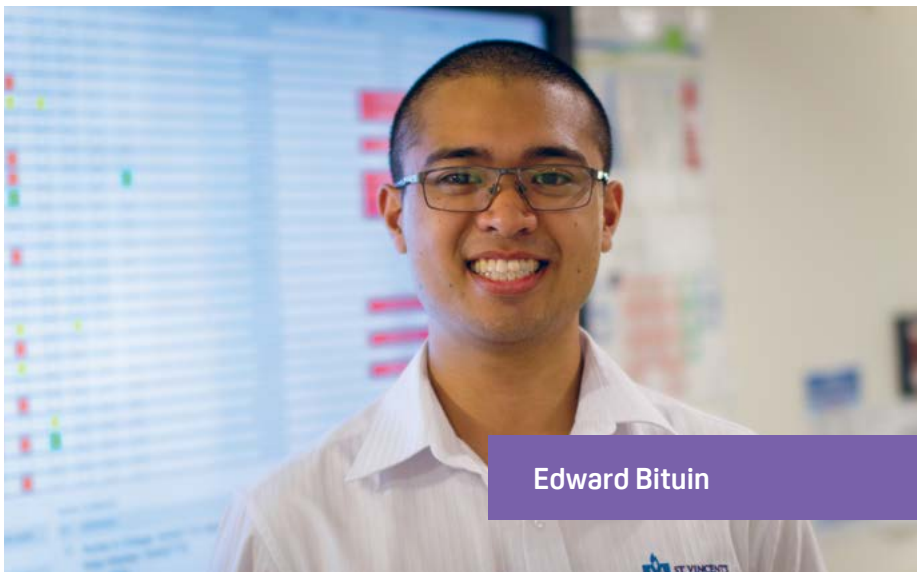
'Last year I primarily observed and did small tasks. Being able to diagnose my first patient will be a special moment.'

Welcome our 2019 graduate nurses



Jessica King

'My Graduate year has been very enjoyable so far. It's really rewarding to contribute in helping our patients to get home and get them better. I did my study at Monash and heard so much about the culture of St Vincent's as a supportive organisation. My friends who did their grad year here last year also said St Vincent's was the best place to be in terms of the educators and the support offered in the program. I'm looking forward to gaining my confidence, learning new skills, making new friends and getting my work life balance a bit better.'



Edward Bituin

'As a graduate nurse, there is a lot to learn every day. I chose St Vincent's because I was part of the ACU Clinical School and had the privilege of doing my placements here. The staff are very welcoming and supportive. They understand that you are fresh and just starting out as a nurse and they don't expect you to know everything. I am looking forward to gaining a lot of confidence and taking steps to hone my nursing skills in the next few months. My next rotation is in dialysis and am very much looking forward to the learnings and challenges that it offers.'



Megan Avar

'I moved down to Melbourne from regional Victoria to come to St Vincent's because I really like the hospital's core values and the fact that it cares for the disadvantaged. When I came to the information day last year, I was so excited to see how fun and interactive it was, that was when I decided to do my grad year here. I am on the Plastics, ENT and Vascular ward – so I get to take care of people who have had massive operations. There is so much to learn.'

Congratulations to our top graduate nurse for 2018



Above: Keely Kennedy and Chloe van Schie.

Graduate Nurse Chloe van Schie has been awarded the 2018 Ida O'Dwyer Prize for her exceptional commitment to nursing at St Vincent's.

Chloe was presented the award by President of the Graduate Nurses Association Angela Griss and last year's winner Hazen Clough.

Ida O'Dwyer left her home in Bendigo to commence her nursing training at St Vincent's Hospital and graduated in 1902. In a biography of the hospital, Ida was singled out for her nursing management of patients.

Ida nursed in the First World War as part of the AIF delivering care in Egypt, England and France, achieving a Royal Red Cross for her devotion to duty. She was the inaugural President of the St Vincent's Hospital Graduate Nurses Association.

The prize, proudly sponsored by our Graduate Nurses Association is awarded to a Graduate Nurse who encompasses:

- knowledge and thorough nursing skills
- commitment to the nursing profession at St Vincent's



- behaviour reflective of our values,
- confidence to think ahead and act accordingly, and
- willingness to work effectively within a team and support colleagues

\$1,000

is the prize money and a copy of the book: "A Professions Pathway – Nursing at St Vincent's since 1893".

Emerging Clinical Leader

A new prize, the Emerging Clinical Leader Award, was awarded for the first time to Keely Kennedy.

Keely was recognised for outstanding participation in the Practice Development Year program and for demonstrating emerging leadership capabilities.

Education & Learning General Manager Deanne Riddington says nurse leadership is essential to support high-quality patient care, productivity and health service innovation and to ensure that the nursing profession retains a strong voice.

'Supporting the development of nursing leadership is a priority for St Vincent's,' Deanne says. 'This award gives a current emerging clinical leader the opportunity to

achieve their goals and aspirations through professional development.'

The prize is a 12 month membership to the Australian College of Nursing and attendance at their annual three-day National Nursing Forum, to be held later this year in Hobart, including flights, accommodation and meals.

Dennis says thank you



Above: Christine and Dennis Pearson, with daughter Fran.

Dennis Pearson, from Casterton in the far south west of Victoria, was on the phone to his son when all of a sudden he began experiencing a severely painful headache.

Dennis was suffering a brain aneurism, a ballooning in a blood vessel of the brain that can potentially be fatal if it bursts, causing bleeding on the brain.

He was taken to the Hamilton Base Hospital and then air-lifted to Melbourne for three urgent surgeries at St Vincent's.

'I felt very glad that we were at St Vincent's. To watch the professionals work in harmony in critical situations was a sight to behold.'

'It was like somebody had drilled a hole in my head,' Dennis said. 'I had never experienced anything like that before.'

After spending three weeks in ICU, Dennis was transferred to Rehab, where he stayed for another three weeks.

'By the time I got to Rehab, I could walk around, read and feed myself,' Dennis says.

'I felt very glad that we were at St Vincent's,' wife Christine says. 'From the moment we arrived in the ambulance I trusted that everything that could be done would be done for Dennis. To watch the professionals work in harmony in critical situations was a sight to behold.' Dennis' daughter Fran says it is amazing to see him make such a miraculous recovery.

'Everyday he gets better,' Fran says. 'Some days we still see the effects of the brain injury but overall he is doing so well.'

'People say it is miracle that I'm here,' Dennis says. 'There's a way of going about things at St Vincent's that is very generous. To all the St Vincent's staff that looked after me, the doctors, nurses and support staff, I would like to express my very deep gratitude for what you have done.'



Australian first artificial pancreas a 'game changer'

Australian with type 1 diabetes will have access to a new, Australian first device that works like an artificial pancreas.

Developed in consultation with patients and clinicians from around the world including St Vincent's, the hybrid closed-loop insulin pump system works like an artificial pancreas, continuously monitoring blood glucose levels and automatically adjusting delivery of insulin to keep glucose levels stable in a healthy range.

It is a long-awaited breakthrough in the Australian diabetes community in their quest to better manage the chronic disease. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which a person's pancreas stops producing insulin, a hormone that converts sugar into usable energy. It can impact both children and adults at any age and has a significant negative impact on quality of life.

A sensor is inserted under the skin and monitors glucose levels, sending the data to the pump every five minutes. The system then calculates the amount of insulin needed and automatically delivers it, based on the glucose sensor readings. As a result, the technology requires minimal input. People with type 1 diabetes only need to enter mealtime carbohydrates, accept bolus correction recommendations and periodically calibrate the sensor.

St Vincent's Endocrinologist Professor David O'Neal, who was one of the first Australian researchers to trial the device on local patients, says the new device is a 'game changer'!

'While the new device does not represent a cure for diabetes, it does have the potential to significantly improve control of glucose levels, reducing damage to the body resulting from unstable glucose levels and improving the quality of life of people with type 1 diabetes.'

'The goal in treating type 1 diabetes is to keep blood glucose levels as close to the normal range as possible which can be difficult to achieve,' Professor



'The goal in treating type 1 diabetes is to keep blood glucose levels as close to the normal range as possible which can be difficult to achieve'

O'Neal says. 'A measured, constant supply of insulin is required because it is no longer being produced by the pancreas.'

Leanne Foster is the first Australian to be fitted with this commercial device. Leanne has lived with type 1 diabetes since she was 11 years old, but even after 38 years, it is still impossible to predict how her blood sugar levels are tracking.

'Hormones, stress and exercise can all impact my blood sugar levels,' Leanne says.

Leanne says the system has meant her blood sugar was not dropping low, and she was experiencing less 'brain fog.'

'For me the big bonus was that I slept restfully through the night so I woke up refreshed and able to be my 'best' me,' Leanne says. 'This device means I spend less time thinking about my diabetes and less time responding to, and recovering from, highs and lows.'

'I'm clear headed during the day and can go about my daily activity without having to factor in diabetes to every activity.'

St Vincent's doctor awarded Victorian Young Australian of the Year

Growing up in Bendigo, St Vincent's doctor Dr Skye Kinder saw her father travel to Melbourne many times for specialist appointments, and became committed to easing the travel burden and financial impact of healthcare on rural populations.

Skye, a Psychiatry Registrar in Mental Health, was named the 2019 Victorian Young Australian of the Year at a special event held at Victoria's Government House. Skye was recognised for her commitment to improving the health of people living in rural and regional areas.

While studying, Skye became a passionate advocate for rural health, representing the Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) as Rural Health Officer. Through AMSA, she co-founded and chaired the first Rural Health Committee and set up a national Rural Health Summit, creating new opportunities for students in regional areas to participate in advocacy and policy.

Now a board member of the Rural Doctors Association of Victoria, Skye continues to highlight rural health issues to local, national and international audiences, through her research, ongoing speaking engagements, press appearances, workshops, and articles.



Skye continues to highlight rural health issues to local, national and international audiences

This is not first time Skye has been acknowledged for her tireless work representing country Victorians – Skye was named Victoria's Junior Doctor of the Year in 2017 and Bendigo's Young Citizen of the Year in 2014.

Goodbye Jan, all the best!

After almost 20 years of wonderful service at St Vincent's, Cancer Centre Nurse Unit Manager Jan Chapple has decided to move on the next chapter in her life.

'Although I will be very sad to leave, my heart will be full of so many wonderful memories,' Jan says. 'I worked seven of my 20 years as Nurse Unit Manager of the Cancer Centre Chemotherapy Day Unit and

I am extremely proud of what I have achieved.

'But my biggest achievement by far is leaving behind such a wonderful team of Cancer Centre nurses who I am confident will continue to go the extra mile for patients. I will miss you all and will always remember my time at St Vincent's with great pride and affection.'

Thank you Jan, we wish you all the very best!



'I chose to come to St Vincent's as it's a hospital that really matches what I value in life. I think a lot of that has to do with St Vincent's inclusion of everyone. I am from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and am Muslim. I have found that St Vincent's is quite inclusive which really resonates with me especially as someone who has done a lot of work with refugee and migrant welfare where I come from in Horsham. We actually founded the first migrant and Islamic welfare association in Horsham and built the first mosque there. Being able to launch my career at a place like St Vincent's where I know they are inclusive is very important.'

– Dr Taha Mollah, 2019 intern

49%

of Australians are born overseas or have a parent born overseas

47%

of St Vincent's patients are born overseas



Cultural Diversity Week - 18 – 24 March

Cultural Diversity Week provides an opportunity for staff to celebrate the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of our health service.

Cultural Diversity Week also marks the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Racism on 21 March (Harmony Day), and affirms our belief in the right of all Victorians to live without fear of racial and religious discrimination.

Where in the world are you from?

Did you know 49% of Australians are born overseas or have a parent born overseas and that 47% of St Vincent's patients are born overseas? We would like to capture the demographics (statistics) of our staff in order to improve support, training and cross-cultural resources.

Please remember to enter your country of birth in WorkDay!

Here are a few easy ways for you to support and celebrate Cultural Diversity Week.

Monday 18 March

Organise a Taste of Harmony Lunch

www.tasteofharmony.org.au to register and download event ideas

Tuesday 19 March

Drumming Circle

12:30pm – 1:30pm

St Vincent's Courtyard

Wednesday 20 March

Flamenco guitar performance

12:30pm – 1:30pm

St Vincent's Courtyard

Thursday 21 March

Asian fusion dance performance

12:30pm – 1:30pm

St Vincent's Courtyard

Cultural Diversity Quiz

Enter online until 5pm Friday 22 March to win gold class tickets, a hamper or a bottle of sparkling wine. www.surveymonkey.com/r/CDW2019

Taste of harmony Photo competition

Send a photo of your team enjoying their Taste of Harmony lunch to monita.mascitti-meuter@svha.org.au for a wonderful team prize! Last day to enter is 5pm Friday 22 March.

Education and Learning: bringing education together

In 2018 the four areas of Clinical Education and Simulation, Learning and Development, Medical Education and Nursing Education came together under the banner of Education and Learning.

New General Manager Associate Professor Deanne Riddington says she is delighted to be leading the transition, with the focus being about creating a truly interdisciplinary team and an opportunity to further strengthen a collegiate platform.

Education and Learning has taken a novel approach among health services

to deliver its education programs. The focus is on the individual's career pathway, rather than being discipline specific, covering early to continuing career learning.

'For the new combined team it's about learning from each other while teaching others,' says Deanne. 'The new unit is a step forward for the growth of education at St Vincent's – at its core it will strengthen collaborative learning.'

An interim department structure has been established to ensure it's 'business as usual'. The next step for the team will be developing a St Vincent's education strategy.



The Medical Education Team is a multidisciplinary team with a vast range of clinical and educational experience. Our focus is on the continuing education and welfare of our Junior Medical Staff. The team is enthusiastic and focused on redesigning education to be clinically relevant and contemporary for our modern learners.'

– Rachel Green, Medical Education Officer

(l to r) Rachel Green, Jade Murphy, Jennifer Weil, Genni Newnham, Candice Quinlan



'The Simulation Team has a passion for team based multidisciplinary training with the common goal of improving clinical confidence and promoting patient safety. In 2019, we will be aiming to take simulation to the clinical environment and improve responses to clinical deterioration in a safe setting.'

– Clarissa Torcasio, Simulation Coordinator

(l to r) Matthew Williams, Jude de Graaf, Clarissa Torcasio, Candice Quinlan, Stuart Dille



'I commenced in August 2018 after spending five years with Eastern Health. As Learning and Development Coordinator I partner with managers and teams to deliver high quality management and leadership skills programs. Our focus for 2019 is on reviewing the hospital's new employee orientation program. We will also be introducing a mentoring program to support leaders.'

– Isobel Ursich
Learning & Development
Coordinator



As the Graduate Nurse Program Coordinators, my colleague Paula Titford and I bring many years of nursing education experience to the program. St Vincent's has long been a preferred employer for new nurses commencing their careers and we are committed to providing ongoing education, training and support to ensure a successful transition for tomorrow's nurses.'

– Sarah Britten
Graduate Nurse
Coordinator

Stitching together a history of the Sisters



A beautiful collection of artworks by Dawn Duncan-Smith that show the story of St Vincent's will remain available for the enjoyment of all staff and patients after it was purchased by the hospital.

Dawn uses fragments of hand dyed silk and commercial fabrics that are either torn or cut, secured by pins and free machine stitched to explore the history of the St Vincent's. Art Curator Monique Silk says that Dawn's style is unique.

'It's as if Dawn draws with her sewing machine,' Monique says. 'She then includes just the right amount of objects, architectural features, nursing uniforms and medical equipment to bring the story of St Vincent's to life.'

'Each one of these magnificently crafted art works highlights the rich narrative history of the Sisters of Charity coming to Australia and the subsequent important work that the nurses have done, particularly in war time.'

Dawn's artworks were shown as part of a 125th anniversary exhibition last year in the St Vincent's Art Gallery. After seeing the collection, CEO Angela saw the importance of ensuring the whole

'I was very fortunate, to see life pass so gracefully from my window as patients, family and friends visited their loved one in the gardens.'

collection was together and arranged for St Vincent's to purchase the entire set of works.

Dawn was inspired by what she saw during her time as an artist in residence at Caritas Christi Hospice in Kew.

'I was very fortunate, to see life pass so gracefully from my window as patients, family and friends visited their loved one in the gardens.'

The Hospice was built in 1938, and the historical setting echoed the past. Dawn started researching the Sisters of Charity and travelled back in time to Ireland in 1789 to the founders of the Sisters of Charity, Mary Aikenhead.

On her journey Dawn uncovered historical information on other outstanding women such as Mother



Mary Berchmans Daly and Ida O'Dwyer, both of whom had been an integral part of St Vincent's Hospital since its inception.

'From a curators perspective, I have always hoped that the set would remain in the collection of St Vincent's,' Monique says. 'We are very fortunate to have this series of works now in our collection for future generations to view, and it is befitting that it has happened in our 125th anniversary.'

Enhancing Mental Health clinicians to spot family violence

Women who suffer from a disability, such as severe mental health challenges, are twice as likely to suffer from family violence. It is important that staff are trained to recognise and respond to family violence in public mental health services.

Social Work in Mental Health has developed a staff training package and prompt cards for ready reference by clinicians. The team provided family violence education sessions in each area in Mental Health - including inpatient, community and residential - educating the service about evidence-based family violence knowledge and how to identify and respond.

Senior Social Worker Meg De Melo says research revealed that many clinicians were unaware that the concept of family violence was much broader than just physical violence.

'Developing this training package and introducing the prompt cards has enabled social workers to raise awareness and build clinician confidence in identifying family violence and taking appropriate steps.'



Above: Dr Melissa Petrakis and Meg De Melo.

'Asking appropriate questions, being a compassionate ally, and knowing what services are available and how to access them, are really useful skills for mental health clinicians,' says Meg De Melo.

So far, more than 100 staff have received the training. Evaluation has shown that awareness and skills in responding to family violence have improved, which could provide positive outcomes for consumers who have been subjected to family violence.

The prompt cards are produced by Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA supported by the Australian Department of Health, and the content developed by St Vincent's Mental Health is now being used to up-skill clinicians and community workers state-wide.

'It was excellent to partner with VAADA, as they have a history of producing evidence-based and practice-relevant prompt card resources,' says Dr Melissa Petrakis, Senior Research Fellow in Mental Health.

Kew Community Rehabilitation Centre turns 10

The Kew Community Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) provides home or centre based services for people of all ages, helping patient achieve their rehab goals.

On 24 January Kew CRC celebrated ten years since it was opened by the Health Minister of the time, Daniel Andrews, with an afternoon tea in the centre gym. Past and present staff celebrated with a photo slide show and birthday cake.

Dedicated physiotherapist Paul John has been a part of Kew CRC for its entirety. Reflecting on the last ten years, Paul says that while there has been many changes, some things have always remained the same.



'If I look back on ten years, the consistent level of quality treatment we have been able to offer our clients over this period of time comes to mind,' Paul says.

'The feedback we have received over the years demonstrates that our service is highly valued by those

who use it. This has been made possible by the quality of staff we have employed over the years – everyone who was joined the team has really bought into the team and what we have to offer clients and the community.'

Improving discharge processes together

Length of stay (LOS) is the number of days a patient stays in a hospital bed as an inpatient. In many cases, a patient can stay in hospital much longer than they need to, waiting for treatment to start, waiting for reviews or waiting for scripts

Reducing unnecessary LOS by ensuring that the patient journey is efficient and streamlined means a patient can get home sooner.

Reducing LOS improves patient safety by reducing the risk of hospital-associated harm, which contributes to an even longer stay, and increases bed and staff capacity, enabling us to care for more patients.

In late 2017, the General Medical team began a project to reduce the acute length of stay at St Vincent's. The team identified problems with discharge planning, which led to the 'Countdown to Discharge' (CTD) project being implemented in February 2018.

This new process has been very successful, resulting in CTD being implemented across the health service using five key CTD principles.

Multi-disciplinary Engagement

Everyone plays a part in a patient's discharge experience. This key principle ensures the multi-disciplinary team are engaged at a local level when developing a standard discharge process.

Estimated Discharge Dates (EDDs)

Reviewing these everyday with the multi-disciplinary team ensures a consistent message is communicated with patients and their families.

Written Standard

This principle is the formal documentation of the discharge standard that the multi-disciplinary team develop and agree upon. It outlines who does what, when, where and how to ensure there are no assumptions or confusion around roles and responsibilities.

Visual

Using visual tools such as the Electronic Journey Board (EJB) and patient bed boards mean all staff and patients have another way to quickly and easily see discharge plans.

Daily Control

Are we doing what we agreed we would do? This daily control principle comes in the form of daily huddles where the multi-disciplinary team meet to discuss all patients EDDs, ensure everything is on track, pick up problems or delays and problem solve these together or escalate via the Daily Management System. Short, structured daily huddles are the glue that holds the entire discharge process together.

The third round of departments are now implementing CTD in their areas. As well as benefitting from a standardised discharge process, staff are also enjoying sharing learnings and problems between departments. Staff capability to implement change and problem solving together is growing, an amazing outcome.



'Our multidisciplinary team was involved right from the start. Each discipline has contributed to the changes we have made, which has led to the evolution of a sustainable process that we all get great benefit from every day.'

– Sally Kemp
NUM 4E



Having a visual board such as the EJB has been an integral part of facilitating better discharge planning from the multidisciplinary teams, enabling timely reviews and improved patient flow and ultimately enhancing the patient's experience.'

– Samantha Blade
NUM 8E



'Every one of our patients has an estimated discharge date that is routinely updated twice a day, or when their plan changes. This date is visible for patients, next of kin and staff, and can be seen within three seconds of walking on to the Ward.'

– Sue White
NUM 7E

Training Sister Doctors in India

A delegation from the Catholic Health Association of India visited St Vincent's in early March, ensuring the continuation of a scholarship that provides training, mentorship and research opportunities for healthcare providers in India.

The scholarship started two years ago, honouring Dr Sr Mary Glowery — an Australian-born doctor who served as a missionary Sister-doctor in India from 1920 to 1957.

Leading the delegation to St Vincent's, Director-General of the Catholic Health Association of India, Rev Dr Mathew Abraham,

said the scholarship program helps build capacity mainly in palliative care, disability, social work and mental health.

55 scholarship recipients received training so far. Some of them came to Melbourne and some trainers went to India to conduct the training there.

The Catholic Health Association of India is a network of 3,500 member institutions, providing primary, secondary and tertiary care to people across the country.

Another member of the delegation was Sr Dr Beena Umi, President of the Sister Doctors Forum of India. As part of the scholarship program, she is one

of 20 Sister doctors who undertook a short course on healthcare design and implementation, visiting the palliative care departments of St Vincent's, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Royal Children's Hospital.

Sr Dr Beena said more than 90 percent of the sister doctors in India work in rural areas and some of them see more than 100 patients a day.

'I'm very grateful to St Vincent's Hospital,' she said. 'They were very receptive and cordial, especially the Palliative Care Department, they are very generous and supportive.'



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