



*At Epworth, we care for people.* Patients and community are at the heart of everything we do. We are inspired every day by our patients and touched to be part of their journey.

*We support our employees.* We offer our employees education and mentoring opportunities so they can be the best version of themselves, because we know that empowered people deliver the best level of care to our patients.

*We believe in research and innovation.* We want to turn great ideas into exceptional health outcomes. We want to explore new technologies—and develop existing ones—to bring the most effective treatments to our patients.

*We plan for a healthier future.* We maintain a focus on tomorrow, by developing new services and facilities, to best support our future patients.

*We partner with our community.* We are stronger because of the invaluable support of our donors, volunteers and visitors, employees, patients and the wider community.

Caring for people helps us to achieve more than we thought possible.

**We are committed to our community.**

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

Epworth HealthCare acknowledges the people of the Kulin Nations, on whose land we work and care for our patients. We pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



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## About us

We are Victoria's largest not-for-profit private healthcare group.

We rely on the generosity of donors to help achieve our goals.

We are renowned for excellence in diagnosis, treatment, care and rehabilitation.

We invest all surplus funds into services.

We embrace the latest in evidence-based medicine to pioneer treatments and services for patients.

We care for our patients throughout their lifespan across more than 40 specialty areas.



## From the President



**Ms Maryjane Crabtree**  
President

**As Epworth moves closer to its centenary in February 2020, we are looking forward to an exciting future as well as reflecting on our rich history of service to our patients and the Victorian community.**

In my first year as President, I also look back, and acknowledge the legacy of leadership and philanthropy left by my predecessor, Rod Fitzroy. Rod was introduced to the Epworth family by his business mentor and colleague, Bruce Lockwood. Bruce's own connection to Epworth stretched back through his father, Ron, to his grandparents Thomas and Nell, who both served on the Epworth Committee. Thomas was one of the original group of Methodist Church philanthropists who founded the hospital in 1920. The Lockwood Society honours the history of this family's connection with Epworth over three generations. All members of the Society have chosen to include a gift to Epworth in their will and meet annually to hear about our work, and be recognised for the power and meaning of their generosity and that of past donors—a perfect balance of recognising past support and investing in the future.

Epworth's Board has experienced some renewal and regeneration, following the departures of Rod, Dr John Zelcer, and long-standing member Professor Peter Brooks. The Board was fortunate to replace these great contributors with very high calibre people, and we welcomed three new directors during the year. Dr Alex Cockram is a highly regarded expert on healthcare, having been CEO of Western Health, and interim CEO of Barwon Health. Her experience in the public health sector is enormously valuable. The Reverend Sue Withers joined us as the appointee of the Uniting Church in Australia. Sue brings a wealth of experience as a senior member of the Church, and has also been involved on boards associated with the Church. Mr Stephen Roche, former CEO of Australian Pharmaceutical Industries, where he led the Priceline chain through a period of great financial success and expansion, also joined Epworth's Board. Sadly for us, Stephen accepted an unexpected offer to return to executive life as CEO of a significant manufacturer based in Adelaide, which meant he could no longer serve Epworth. Although Stephen's contribution was short in time, he made a great impact, and we will continue to regard him as part of our family.

I am honoured to chair a Board of high calibre, committed people. Epworth's Board brings together people of diverse disciplines, backgrounds and outlooks, who work respectfully and collaboratively towards achieving our common goal. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the huge commitment they each make, and thank them for their diligence, their expertise, and their friendship. Our Board enjoys an excellent relationship with our hardworking and exceptionally talented Executive team.

Epworth's Group Chief Executive, Dr Lachlan Henderson, has now completed more than a year in his

role and, working with his Executive team and the Board, has shaped his vision for our future in the Epworth HealthCare Strategic Plan 2018–2022 which states our mission: "Caring for people. Innovating for a healthy community". The Epworth Executive team, with full support from the Board, will implement the strategic plan from 2018, with a focus on four pillars: connected care for our patients and community, empowerment for the people of the Epworth family, innovation in everything we touch and sustainable performance guaranteeing our performance in healthcare.

In line with the strategic plan, Epworth continues to invest in the future, not just by building and improving our hospitals, but by investing in new models of care and the education and skills of the people who deliver that care. Some of our investments include:

- Expanding our ability to serve the growing population of the eastern suburbs with an exciting extension of our capacity and services at Epworth Eastern in Box Hill. At Eastern, Epworth has forged an innovative three-way relationship with the Box Hill Institute, with whom we partner in allied health education, and the Salvation Army, which currently occupies land adjacent to Epworth. In securing this land to accommodate our expansion, Epworth is supporting the Salvation Army's move to a prominent site in Whitehorse Road, previously owned by the Box Hill Institute. A church and meeting house will also be built at the new site. In a surprise to all, it came to light that the Salvos began their work in Box Hill at that very site. They are delighted to be "coming home" and this development is an uncanny example of the way that futures are often built on the foundations of the past.

- Maximising the value of Epworth's inner city location at Freemasons Clarendon Street by, together with our property partner NorthWest, developing much-needed facilities to support that campus, including a new consulting suite tower and ample parking.
- Upgrading wards at Richmond and Brighton to increase our private room offering.
- Purchasing, with the help of a wonderfully generous donation from La Trobe Financial, six new surgical robots, making Epworth—the original pioneer of robotic surgery in Australia—once again the leader in this field.
- Supporting Epworth's people to pursue their learning and development by granting 135 scholarships for the 2018 calendar year for tailored further study and qualification.

Through these, and other, investments, we are very mindful of Epworth's purpose, and our privileged status as a charitable, not-for-profit organisation. This status brings advantages in our treatment for taxation, as well as the ability to attract significant philanthropy. These are privileges that Epworth has earned over its long history of contributing to the community, right back to its beginnings not only as a private hospital provider, but as an educator of nursing employees. Epworth continues to earn and deserve its charitable status by running its enterprise effectively and efficiently, yielding a surplus to be reinvested into improved services to patients, supporting research, providing high-quality clinical education and extending our reach into communities such as the Geelong region.

We provide great care for our patients, and empathy and support for our patients' families and friends. Epworth aims to provide an ideal

environment for our doctors to ensure that they can practise in centres which offer their patients the very best care, but also seeks to ensure our doctors achieve their professional aspirations to conduct ground-breaking research and to contribute to training the next generation of extraordinary health professionals. In all areas, we aspire to provide leadership and models of best practice in the private health sector.

**"Epworth continues to invest in the future, not just by building and improving our hospitals, but by investing in research, new models of care and the education and skills of the people who deliver that care."**

Epworth has achieved much during the past year. The healthcare sector generally is experiencing many headwinds and challenges. An ageing population, increased comorbidities, rising utility costs and rapid changes in technology affect the whole sector. Private hospital providers face the additional challenges of declining uptake of private health insurance, and competition from public providers. This year, the Board and Executive have focused on ensuring the organisation is structured and resourced to be sustainable in this dynamic environment. I acknowledge and thank Dr Henderson and the Executive team for a year of exceptional commitment and dedication in this environment. I believe that together with our magnificent and dedicated employees, their work has ensured that Epworth continues to be the preeminent private, not-for-profit healthcare group in Victoria.

Finally, I acknowledge and thank the extended Epworth family—our volunteer army; our donors and benefactors; the Board of the

Epworth Medical Foundation, generously supported by the Special Events Committee; Friends of Epworth; Heartbeat; the Lockwood Society; members of our Human Research and Ethics Committee; our Property and Project Committees; members of our Medical Advisory Councils; our clinical leaders; and our visiting medical officers.

All of us play a role in our success and the outstanding contribution that Epworth makes to our community. Long may we continue!

**Ms Maryjane Crabtree**

## From the Group Chief Executive



**Dr Lachlan Henderson**  
Group Chief Executive

**It has been a busy year at Epworth as we consolidate post a period of extraordinary growth.**

From 2013 to 2017, Epworth grew by almost 30 per cent both in bed capacity (from 1,199 beds in 2013 to 1,651 in 2017) and number of employees (6,870 as at June 2018). This is an incredible statistic for an organisation that has been providing health care to the Victorian population for almost 100 years. As Epworth moves towards its centenary year in 2020, it has been important to reflect on this growth and our achievements as we plan our next five-year strategy (2018–2022). Epworth is incredibly fortunate to partner with many very generous individuals and groups who enable the great work of the Epworth Medical Foundation (EMF). A record year for EMF has assisted our capacity to continue to provide the latest innovative care and technology to benefit our patients. This support is increasingly critical at a challenging time for the private hospital industry, during which Epworth has needed to respond to the dual challenges of a lower funding environment and a small decline in private health insurance membership.

The recent growth at Epworth has included a new hospital in Geelong (now in its third year of operation), a major expansion of Epworth Richmond (Lee Wing), and new ways to enhance our patients' experience via expanded services (Epworth Medical Imaging and the South West Regional Cancer Centre) and new Point of Care bedside technology. This growth in clinical services has led to a coordinated Epworth Clinical Services Strategy critical to inform our new five-year strategic plan. It is not all about growth, however, as a review of Epworth's cancer clinical services strategy in 2017 led to the sale of our radiation oncology business (Epworth Radiation Oncology) to Icon, a group committed to ensuring Epworth patients access the latest in cancer treatment modalities.

A significant achievement in 2018 has been the development of the new five-year Epworth HealthCare Strategic Plan. During this process, Epworth's Board and management renewed and strengthened the organisation's purpose and vision statements. The critical role of our patients, employees and visiting specialists has been recognised within the context of looking beyond the walls of Epworth's facilities to improve the health of the broader community. A focus on innovation, compassionate care, technology and partnerships allows Epworth to continue to improve the health outcomes of our patients. I am incredibly grateful for the energy and enthusiasm of several hundred Epworth employees, doctors and other stakeholders who contributed to the development of our new strategic plan. Our immediate aim is to deliver on four strategic pillars, namely: more connected patient care; empowering our people; continuing to innovate; and building a sustainable organisation. The process of developing the new strategic plan reinforced for me that many of our

great ideas and innovations come from those who most closely interact with our patients—thanks to all who were involved.

To deliver additional and improved clinical services, maintaining and enhancing Epworth's facilities is key. While our building program has slowed, we are committed to our significant redevelopments of Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Eastern campuses. The Epworth Freemasons redevelopment is already underway and will significantly improve the amenities at our East Melbourne site. Improved parking, new consulting suites for doctors, four additional theatres and expanded clinical services (including a new day oncology unit) will help transform Epworth Freemasons. At Epworth Eastern, we are already at capacity and the redevelopment scheduled to begin in early 2019 will deliver 26 new consulting suites, four additional operating theatres, 60 new beds and a new private emergency department. This is a complicated redevelopment with multiple parties involved and has required significant preliminary work by Executive Director Epworth Eastern Lou O'Connor and her team. Epworth's partnerships with Box Hill Institute, the Salvation Army and Whitehorse Council have all been important in getting the redevelopment to the start line.

Over the past 12 months, the Epworth Executive team has significantly evolved. Following the departure of David Nowell in May, Nicole Waldron has taken on executive responsibility for Epworth Freemasons in addition to her role at Epworth Richmond. In a busy year for Nicole, this followed a period where she had executive responsibility for Epworth Medical Imaging (EMI) as well as the Strategy portfolio. Damian Armour has subsequently taken on responsibility for EMI and Strategy, in addition to his position as CEO of Epworth Geelong.

In the Clinical Services portfolios, we farewelled Professor John Catford in early 2018 after five years leading Academic and Medical Services at Epworth. Associate Professor Luis Prado was subsequently appointed Executive Director Medical Services and Chief Medical Officer. Luis is leading the development of a new Clinical Governance Framework and has facilitated improved coordination of Epworth's research and education programs. In mid-2018, Epworth appointed Paula Stephenson to the roles of Executive Director Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer. Paula is shaping a new team as she helps strengthen group coordination of our significant nursing (3,595 employees) and allied health (1,772 employees) workforce.

**"To the many Epworth supporters who volunteer and fundraise to support our organisation, a heartfelt thanks."**

The outstanding support of the EMF is worthy of note. In challenging economic times EMF, superbly led by Scott Bulger, achieved record funding success. A particular highlight has been the support of Greg O'Neill and La Trobe Financial that delivered an incredible six new da Vinci robots to Epworth in June. This investment supports our strategic plan to innovate and provide doctors with access to the latest cutting-edge treatment. More than a decade ago, Epworth was the first hospital in Australia to use this technology and the recent investment consolidates Epworth's position as the leading healthcare organisation in Australia using robotic technology. To the many Epworth supporters who volunteer and fundraise to support our organisation, a heartfelt thanks.

The generosity of our donors and supporters assists EMF to deliver a fantastic scholarship program for our employees each year. In 2018, this support allowed Epworth to provide 135 scholarships to our employees valued at more than \$700,000. Through the scholarship program, Epworth employees can upskill in areas relevant to their roles

including support for study, courses and conferences. EMF also supported a number of significant overseas fundraising events this year and I had the good fortune to lead a CEO Challenge in Vietnam—next time I will try to stay on my bike for the entire journey! Orthopaedic injuries aside, the Vietnam Challenge (Scott Bulger and Liz Camilleri joined me on the ride with 12 other CEOs) raised an amazing \$160,000 to support mental health research and new medical equipment. Executive Directors Maree Feery and Carolyn Bell were also involved in an EMF fundraising event this year, testing their fitness on the Camino de Santiago trail in Spain.

Increasingly important to private hospital operators are our partnerships in the health sector. Epworth partners with the Department of Health and Human Services in significant ways including our public contract at Epworth Geelong. In addition, partnerships with our funders, suppliers and the private hospital sector all aim to strengthen Epworth's brand and presence in Victoria. Partnering with our employed and visiting medical officers (VMOs) is also critical and it has been pleasing to see so many doctors engaged in our endeavours to improve clinical care and health outcomes at Epworth. Our VMOs have been widely consulted in the renewal of our strategic plan. As part of our new five-year strategic plan, Epworth aims to invest in technologies that will continue to improve the experience of our patients and doctors. Epworth is developing a new Digital Technology Strategy to assist these endeavours.

Epworth has also developed a number of international partnerships and collaborations. One important strategic partner is Northwell in the United States (based in Long Island, New York). Northwell is a significant US healthcare system with 21 hospitals, 6,600 beds and more than 60,000 employees. In May, I had the opportunity to visit Northwell along with a team of seven Epworth scholarship recipients. The opportunity for our senior employees to share the knowledge and learnings from their two-week immersive experience has been really valuable. Following two recent visits to

Northwell, Epworth hopes to provide reciprocal hospitality with a Northwell team, including CEO Michael Dowling, planning to visit Epworth in September 2019—hopefully in time to celebrate another West Coast Eagles premiership!

**"... it has been pleasing to see so many doctors engaged in our endeavours to improve clinical care and health outcomes at Epworth."**

To conclude, I continue to be grateful for support from the Epworth Board and Executive team. In late 2017, Epworth farewelled Rod Fitzroy, who retired as Board President, and welcomed Maryjane Crabtree to the role. I am grateful for the support of both Rod and Maryjane over the past two years and am reminded that you can never actually leave Epworth. Rod has since been co-opted to assist the Eastern redevelopment and his wife Paige remains an active member of the Epworth Special Events committee—thanks to you both. Maryjane has had a very busy first year as President and, assisted by Deputy President Rob Macmillan and the entire Epworth Board, continues to give generously in terms of her time and expertise to support the organisation.

Finally, I would like to thank the close to 7,000 Epworth employees working across our nine sites in Victoria. It is your enthusiasm and compassionate care on a daily basis that helps to improve the outcomes and the broader community.

It is my pleasure to share with you some of the achievements of Epworth's talented employees and doctors featured in this annual report. As we head towards the organisation's centenary in 2020, I am confident that Epworth is well positioned to respond with energy and innovation to the challenges and possibilities that lie ahead.

**Dr Lachlan Henderson**

# Year at a glance

In 2017/18 we continued to offer quality healthcare to our community. These graphs provide an overview of the care we have delivered.

## Employees

2017/18	6,870
2016/17	6,658
2015/16	6,326
2014/15	5,013
2013/14	5,145
2012/13	4,818

## Births

2017/18	3,268
2016/17	3,147
2015/16	3,187
2014/15	3,020
2013/14	3,418
2012/13	3,425

## Operations

2017/18	116,841
2016/17	112,847
2015/16	96,553
2014/15	90,210
2013/14	85,207
2012/13	78,196

## Total bed days

2017/18	514,727
2016/17	496,620
2015/16	440,822
2014/15	424,390
2013/14	415,590
2012/13	394,518

## Total patient admissions

2017/18	184,979
2016/17	176,891
2015/16	148,170
2014/15	141,176
2013/14	132,969
2012/13	122,268

## Same day surgery attendances

2017/18	55,828
2016/17	59,812
2015/16	48,408
2014/15	40,610
2013/14	37,050
2012/13	33,977

## Radiation oncology—total treatments

2017/18	36,711
2016/17	23,834
2015/16	(Total patients: 1,500) 25,885
2014/15	24,168
2013/14	23,346
2012/13	21,704

## Emergency department attendances

2017/18	38,135
2016/17	34,567
2015/16	25,759
2014/15	25,691
2013/14	26,606
2012/13	27,388

## Intensive care and coronary care bed days

2017/18	35,708
2016/17	19,090
2015/16	13,361
2014/15	13,616
2013/14	13,662
2012/13	13,730

## Radiology—treatments administered

2017/18	162,933
2016/17	143,864
2015/16	94,399
2014/15	33,446
2013/14	10,230

Service commenced 2013



## Board of Management



**Ms Maryjane Crabtree**  
President



**Mr Robert Macmillan**  
Deputy President



**Dr Lachlan Henderson**  
Group Chief Executive



**Ms Laura Anderson**



**Assoc. Prof. Alex Cockram**  
[commenced Nov. 2017]



**Prof. Paul Douglas**



**Assoc. Prof. Nerina Harley**



**Ms Janet Matton**



**Prof. Christiaan Mostert**



**Mr Stephen Roche**  
[to June 2018]



**Rev. Sue Withers**  
[commenced Nov. 2017]

## Group Executive

Reflects incumbents for the period July 2017 to June 2018.



**Dr Lachlan Henderson**  
Group Chief Executive



**Mr Damian Armour**  
CEO Epworth Geelong



**Ms Carolyn Bell**  
Executive Director  
Rehabilitation &  
Mental Health



**Mr Scott Bulger**  
Executive Director  
Epworth Medical  
Foundation & Brand



**Ms Liz Camilleri**  
Executive Director  
Finance & Commercial  
Services



**Prof. Emeritus John Catford**  
Executive Director  
Academic & Medical  
[to Mar. 2018]



**Adj. Prof. Sharon Donovan**  
Executive Director  
Clinical Services  
[to Dec. 2017]



**Ms Maree Feery**  
Executive Director  
People & Culture



**Mr David Nowell**  
Executive Director  
Epworth Freemasons  
[to June 2018]



**Ms Louise O'Connor**  
Executive Director  
Epworth Eastern



**Assoc. Prof. Luis Prado**  
Executive Director  
Academic & Medical,  
Chief Medical Officer  
[commenced Mar. 2018]



**Ms Paula Stephenson**  
Executive Director  
Clinical Services,  
Chief Nursing Officer  
[commenced June 2018]



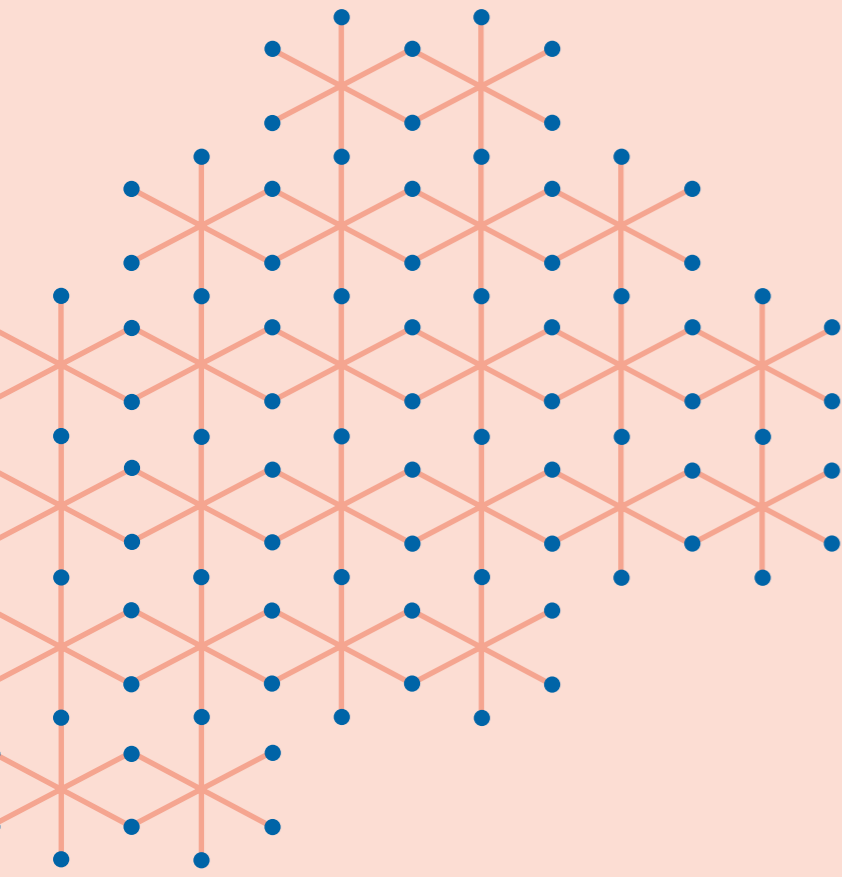
**Mrs Nicole Waldron**  
Executive Director  
Epworth Freemasons  
& Richmond



**Ms Karen Kinmont**  
Chief Information  
Officer



# Our patients





## Changing lives with pro bono surgery

**Pro bono surgery gives patients in developing countries, who don't have access to specialised surgery or healthcare, another chance at life. Epworth's generous medical teams give their time and expertise to make it possible.**

In December 2016, 21-year-old Kiko was brought to Melbourne from Indonesia by the Children First Foundation because of a pituitary gland adenoma that had caused gigantism from excess growth hormone production. The benign tumour of glandular tissue was removed at St Vincent's Private Hospital, but not before Kiko's skeleton overgrew. Kiko had also developed a massive jaw disproportion due to the abnormal growth, with an inability to chew food normally or speak clearly.

The Miracle sMiles program run by the Children First Foundation helps children from developing countries receive complicated surgery for a range of congenital and acquired conditions including orthopaedic, craniofacial, burns and plastics, renal and urology cases. The program is supported by hospitals including Epworth, St Vincent's, The Royal Children's and Monash, who provide beds pro bono or at humanitarian rates. Surgeons from the different hospitals work together to provide surgeries not available in the children's home countries.

Epworth Richmond's maxillofacial surgeon Professor Andrew Heggie has been a key figure in the program, performing multiple surgeries for Children First.

"Over the past decade, thanks to Epworth, there are patients from all over the world who have recovered from complicated facial, cardiac and orthopaedic procedures unable to be performed in their own countries," Andrew says.

To correct Kiko's facial imbalance, two stages of major facial surgery were required. With the support of Epworth Richmond Executive Director Nicole Waldron, and Epworth funding

operation costs, in February 2018 Andrew worked pro bono alongside anaesthetist Dr Rob Greenberg, visiting UK Fellow Dr Ravinda Pabla and senior theatre nurse Lou Norris, to give Kiko a mid-facial advancement and bring the bones of his upper face forward more in line with his jaw.

"The lines of the cuts we made in the skull started off at the side of the nose and travelled over the lower part of the eye socket, across the cheekbones and around the side of the face. The entire front portion of the skull was disconnected so it could be mobilised and brought forward," Andrew says.

Kiko's second operation in September altered the position of the upper and lower jaws to match his teeth together and balance his profile. Both surgeries required a set of plates and screws, donated by medical technology company Stryker.

After the surgery, Kiko recovered at the Children First farm in Kilmore before returning to normal life in Indonesia.

He had been extremely self-conscious about his facial disfigurement, and was thrilled with the results of the surgery, saying, "Thank you Professor, you really changed my life and thank you Epworth for the hospital and the transformation as well."

Children First Foundation Chief Executive Elizabeth Lodge was very pleased with the result of the operation.

"At Children First we place great importance on the value of partnerships. It's only through developing relationships and

working with our Miracle sMiles program partners that we are able to help young people like Kiko. We're delighted that through our partnership with Epworth, together we've enabled Kiko to return home to a bright future," Elizabeth says.

Aside from supporting pro bono work within Australia, Epworth has a range of ongoing initiatives to assist individuals and communities in developing countries, including providing donations of medical products in crisis situations, and supporting doctors with funding so they can undertake pro bono work overseas.

Other prominent surgeons at Epworth Richmond who have given their expertise to change the lives of young people through Children First and Rotary Oceania include Mr Patrick Chan, Professor Richard de Steiger, Professor Andrew Cochrane and their anaesthetists and surgical teams.



Kiko's facial development, before and after surgery



## Triathlon after cancer treatment

**Taking part in a triathlon—particularly after undergoing cancer treatment—is not for the faint-hearted, but for cancer survivor Shaliza Shukor, it was a goal that helped drive her recovery.**

When Shaliza came to Epworth Hawthorn for oncology rehabilitation in September 2017 after nine months of extensive surgery and treatment for cancer at Epworth Eastern, her body had undergone a significant ordeal. Despite that, Shaliza set her rehabilitation goals high, telling employees she wanted to compete in a triathlon.

"I was half joking when I told the rehab team my goal was to complete a triathlon," Shaliza says. "I didn't really know if this was possible or where to even start."

Shaliza was guided back to fitness by exercise physiologist Tamara Luke, physiotherapist Jemma Keeves and a wider team of dietitians and psychologists involved in her program.

"Shaliza was really deconditioned following oncology treatment and was unsure of her capabilities. She had lost confidence in exercising and was only able to walk 20 to 30 minutes before fatigue stopped her," Tamara says.

The rehabilitation team developed an individual oncology rehabilitation program for Shaliza, with access to the entire suite of allied health therapists. The multidisciplinary program helped her recover enough strength to return to the activities she enjoyed before her diagnosis and achieve her goal of competing in her first triathlon.

"With our help and her determination, Shaliza overcame fatigue, regained physical strength and normal movement patterns. Most importantly, she built confidence in herself and her ability to exercise again," Tamara says.

Five months later, Shaliza successfully competed in her first triathlon, a breast cancer fundraising event, Triathlon Pink, with Jemma and Tamara right by her side.

"From the outset we told Shaliza that if she got to the point where she was committing to the triathlon, we would come and see her achieve that. Shaliza competed in the 100m swim, 3km bike ride and 1km run. To see the smile on her face when she was just about to start the swim leg, and to see her smiling even harder after the completion of the event really made our day," Jemma says.

"Every week we worked on getting her fitter and stronger and when the day finally arrived, she was able to achieve her goal and complete the triathlon. Shaliza was always so positive. She never missed a session and always walked through the gym doors with a smile on her face regardless of what she was going through in her work and home life."

Shaliza found that training for the triathlon not only helped rebuild her body, but also helped rebuild her confidence in herself.

"After my treatment, I had no energy and could barely read a book to my son. I never thought I'd be able to compete in a triathlon. When it came to the running leg, I didn't think I was going to make it, but the girls ran by my side and pushed me to the end. I was thrilled when I crossed the finish line," Shaliza says.



"When you go through cancer treatment, you get bombarded with information and it's hard to know what source you can trust. The oncology rehabilitation program gave me the tools and techniques to rebuild my life and regain my mental and physical strength; to know what to eat to fuel my body and to learn that it's okay to pace myself and not do everything at once."



# Delivering new choices in maternity care

Welcoming a new baby is one of the most special times in a family's life. The new maternity unit at Epworth Geelong helps support families with a commitment to personalised care, safety and innovation.

Maternity services at Epworth Geelong unofficially opened on 27 August 2017 when baby Kit Sanderson arrived seven-and-a-half weeks early. A fully equipped Level 4 special care nursery was ready to care for the tiny newborn who weighed just 1,950 grams at birth. After spending time under the care of the experienced maternity team, a healthy and happy Kit graduated from the special care nursery to start life at home with proud parents Sally and Ben.

With a four-cot special care nursery, four birthing suites and a 30-bed maternity unit that can be extended as needed, Geelong Maternity offers the rapidly growing Greater Geelong community a first-class, local maternity service that incorporates all aspects of care from pre-natal through to post-natal domiciliary care.

Since opening, Epworth Geelong Maternity has delivered many milestones, including Huxley Partington, who was not only the hundredth baby born at the hospital, but also the first baby born in Greater Geelong in 2018, arriving just nine minutes into the new year.

Associate Director of Clinical Services Lisa Garner believes its focus on safety and the recruitment of exceptional employees has been absolutely crucial to the success of the maternity unit.

"Our focus on safety is something that we have done extremely well. With Epworth Geelong already operational for just over a year when we opened, we already had a good support framework to be able to implement maternity, with well-established safety measures through the support of the emergency department, intensive care and the perioperative unit."

"We've got people who really want to be part of a new service and are very open to new ideas in best practice and innovation. We've got a fresh approach, with clinicians who have all come from different hospitals and other healthcare facilities with incredible experience and the energy to create the best options for women."

The unit prides itself on its ability to "close the gaps" in maternity, with a model that offers antenatal care in collaboration with obstetrics, so women become familiar with some of the midwives even before the birth. Ongoing check-ups at home after the birth are a valuable aspect of ensuring women feel safe and cared for.

Lisa is proud of how the unit has developed in its first twelve months.

"It is very special to see relationships develop between parents and our employees throughout the antenatal period to birth and beyond. To know that parents are confident in the facilities and employees, feel safe and supported throughout all stages of pregnancy and have genuinely loved their experience is extremely rewarding and a true testament to the team."

Geelong Maternity has received outstanding evaluations from families who have used the service since it opened. Lisa believes this high rating is due to the maternity team's commitment to excellence, as well as the high level of patient care and personalised service, which includes meals on demand so patients can manage meals around visitors and baby feeding times.

"Every baby born is unique and the team is privileged to be part of each experience. We offer a caring, comfortable private space for each woman and their family with individualised care, so they leave feeling they have had a five-star experience."

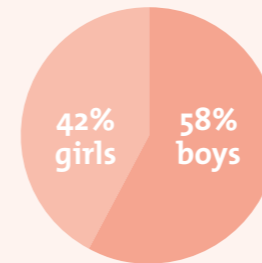


Epworth Geelong's one hundredth baby, Huxley Partington, and the first baby for Greater Geelong for 2018



Epworth Geelong's first baby, Kit Sanderson, turns one

# Snapshot of Epworth Geelong babies



5 sets of twins



Busiest birth days



Average baby height



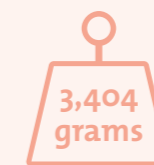
49.3cm

Tallest baby



57cm

Average baby weight



3,404 grams

Largest baby



4,830 grams

Inpatient experience

93% very good (highest option)

7% good (second highest option)

Likelihood to recommend Epworth Geelong to others

93% absolutely (highest option)

7% would recommend (second highest option)

## Inpatients MOVE for mental health

**A new program at Epworth Clinic is helping patients to overcome significant barriers to a healthy lifestyle and improving mental health at the same time.**

Research has shown regular physical activity has a positive influence on sleep, mood and relationships. However, people with a mental illness often do not get nearly enough exercise.

Ismini Dandanis, exercise physiologist at Epworth Clinic has been responsible for developing and implementing MOVE—a multidisciplinary program for Epworth’s mental health patients.

MOVE emphasises the connection between mindful movement and intuitive eating and has been running as a 12-week outpatient day program for a few years. In 2018 the program was made available to inpatients at Epworth Clinic. Now, inpatients can access the rehabilitation gym twice a week and attend group or individual sessions under the guidance of a multidisciplinary allied health team.

The program helps patients to change lifestyle and behaviour through better exercise, nutrition and psychological input to assist in healthy eating behaviours, thoughts and emotions, and better sleep.

“It is so important to promote the role of exercise as a form of therapy for people with mental health conditions. This inpatient program is a fantastic outcome for our patients and a direct result of the unique link we have with the rehabilitation services within our division,” Ismini says.

“The interdisciplinary model of care applied across the division, including within Epworth Clinic, means participants are guided through the MOVE program by psychiatrists, exercise physiologists, dietitians and other allied health team members who provide education and support

around exercise and nutrition to help make long-term, positive behavioural and lifestyle changes.”

The program has been very well received by patients, allied health and nursing employees as well as the referring doctors within Epworth Clinic.

MOVE is tailored to individual health and individual wellness goals to help patients plan for their discharge and ongoing recovery, and empowers patients to find and sustain the healthiest version of themselves. Using a “health at every size” approach, it encourages them to move away from traditional dieting cycles and work towards long-term change. Learning how to focus on individual goals within a group dynamic is also significant in improving physical, social, psychological and emotional health outcomes.

The program incorporates mindfulness, self-compassion, and a values-based approach to living, alongside group and individual therapy sessions to help participants better understand how mental health symptoms and thought processes can contribute to difficulties in maintaining positive lifestyle changes. Guided gym sessions provide patients with the tools to maintain physical activity after their hospital admission.

“I love being able to make a difference to a patient’s health and wellbeing, particularly in the area of mental health. This is why I am thrilled to be a part of implementing the Epworth Clinic MOVE program for inpatients,” Ismini says.

Ismini received an Epworth Scholarship in the 2016–17 financial year to undertake training to help develop the program. The scholarship helped fund her to travel to New South Wales and meet with leading exercise physiologist Simon Rosenbaum to discuss implementation and evaluation of programs offered, as well as completing Level 1 and Level 2 Therapeutic Yoga courses.



Guiding a patient through an exercise program

## Mental health innovation centre opens

**Better understanding of the brain and mental illness will help guide early diagnosis and shape the path forward for new, personalised treatment options for people experiencing mental health concerns.**

Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and schizophrenia are one of the leading causes of disability worldwide, with 45 per cent of Australians experiencing a mental health condition in their lifetime. There is no “one size fits all” approach to treating mental health conditions and while there are a range of treatment options already available, more needs to be done to understand mental health, improve existing treatment options and explore new ways to manage these conditions.

Epworth hopes to do this with the opening of the Epworth Centre for Innovation in Mental Health (ECIMH). The centre will conduct research to expand understanding of the brain and mental health and develop effective new treatments for individuals experiencing mental health concerns.

The newly built space at Epworth Camberwell has world-class neuroscience laboratories, equipped with specialist electroencephalography (EEG), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) technologies. These will enable ECIMH researchers to explore the brain mechanisms involved in mental illness, and to develop innovative, personalised treatments to effect more lasting change than medication can offer alone.

“What we have is unique, embedding our research unit within a hospital environment which will ensure the outcomes will directly translate to the care and health outcomes of Epworth patients,” says Professor Paul Fitzgerald, Director of Psychiatry and Head of ECIMH.

“We’re starting to use brain imaging, genetics and other ways of investigating brain function to



ECIMH employees at the opening of the centre

determine the way people are treated. It’s an approach that naturally fits with brain stimulation, because we are often targeting very small areas so we can use brain imaging to increase the fidelity and accuracy. It’s also an approach that has application across the board.”

The centre brings together a multidisciplinary team of psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, researchers and engineers dedicated to enhancing mental health outcomes.

“Our researchers have a well-established history of developing innovative new treatments for common disorders such as depression and then helping translate these into clinical practice,” Paul says.

Non-invasive brain stimulation techniques like TMS have the potential to revolutionise mental health treatment for individuals who do not respond to standard therapy. The new techniques help to modulate brain activity and show promise for treating depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, chronic pain, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease and addiction.

The first trial at the centre is exploring the use of TMS in patients with OCD. This disorder affects one to two per cent of the population, yet most patients never get treated. Of those who do, half don’t respond to standard treatments. Brain stimulation may be a way of regulating uncontrollable impulses in these patients.

“We really want to be at the forefront—not only of developing new technologies—but of working with industry partners and other groups

to bring personalised mental illness treatment to patients as quickly as we can.”

ECIMH has been developed thanks to the support of Sue Keable, a generous donor to the Epworth Medical Foundation who had the foresight to recognise the significance of mental health research, and the need to develop innovative treatments that will bring critical hope to people experiencing mental health concerns.

This year, the ECIMH has:

- commenced clinical trials of TMS in the treatment of depression and in OCD, aiming to improve treatment access and efficacy through accelerated treatment protocols and comparison of alternative treatment sites
- successfully obtained funding through Perpetual and a large philanthropic donation for a world-first study of mild brain stimulation as a treatment for depression in young people
- completed a highly successful industry-sponsored trial investigating heart rate as a marker of depression symptoms which was the highest recruiting Australian site, and highest recruiting academic site internationally
- in partnership with the Monash Alfred Psychiatry research centre (MAPrc), hosted the inaugural Australasian Brain Stimulation Society seminar, including keynote presentations and a visit to ECIMH by international experts in brain stimulation and mental health research.



## Patient Experience Week

Seeking medical attention can be a stressful experience for patients. Ensuring they have the best experience—no matter what the situation—is central to Epworth’s purpose. This means consistently providing excellent patient care along with safe, high-quality clinical services that are responsive to the needs and expectations of patients and their families.

Executive Director Epworth Rehabilitation and Mental Health Carolyn Bell believes that Patient Experience Week, held in the first week of September, is an opportunity for employees to consider how their care enables the best possible experience for patients and their families.

“Patient Experience Week provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the care we provide to ensure our patients feel safe and supported, and to celebrate everything we do to ensure they leave us having had a positive experience,” Carolyn says.

“It was great to see all of our sites celebrating the week this year and patients also getting involved. I was inspired reading the many messages our patients shared about their experiences. Every single one of our employees makes a significant contribution to the care and experience of our patients, no matter what their role is within the division.”



## Sharing skills with the Pacific online

Epworth Geelong Gastroenterologist Associate Professor Chris Hair has helped provide teaching opportunities for clinicians and better gastroenterology and endoscopy care for patients in the Pacific Islands region through the use of digital technology.

Through collaboration with Dr Payne Perman (from the island nation Pohnpei) and Ms Christina Higa (University of Hawaii), Chris hosts gastrointestinal tele-health education sessions using internet video conferencing. Fifteen clinicians from more than 12 island nations including Pohnpei, American Samoa, Ebeye, Palau, Samoa, Fiji and Marshall Islands participate.

“My vision is to continue to provide high-quality education that is respectful to the resource-limited way that medicine and surgery is practised in the Pacific Islands,” Chris says.

The interactive online learning sessions for Pacific Islands physicians, surgeons and nurses commenced in May 2018, providing

participants with an opportunity to present cases for discussion.

“In the first conference, one doctor generated strong discussion amongst the group after presenting a video recording of a difficult endoscopy that he had performed just hours earlier. After the session, the doctor went back and performed a successful biopsy that very afternoon, which indicates the immediate impact that the conferences can have on clinical outcomes in these areas,” Chris says.

As a founding member of the Australian and New Zealand Gastroenterology International Training Association (ANZGITA), Chris has spent close to a decade assisting the development of endoscopy and gastroenterology through teaching and advocacy in many lower-middle income countries in the Pacific.

The ongoing sessions will be held on the third Friday of every month, with topics on gastroenterology and

hepatology to be decided by the participating nations.

Epworth physicians, nurses and educators with experience in gastroenterology are encouraged to get involved in the interactive conferences. All that is required is a short case study PowerPoint presentation, access to a computer and internet.

**To find out more about this initiative or the work of ANZGITA, contact Associate Professor Chris Hair at Epworth Geelong or visit [anzgita.org](http://anzgita.org).**



## Delivering safe, high-quality care

The clinical services team works closely with all Epworth hospital teams to provide a safe environment for patients by ensuring safety, quality and risk management systems are effective. The team also supports the development of policies and procedures, best practice and informed infection prevention management.

“We support all clinical employees and doctors by making sure that they

can provide safe, high-quality care through effective clinical systems and processes that minimise the risk of avoidable harm to our patients,” says Executive Director Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer Paula Stephenson.

The National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards comprise 10 standards that outline the level of care consumers can expect from health service organisations.

The Epworth Clinical Services team oversees the implementation of actions to improve in each of the 10 standards. These standards provide a baseline to plan and continually improve care services, and reassurance to Epworth patients that they can expect to receive safe, high-quality care.

## Preventing and managing pressure injuries

Pressure injuries are always a risk for patients in long-term hospital care, with significant flow-on effects for patients and the hospital system as a whole, such as increased risk of infection and longer hospital stays.

Throughout 2018, a multipronged approach has been used to reduce the frequency and severity of pressure injuries in all Epworth hospitals and wards. This included a comprehensive pressure injury

education package that was developed to assist clinicians with ready access to the right information and materials for best pressure injury prevention and management.

Initially piloted in the intensive care units, this successful initiative has now been expanded to each clinical area in each hospital, and the total number of pressure injuries occurring has decreased as a result.



## “You’re in the best hands”

Driven by its purpose to provide a superior patient experience, in 2017–18 Epworth Medical Imaging (EMI) developed a customer experience charter communicating its promise to deliver a warm welcome, respectful and efficient service, exceptional knowledge and rapid issue resolution.

A new creative strategy was also developed to reassure patients that “You’re in the best hands”, with powerful new photographic branding used on marketing collateral and building decals.

A patient experience mapping exercise inspired a suite of 18 aftercare brochures that outline post-procedural instructions,

extending patient care beyond discharge, while “Wish you well on your way” postcards issued to patients at discharge provide follow-up contact details for all enquiries.

A customer feedback escalation process was introduced and responses from a new confidential survey are informing service reviews and improvements, which enables EMI to constantly track its performance. The net promoter score currently stands at 80-plus, which is considered world class.





## Partnering with consumers for a positive patient experience

Building strong relationships with users of Epworth's health services is critical for great clinical outcomes and a truly positive patient experience.

In 2018, Epworth introduced a "Know me, wow me, inform me" approach to be embedded in all employee interactions with patients. Quality boards were introduced on each ward to track areas of clinical excellence and identify opportunities to improve the care provided.

Regular patient surveys were conducted to give patients a chance to communicate their experiences at Epworth, while providing Epworth with an opportunity to improve practice and evaluate performance. Surveys demonstrated ongoing improvement and favourable performance against peers. All hospitals closely monitored compliments and complaints,



implemented safety campaigns and continued to drive quality improvement initiatives.

Following consumer feedback, Epworth's childbirth education programs were revised and improved. Epworth also worked with consumers to revise all information booklets for maternity services at Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Geelong.

## Preventing falls and harm from falls

Clinical services across all Epworth hospitals have worked hard to reduce the number of falls patients experience in acute, sub-acute and mental health wards during their hospital stay. Rigorous monitoring and review have seen a reduction in the number of falls, and actions to improve have resulted in a continuing low incidence of harm or serious injuries from falls.

The rehabilitation division developed and implemented a Falls Prevention Program that included physiotherapy and occupational therapy, and involved individualised balance retraining, stretching and strengthening exercises, and gait re-education. Patients were also assisted in developing safety strategies for daily living activities. The program resulted in a significant reduction in falls rates for rehabilitation patients.

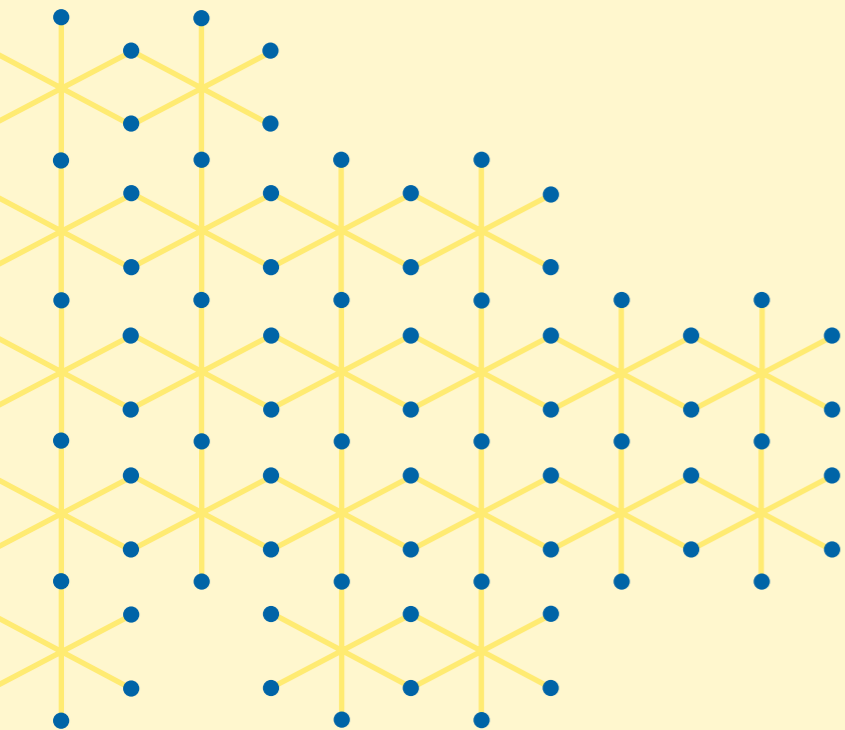
Work is also underway to improve patient care when falls do occur, with a Comprehensive Falls Program being developed for implementation across all Epworth hospitals in 2019.

Epworth has also been an active contributor to wider falls research with the Monash Partners Falls Alliance, resulting in a first publication this year in the *International Journal of Nursing*.





# Our people





## Enabling our people to give and be their best

### Epworth's workforce at a glance

With almost 7,000 employees, more than 2,500 visiting medical officers (VMOs) and more than 300 volunteers, including fundraising volunteers, today over 10,000 people work across Epworth.

Every day, the Epworth workforce works together to provide a round-the-clock service in line with Epworth's patient-centred values, making a critical difference to patients and the community.

In 2017-18, Epworth welcomed 1,467 new employees, with 1,283 attending orientation on their first day of employment. At the end of the financial year, nursing and midwifery represented more than 50 per cent of the workforce.

Epworth has a large, committed and very diverse and inclusive workforce. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency confirmed that Epworth was again assessed as compliant with the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 for the reporting period 2017-18.

### Employee experience and engagement

Highly engaged employees deliver enhanced care to patients, going above and beyond to give their natural best. Whether it is in clinical or support service roles, the link between empowered and engaged employees and patient satisfaction and loyalty is well documented.

To make sure Epworth continues to have a highly engaged culture and delivers the best patient care, every two years since 2009 an employee experience survey has been conducted to track the engagement and experience of Epworth's entire workforce.

In November 2017 the fifth survey was conducted. The results provided meaningful insight into what keeps people engaged, and indicated opportunities for enhancing how

individuals and teams experience their roles within Epworth now, and into the future.

Epworth employees were eager to provide their feedback and thoughts, with a response rate of 71 per cent across the group. Overall, 70 per cent of employees agreed that Epworth is a "truly great place to work".

Epworth's employee engagement level was 57 per cent, indicating that Epworth's culture of ambition remains strong. This finding was particularly positive given the amount of rapid growth and development Epworth has embarked on over the past two years.

The survey results also showed that the substantial investment Epworth makes in its leaders is paying off relative to industry benchmarks, with the top five most positive responses related to "my manager".

Feedback also indicated areas for improvement, including the need for a renewed drive on safety. Another opportunity identified was to help employees explore more efficient ways of working to better manage workload and resource challenges, particularly during peak activity times.

In the financial year 2018/19, Epworth will continue to invest in designing and measuring the employee experience, not only to maintain its rating as a 'truly great place to work', but also to make the Epworth experience a fulfilling one for all employees and in turn, each and every patient.

### Growing careers at Epworth

Epworth's significant investment in leadership and leadership development programs continues to be a key differentiator and hugely successful value proposition, with extensive interest from employees across the group as well as attracting external talent to Epworth.

This year, the leadership development programs on offer were again at

the frontline and operational level, providing many of our emerging and established leaders with targeted development at all stages of their career. The ability for people who are completing the Frontline and Operational Leaders Program to graduate with a Certificate IV, or Diploma of Leadership and Management, respectively, from Swinburne University remains a program standout.

In 2017/18, 30 participants continued or commenced the Operational Leaders Program, and a further 30 participants commenced and completed the Frontline Leaders Program. Participant observers continue to see a strong shift in the leadership behaviour of participants following their completion of the program—reporting on average more than a 40 per cent increase in behavioural change between pre- and post-program measures.

**6,870**  
employees

**2,500+**  
visiting medical officers (VMOs) and salaried doctors

**300+**  
volunteers

**10,000+**  
total people working across Epworth

**1,467**  
new employees in 2017-2018

**>50%**  
of the workforce work in nursing and midwifery



## Health, safety and wellbeing



In 2017, Epworth HealthCare developed a new Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2022. Central to our refreshed strategy is "Care for our patients starts with care for ourselves" and our strategy has six key areas of focus: leadership, accountability, wellbeing, proactive risk management, workplace design and injury management.

Our key objective is safety leadership at all levels. Everyone is accountable for ensuring safety and wellbeing is always front of mind to provide a safe workplace for all employees, patients, visitors and volunteers at all times.

In 2017-18, there was a continued focus on how to improve safety performance to ensure Epworth is a safe place to work. We continued to provide development to our leaders and teams on safety strategy, culture and processes to improve and sustain safety performance across the organisation. Our lost time frequency rate continues to be below 5, which is considered good practice.

### "Safety starts with you" campaign

A patient-centred care culture and the overall success of our organisation depends on every individual—their personal skills, energy and contribution. At the start of 2018, we decided to go back to basics and launched the "Safety starts with you" campaign which included a set of safety rules for every team member to uphold at work. Each rule was supported by a case study, management huddle conversation starter sheet, posters, screensavers, promotional materials and other internal communications promoted by the operational health and safety team and leadership teams at each site.

### Employee wellbeing

Wellbeing program initiatives were also designed to give employees strategies and tools to ensure their wellbeing at work and home. These initiatives continued this year and included health and wellbeing seminars, intranet resources, managing mental health in the workplace, a program to build personal resilience, and an external employee assistance program.

### Safety Week 16-20 October 2017

Safety Week is a major annual event at Epworth. The week is dedicated to promoting safety and wellbeing messages, increasing awareness, building enthusiasm among employees around safety, promoting new initiatives and celebrating successes, for example a reduction in incidents.

The week included a number of Epworth-wide and site-based initiatives including a presentation by Paralympian, Jack Swift.

The theme "What's your safety story?" was built around the concept that safety at work means different things to different people. By acknowledging and embracing these differences, Epworth gained a unique insight into how safety is perceived and what "safe" looks like to team members.

The "What's your safety story?" competition encouraged employees across the organisation to submit their safety story in video, written or image form. It was well received with entries from at all sites and divisions. Winning entries were shared at award events across Epworth sites.

### Health, Safety & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2022

**SAFETY CULTURE**

- ACCOUNTABILITY**
- WELLBEING**
- PROACTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT**
- INJURY MANAGEMENT**
- WORKPLACE DESIGN**

**Leadership**  
I lead by example to keep my people and workplace safe

**Accountability**  
I am accountable to myself and others in my workplace to be safe

**Wellbeing**  
I embrace initiatives that enhance my physical and mental health, resilience and wellbeing for myself and others

**Proactive Risk Management**  
I actively engage in safety activities, including following safe work procedures, to prevent injuries and minimise risk to myself and others

**Workplace Design**  
I recognise the importance of workplace design, including equipment, task workflow, fixtures and fittings to reduce risk of incident and injuries

**Injury Management**  
I report incidents and injuries to ensure my manager/supervisor can facilitate my safe return to work

**Care for our patients starts with care for ourselves**



# Epworth Scholarship Program

## Scholarship recipient profiles

**The Epworth Scholarship Program supports and empowers more than 135 employees each year to improve their skills and experience so that Epworth continues to deliver better patient care.**

The scholarship program is an integral part of Epworth's people strategy and the largest of its kind in any Australian hospital. It offers employees prospects for furthering education and experience and enables career highlights through professional development opportunities, with a real impact for patients through improved quality of care.

Scholarships can be used to attend national or international conferences, return to study, undertake further training in a specialty area, or develop an innovative patient treatment program. The program also funds biannual group study tours to Northwell Health in New York, open to all employees, and the Nursing

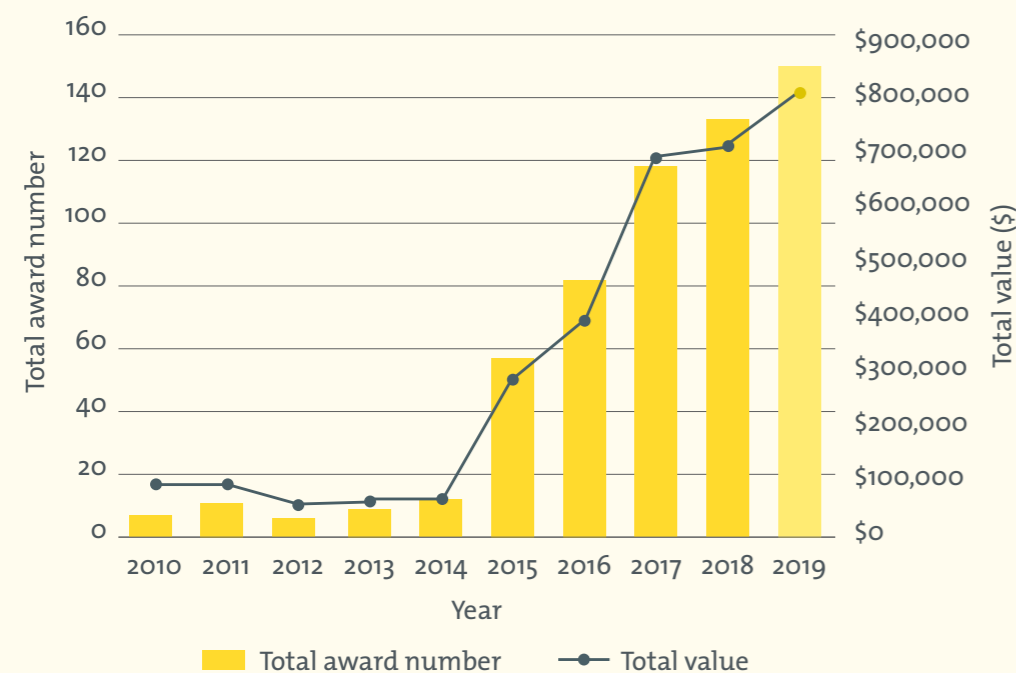
Leadership Experience, which provides mentoring and on-the-job learning to create leaders in nursing. The program is available to employees and recipients across all disciplines in the organisation, including non-clinical cohorts such as food and environmental services.

The scholarship program benefits individual development, allowing recipients to share their knowledge with colleagues and develop and deliver programs for the Epworth community. Funded entirely through gifts from private donors and corporate sponsors, the program invests in and empowers employees by providing them with opportunities they might not otherwise get.

The program has undergone significant growth since its inception in 2010 when six scholarships worth \$19,000 were awarded. For the 2018 calendar year, 135 scholarships were awarded, valued at more than \$700,000.

Scholarship awards are presented across three annual events attended by the Board, Executive, recipients and donors, and are some of the most memorable on the Epworth calendar, celebrating employee achievements and providing an opportunity for donor generosity to be showcased across the organisation.

### Program growth



**Mary Muli (left)**  
Epworth Richmond

Business Manager in Perioperative Services and Critical Care Mary Muli received the 2018 St Jude Medical Scholarship to attend the Operating Room Business Management Conference in Texas in January 2018.

Mary found meeting, learning and hearing from other perioperative business managers and leaders invaluable. She says hearing Christina Dempsey, chief nursing officer at Press Ganey, share her passion for her work reminded her of the value of her own role, and its importance in a patient journey.

"Seeing Christina speak reinvigorated my commitment to the role I play in our hospital. I left the conference knowing that despite the difference between our countries, size, culture, demographics and political

landscape, at the core we all have the same purpose: to empower, support and partner with our colleagues at the coalface so they can provide the best care and experience for our patients," Mary says.

"Being back at work now for three months, the impact of the trip is one of significance. It continues to motivate me to do my best in the day-to-day. The whole trip was incredible."



**Steve Ball**  
Epworth Geelong

A scholarship enabled Steve Ball, Facilities Services Manager at Epworth Geelong, to attend the 25th Congress of the International Federation of Hospital Engineering (IFHE) in Brisbane in October 2017.

"The news that I had been awarded a scholarship was truly humbling. This also reinforced my feeling of being valued and supported by Epworth HealthCare. The generosity of The Susan Harris Foundation caused me to reflect on how valued Epworth is to our community and how our daily contributions make a difference," Steve says.

"The opportunity to meet with hospital engineers from all over the world and learn how they provide healthcare facilities with varying resources is something that was only a dream to me in the past. The financial support provided made that dream come true."

As a result of his attendance at the conference, Steve prepared a business case for the installation of solar panels at Epworth Geelong. In addition to expert knowledge, Steve expanded his professional networks and has since undertaken visits to a range of sites, including the Brisbane Convention Centre, to see renewable energy in action.

Steve's learning was so extensive that he was invited to present at the Melbourne Total Facilities Conference in April 2018. His presentation was titled "What to do when the lights go out" and showcased Epworth Geelong and its model of care.



## Northwell tour and scholars

**A strategic alliance with Northwell Health in New York allows Epworth leaders the opportunity to further develop their professional skills and create relationships with a leading international healthcare group.**

Northwell Health is the largest health care provider and private employer in New York, with 23 hospitals, nearly 700 outpatient facilities, and 67,000 employees. The Northwell Tour and Scholarship Program gives Epworth employees a valuable opportunity to learn from, and make connections with, a not-for-profit healthcare network that operates at a scale not seen in Australia.

In April 2018, nine leaders from a range of clinical and support roles at Epworth went to Northwell Health for a two-week group study tour, which gave them access to global best practice initiatives. Each participant in the tour had a program tailored to their work area to further their knowledge and build on international best practice in healthcare.

The Northwell Tour and Scholarship Program is part of the Epworth Scholarship Program and has been running for the past two years, with nearly 20 employees attending the tours over that time. The scholarship program funds flights, accommodation, on the ground expenses and cultural interactions for the groups.

Medical Director and Director of Emergency at Epworth Geelong, Dr Matt Ryan, investigated service line management in the emergency space along with the concept of freestanding emergency departments. Matt is now exploring standardising data collection and quality activity across Epworth Richmond and Epworth Geelong, as well as future Epworth emergency services.

“Both Epworth and Northwell are not-for-profit, values driven healthcare organisations that have patient care as the focus of all activities. We are both operating in intensely competitive environments

that drive productivity and innovation. Both organisations really value their employees and their development. The Northwell–Epworth tour is a prime example of this commitment,” Matt says.

“My Northwell sponsors tailored the visit to cater to my objectives. I visited multiple hospitals and urgent care centres in Long Island and Manhattan, and had the opportunity to present my learnings to the Northwell executive team at the end of the two weeks.”

After the tour, participants are responsible for translating their opportunities into quality improvement initiatives. Nurse Unit Manager Kaddy Fogarty had explored ways to improve the education provided to patients upon discharge, with the aim of reducing the number of calls from patients once home. She is now helping to develop content for Epworth Connect—an app that patients can engage with pre- and post-discharge.

The scholarship program continues to be a compelling element of Epworth’s employee value proposition. Matt found the program invaluable. Unforeseen benefits included building invaluable international networks, and collaborative cross-divisional relationships with other recipients of the scholarship.

“This scholarship was truly a career highlight for me and I cannot thank the Epworth Medical Foundation enough for the opportunity. I have worked in multiple hospitals and organisations across the public and private sectors for more than 20 years and have not come across anything like the program. I am truly grateful for the investment in me and the experience,” Matt says.

“Perhaps unexpectedly the best part of the experience by far was getting to know my Epworth colleagues from other areas and divisions. As a result, I feel that I have a much deeper understanding of Epworth—quite apart from my own small area of the emergency department in Geelong.”

Northwell participants developed significant professional connections and lifelong friendships from the program and as a result self-facilitated the development of an alumni group to continue to support and inspire each other.

Thanks to the generosity of Epworth’s donors and sponsors, the program offers incredible opportunities for Epworth to empower employees.



## Volunteers caring for patients

Epworth’s more than 300 volunteers perform a special role, supporting patients, their families and friends in multiple ways as they are cared for and treated at Epworth. Deeply valued by patients and employees alike, these volunteers contribute their time and skills so that patients and their families can receive the best possible care.

“At Epworth, volunteers across all our sites have the ability to impact patients and visitors in a really personalised way. Our volunteers give time, energy and compassion that really makes a difference at Epworth,” says Group Manager Volunteer Program Tara Cantwell.

Epworth strongly values the role community plays in enhancing patient care. National Volunteer Week in May and the Volunteer Christmas celebration in 2017 were both opportunities to recognise the volunteers who give time and support to Epworth, with 21 individuals celebrated who have contributed between five and 25 years of service. Many of these volunteers have been former patients who valued their experience at Epworth and wanted to give back to the community in some way.

One of those honoured was long-term volunteer, Jan Richards. Jan has been a part of the program since 2002, and received a certificate celebrating her 15 years of service in December 2017. Jan is a volunteer in the emergency department, a mentor and trainer for new volunteers, and a key member of the Volunteer Policy Advisory Group that reviews Epworth policy and provides recommendations for change from a volunteer perspective.

Receiving the honour was quite unexpected for Jan, but she was thrilled by the acknowledgement.

“I wanted to volunteer, and I really wanted to volunteer at somewhere I knew. I’ve been a patient at Epworth, as have my parents, so it made sense to volunteer at

Epworth. Volunteers very much help to improve the patient experience and reduce the load for nurses and healthcare providers. In the emergency ward, volunteers help to ease tension for families as much as patients,” Jan says.

To provide additional services and extend the level of care that volunteers offer to patients, in the last financial year, Epworth established volunteer teams for seven new programs, including the Wig Salon at Epworth Eastern and Epworth Geelong, the Renal Dialysis volunteer drivers for Epworth Eastern and Epworth Geelong and the uniform shop and patient administration support service at Epworth Richmond. This was enabled by 78 new volunteers joining the team.

Volunteers undergo a training and orientation program, and employees work closely with the team to ensure the experience is interesting, diverse and enriching. Volunteers also enjoyed a professional new look this year, courtesy of a new uniform to enhance their high levels of customer service.

**“I would like to send a huge thank you to the lovely lady (volunteer) at the concierge desk yesterday. With the storm rolling through yesterday afternoon, she kindly offered to take care of my unwell little boy and his pram while I dashed out to get my car to avoid us both getting soaked. Such a small act of care made such a significant impact on our afternoon being able to get him in the car warm and dry.”**

Patient feedback



Jan Richards receives her service award from Executive Director People & Culture, Maree Feery



## Valuing Epworth's women

International Women's Day (IWD) commemorates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women through unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy and action. Epworth has a strong commitment to gender equity and female leadership, with 5,000 female employees, and women making up 63 per cent of management.

For IWD on 8 March 2018, Epworth wanted to celebrate the contributions its many female employees make to healthcare. The campaign theme #PressforProgress, provided a rally point, along with selfie stations and the opportunity for Epworth's women to share their stories and achievements with employees and the wider community.

"International Women's Day presents a great opportunity to celebrate and recognise the achievements of the many outstanding women that make up 77 per cent of our large, diverse workforce," says Executive Director People & Culture, Maree Feery.

**"At Epworth, we have so many positive female role models, from the many women we have in leadership roles, to the women who care for and support our patients every day. The Epworth community also includes a significant number of very committed female visiting medical officers (VMOs) who partner with us and treat patients in all of our hospitals and services. We have women who volunteer and generously give their time, care and support to our patients, families and employees. Epworth couldn't be what it is without them."**

**Maree Feery**  
Executive Director  
People & Culture



Employees celebrating International Women's Day

**77%**

of Epworth's workforce is female

**60%**

of the Board is female

**63%**

of management is female

**58%**

of the Group Executive team is female

**45%**

of the female workforce are part-time

### Megan Kiteley Physiotherapist Epworth Brighton



#### What do you do at work that is most meaningful to you?

My role as a rehabilitation physiotherapist involves the twice-daily treatment of inpatients at Epworth Brighton. They are admitted following a range of surgeries such as elective joint replacements and spinal surgeries, and are also patients who have had motor vehicle accidents with multiple traumatic injuries, or those requiring geriatric reconditioning, falls rehabilitation and chronic pain management.

I feel blessed to be in a job where I directly contribute to improving a person's physical capability to perform an everyday task, such as returning to walking. The rewarding nature of this does not wear off, and still makes me feel excited for that person and motivated to help them every single day.

#### What are some of the biggest opportunities for supporting women in healthcare?

I consider Epworth an organisation that promotes women in positions of leadership. My three tiers of

managers are all female and I have great respect for all of them. I think one of the biggest challenges in the hospital setting is the unbalanced ratio of particular roles. In nursing, it would be nice to see a shift of more men in these roles to promote equality in workplaces, so no position can be presumed to be more male than female.

#### Who has been the biggest inspiration for you in your career?

My inspirations are the generations of strong and resilient women in my family. My incredible and lovely late nanna, Dorothy, was a patient at Epworth Brighton way back in 2007 after a very complicated necrotic hip required her to have a hip replacement.

I had a moment of clarity as I watched my nanna talk glowingly and gratefully about the physio who was treating her. She spoke fondly of how the physio had helped her feel stronger and get her back on her feet, and how important that progress was for her at the time. Bingo! That's exactly what I want to do. I want to be that person and have

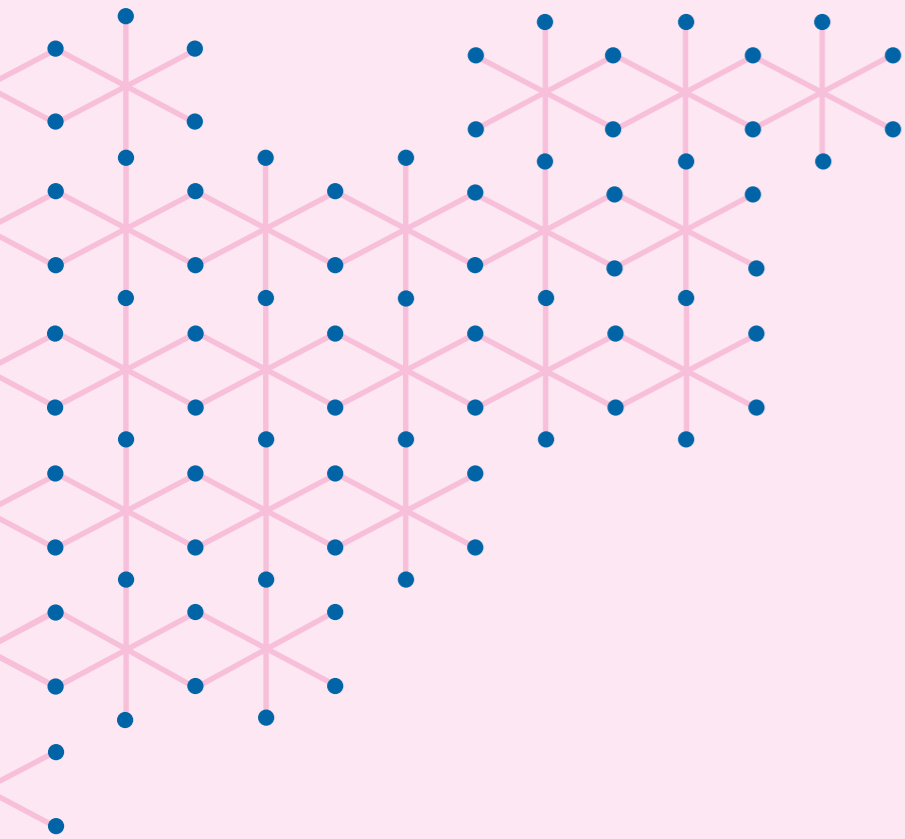
always aspired to be like the physio who made my nanna feel safe and motivated to get better.

I transferred in 2008 from Arts to a Bachelor of Physiotherapy at Monash University, and without an inch of doubt know this was the right decision. I love reflecting that I happen to work at the very same hospital, more than 10 years after my nanna was here.

My other career inspiration is my mum. She is an Alfred-trained nurse who has worked tirelessly for years on the wards at various hospitals in Melbourne. She now specialises in urological nursing in a leadership position where she is highly trained in the latest evidence-based practice in catheterisation. Growing up, I would listen to her talk about nursing and caring for people in their most vulnerable moments without judgement or a hint of impatience. She urged me to honour this code of integrity and respect that we should use in every single interaction with a patient. Most importantly, she taught me to treat everyone as if they are your own family.



# Innovating for **exceptional outcomes**





## Six new da Vinci robots

This year Epworth HealthCare received one of the organisation's largest benefactions since opening in 1920, assisting the organisation to make a significant and unique investment.

The purchase of six new da Vinci robots was possible thanks to a very generous donation by global financial services company La Trobe Financial, which selected Epworth Medical Foundation for its major annual donation through its corporate social responsibility program.

"Knowing that Epworth's clinical employees, and their patients, have access to a range of leading edge and world's best practice medical equipment was important to us," says La Trobe Financial's President and CEO Greg O'Neill.

The da Vinci robot is a laparoscopic surgical machine with robotic arms that move millimetre by millimetre inside a patient, as directed by a surgeon, who sits nearby operating hand and foot controls to manipulate a 3D camera and robotic instruments inside the patient's body. The new robots—the latest X and Xi models—were installed in June 2018, enabling more surgeons to access this technology for their patients.

During robotic surgery, the patient lies on the operating table with the robotic arms positioned in the surgical area through tiny incisions. Surgeons say they can reach areas with the robot that they cannot reach with their hands. The machine is not capable of independent movement.

The benefits to patients who have robotic-assisted surgery include smaller incisions, less scarring, decreased blood loss, lower risk of infection and often a shorter hospital stay. The technology also offers great advantages for the

surgeon—the 3D camera in the robot gives a complete view of the area inside the patient and its small, flexible arms give the surgeon unparalleled dexterity and control.

In 2003, Epworth pioneered robotically-assisted surgery in the Southern Hemisphere and installed Australia's first surgical robot at Epworth Richmond. Epworth has since performed more than 10,000 robotically-assisted procedures and plays a significant role in clinical research and the training required for robotic procedures. More than 100 surgeons across the group have used the da Vinci robots, with more surgeons applying for training each year.

Epworth's early investment in robotic technology has resulted in several Australian firsts in urology, cardiology, gynaecology and general surgery. The most common procedure performed using the da Vinci robot (at Epworth or worldwide) is radical prostatectomy, a procedure that removes the prostate gland and the surrounding tissues. Robotic surgery is used for more than 90 per cent of radical prostatectomies in the United States, and increasingly is replacing open surgery or other laparoscopic techniques in Australia. Other procedures that use robotic-assisted surgery include:

**urology:** partial nephrectomy (removing cancer and preserving kidney) and pyeloplasty (repairing blocked kidney)

**gynaecology:** hysterectomy, prolapse repair, fibroid removal to preserve the uterus

**cardiothoracic:** mitral valve surgery, removal of thymus gland

**colorectal:** removal of rectal cancer

**endocrinology:** thyroid removal

**radical cystectomy for bladder cancer**

**selected head and neck cancers (trans-oral robotic surgery).**

Thanks to the generosity of La Trobe Financial, Epworth has the largest number of da Vinci systems in a single state of any healthcare group in Australia. The robots will be available to surgeons at four sites: Epworth Richmond; Epworth Freemasons; Epworth Geelong; and Epworth Eastern.



*Thanks to the incredibly generous support of La Trobe Financial we've been able to purchase this equipment for our patients and surgeons. The gift from La Trobe Financial is one of the largest gifts ever received by Epworth HealthCare and is a reflection of La Trobe's desire to support their community.*



First surgery performed using the new da Vinci robot

### Australian-first paediatric robotic surgery at Epworth Richmond

In March 2018, an Australian-first paediatric procedure, performed by Head and Neck Surgeon Dr Ben Dixon, successfully removed a patient's rare sarcoma using robotic surgery at Epworth Richmond.

The patient was six-year-old Freyja Christiansen. It was during a desperate search for treatments overseas that a conversation with Boston Children's Hospital led Freyja's mother, Liz Christensen, to Dr Dixon.

"Robotic surgery was deemed the best option to remove the sarcoma in the first procedure because it was located between the carotid artery and the base of the skull; and therefore not accessible from the lateral neck," Ben says.

Freyja and her family were living in New South Wales; however, they were unable to find a surgeon in Sydney who had access to a robot in a hospital with a paediatric ward. At the time, the family found there were similarly limited options when searching in other states, including Victoria.

"We knew that if Epworth could not take the case, it would be difficult for Freyja to have her condition managed surgically in Australia," Ben says.

Using the latest in clinical innovation and technology such as robotic surgery, Epworth is proud to offer effective solutions for complex surgeries to its adult, and now paediatric, patients.



Surgeon Ben Dixon with paediatric patient, Freyja, and her mum, Liz



One of the da Vinci robot surgical teams

Epworth has a proud history of Australian robotic surgery:



First radical prostatectomy (prostate gland and surrounding tissue removal) using robot



First radical cystectomy (bladder removal) using robot



First cardiac surgery using robot



First hysterectomy using robot



First hospital to install a dual-console robot for training



## Epworth introduces neurosurgical services to Geelong

**Patients in Geelong and surrounds who experience neurosurgical emergencies, such as brain haemorrhage and trauma, can now be diagnosed and treated locally, thanks to the introduction of Epworth Geelong's neurosurgery unit.**

Until Epworth Geelong opened its neurosurgery unit in 2017, treatment options for patients with neurosurgical emergencies were non-existent in Geelong, with patients having to travel to Melbourne for surgery. The new neurosurgery unit will help support the health of the community, and confirms Epworth Geelong's commitment as the leading provider of healthcare within Greater Geelong, offering the best in patient diagnosis, treatment and care.

Consultant Neurosurgeon Mr Nicholas Hall relocated from Melbourne to take up consultancy at Epworth Geelong in 2016, and was staggered at the difficulty patients formerly had in accessing critical treatments in the region. He believes clinical outcomes for patients have improved dramatically as a result of the service.

"This was a fantastic opportunity to establish a much-needed neurosurgery service to a growing region, while ensuring high-quality service and level of care from the outset. Previously, critically ill patients had to be transferred to Melbourne which, even by air ambulance, can take several hours. For a critically ill patient this may mean the difference between life and death or a terrible neurological outcome," Nicholas says.

Nicholas is an internationally renowned expert in minimally invasive spinal surgery and specialises in the treatment of patients with complex skull-based tumours and trigeminal neuralgia. He has been involved in almost 400 neurosurgical theatre cases since relocating to Epworth Geelong.

Nicholas heads the neurosurgery unit which has state-of-the-art facilities to deal with neurosurgical emergencies such as brain haemorrhage and trauma, as well as assisting patients in the region with cerebral tumours, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), Guillain-Barré syndrome and pain disorders.

"We have the most up-to-date diagnostic imaging equipment at Epworth Geelong. In theatre, the hospital has invested in a robotic 3D imaging system from Siemens called the Artis zeego. This, combined with fully radiolucent operating tables from Maquet and 3D spinal navigation systems from Stryker, allows minimally invasive navigation along the whole spine ensuring the placement of rods, screws and cages with high levels of accuracy and small incisions," Nicholas says.

"This cutting-edge technology makes spinal fusion procedures for patients faster, safer and offers a quicker recovery. The hospital has also invested in cutting-edge cranial navigation systems as well as the best microscopes and additional equipment."

The facilities mean that patients now have access to a complete range of surgical treatments for all spine-related diseases at Epworth Geelong, with keyhole surgery enabling patients to mobilise and resume activities earlier after surgery.

Epworth Geelong Chief Executive Officer Damian Armour believes investing in services at Epworth Geelong is vital in preparing for

both the changing landscape of healthcare and the needs of the local community.

"With a population growth of nearly three per cent in the past year, Geelong is the only city in Australia that is growing faster than Melbourne. This growth comes with additional pressure for health options and key services. In line with our strategic plan, our commitment is to extend local service offerings like neurosurgery to improve health outcomes and patient experience within the region," Damian says.



Neurosurgeon Mr Nicholas Hall



## Victorian first helps patients breathe easier

**With the launch of its new interventional pulmonology service, Epworth Eastern is Victoria's first private hospital to offer procedures including bronchial thermoplasty, allowing patients like Rachel Cairnduff to breathe a sigh of relief.**

Rachel, 30, a former nurse and mother of two, coped with chest infections or pneumonia complications as a regular part of her busy life for more than 20 years and was diagnosed with adult-onset asthma at the age of 27. The condition regularly leaves Rachel short of breath and, this year alone, she has been prescribed eight courses of antibiotics. Rachel describes the feeling as "like breathing through a straw" and often finds herself coughing and wheezing.

"The worst thing about it is the exhaustion. I still don't have my breathing under control even though I take five or six medications every morning and evening," Rachel says. "I force myself to walk every day, but can only manage the flat surfaces near my home. My husband goes ahead with our dogs and I walk from telegraph pole to telegraph pole with a rest at each one to catch my breath."

Rachel was relieved when her respiratory specialist Dr Nick Wilsmore suggested that bronchial thermoplasty might be the best way to treat her condition. The procedure is relatively new in Australia and is being used for patients for whom various medical therapies have been trialled but did not work as well as hoped.

During bronchial thermoplasty, a catheter inside a bronchoscope (a thin, flexible, tube-like instrument) is inserted through the patient's nose or mouth and as far as possible into the patient's lungs. The catheter is used to heat parts of the lungs to 65 degrees Celsius, which destroys the smooth muscle tissue that constricts during an asthma attack.

"The smooth muscle tissue doesn't serve a purpose and removing it opens the airway. Following the procedure, the patient shouldn't have as severe asthma attacks," Nick explains.

This process continues until a whole area of the lung has been treated. The procedure lasts for about one hour and up to three sessions may be necessary to treat as much of the lung tissue as possible.

Epworth Eastern is the first private hospital in Victoria to provide bronchial thermoplasty treatment and has set a new benchmark in treatments for patients with asthma.

Rachel saw an improvement in her symptoms in the weeks following the first procedure, which took place in September, at the beginning of Epworth's annual Patient Experience Week. Months later, Rachel has seen a profound improvement in her asthma symptoms, medication requirements and quality of life. She has not used Ventolin in months, having previously been too scared to leave the house without it," Nick says.

This potentially life-changing technique promises hope to sufferers of asthma that they will be able to breathe a little easier and enjoy an improved quality of life in the future.



Dr Nick Wilsmore (middle) performing bronchial thermoplasty on patient Rachel Cairnduff



## Setting new standards in cancer care

**The Department of Molecular Oncology and Cancer Immunology has become a hub for innovation and the implementation of precision medicine, and is now delivering cellular therapies, in a first for patients at Epworth Freemasons.**

For patients with traditionally incurable cancer cases, genomic testing and cellular therapies are showing promise in guiding effective treatment decisions. The Department of Molecular Oncology and Cancer Immunology (MOCI) at Epworth Freemasons is leading the delivery of the latest innovations in cancer care for the benefit of Epworth's patients, by seamlessly integrating world-class clinical research with new treatment options.

Established in early 2017 in collaboration with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and the University of Melbourne, Medical Director Professor Miles Prince helped develop MOCI into a thriving hub of research and innovation. The MOCI team has grown rapidly, and now includes eight talented medical, scientific and administrative employees.

Deputy Medical Director Dr Costas Yannakou believes MOCI's frontline role in exploring the delivery of cellular therapies for patients with blood cancers provides real hope for patients who have been told their cancer was incurable.

"Cellular therapies represent the next frontier in the treatment of cancer because these living medicines promise cures where none existed previously. We are determined to ensure Epworth is ready to take the lead in implementing these paradigm-shifting therapies that are now beginning to make their way from the bench to the bedside," Costas says.

Similar hopes now exist for patients with genetic abnormalities. The presence of MOCI medical scientists

at both Epworth Freemasons and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre enables the team to manage the entire genomic testing process, from the transfer of samples between laboratories to the delivery of reports, saving doctors' time and delivering fast, best-quality results.

In 2012, patient Alan Anderson was diagnosed with a non-Hodgkin lymphoma called Waldenstrom's disease, where cancer cells make large amounts of abnormal protein called macroglobulins. Testing showed an amplification of chromosome 9p involving an important immune checkpoint protein called the PDL-1 gene, which can be targeted with pembrolizumab (a PD-1 inhibitor).

"The disease mutated in December 2017 and involved my central nervous system. I was treated with chemotherapy for three months, but the disease rapidly re-emerged. My prognosis was very poor, as the disease with which I was afflicted is very aggressive," Alan says.

"Professor Prince then recommended I start treatment with Pembrolizumab, commencing in June 2018. As a consequence, I have been in remission for the past four months. The Pembrolizumab treatment has given me uplifting hope. I am very grateful to Professor Prince for his outstanding and unfailing care."

Latest tests have shown Alan has no evidence of cancer in his bone marrow for the first time.

MOCI's latest activities include the launch of the MOCI Biobank Study, a repository of clinical data and

patient samples that will help fuel the next generation of translational, investigator-initiated research in the fields of genomics and cancer immunology.

Collaboration between Epworth researchers performing clinical research and MOCI has enabled the development and implementation of various investigator-initiated studies, including projects on endometrial, thyroid, pancreatic and colorectal cancer. Epworth colleagues are also supported by the MOCI team in study design and translational genomics.

The roles and activities of MOCI continue to advance and expand, with projects in pharmacogenomics, circulating tumour DNA (liquid biopsy) biomarker assessment and advanced myeloid disorders currently under development.



## Point of Care upgrades enhance patient experience

Improving the in-hospital experiences of Epworth patients is critical to ensuring a smooth and effective recovery. Epworth uses the Point of Care system, an interactive touchscreen terminal located in each patient's room to improve the overall patient experience by involving them in decision-making regarding their care and providing patients with access to information during their stay. It is also an essential tool used by clinical and non-clinical employees to ensure Epworth provides patients with the best care possible.

More than 1,400 Point of Care patient terminals are in use across Epworth. The system provides patients with access to educational resources and hospital information, plus a range of entertainment options including TV, radio, movies, audio books, internet access and games. The system is well used by both employees and patients—approximately 15,000 nurse rounds and 700 leader rounds are entered into Point of Care each day.

Epworth has continued to develop Point of Care over the past year.

At Richmond and Geelong, patients can order meals on demand through the system and have the ability to order a la carte breakfast, lunch and dinner at flexible times.

A new feature of the system makes it easier for nurses to request other Epworth employees, such as rehabilitation referral specialists or dietitians, visit patients to address specific needs. By providing this function at the bedside through Point of Care, nurses can maximise the amount of time they spend with patients and minimise time lost to administrative tasks.

Additional improvements to the system over the past year include:

- the ability to tailor content for patient education to the patient's admitting speciality, further personalising the patient's experience
- trialling the use of daily patient goals set by the allied health team—goals are marked by the patient as they are completed throughout the day



- adding request buttons for new mothers seeking assistance such as help with bathing their baby or support with feeding
- the option for Geelong mothers to request a photo with their newborn.

To enhance continuity of care, discharge planning surveys are provided to patients through Point of Care. These surveys provide an interactive way for employees to work with patients on their plans for leaving hospital, and mean that conversations can commence soon after admission to ensure patients are well prepared for their discharge.

## Setting a steady pace for cardiac patients

Earlier this year, Epworth Eastern Cardiologist Dr Michael Wong successfully implanted a Micra leadless pacemaker in a cardiac patient—a first for the Epworth HealthCare Group and life-changing for the patient, Graeme Henwood, who is aged in his 60s.

Most pacemakers are placed in the patient's chest with leads attached to the heart, but the Micra pacemaker is implanted completely within the patient's heart. Much smaller than conventional pacemakers, the new pacemaker is the size of a bullet or a large vitamin capsule.

"There are minimal external scars or wounds as well as less pain and a faster recovery time from the insertion of a leadless pacemaker. This is done via a skin puncture into a large blood

vessel at the top of the leg as opposed to a three-centimetre skin incision under the collarbone in traditional pacemaker systems," Michael says.

"I was very pleased with the outcome of the procedure which went smoothly, with no issues or complications. In particular, I was impressed with how Epworth Eastern's cardiac catheterisation lab employees adapted so quickly to the protocols required for this new procedure, which was a first for the group."

The leadless pacemaker is a new state-of-the-art technology for patients, which can reduce the complications typically associated with traditional pacemakers. Michael says that other advantages of the Micra pacemaker include a reduced amount of implanted hardware, which

minimises the risk of infection, blood clots and pacing lead problems.

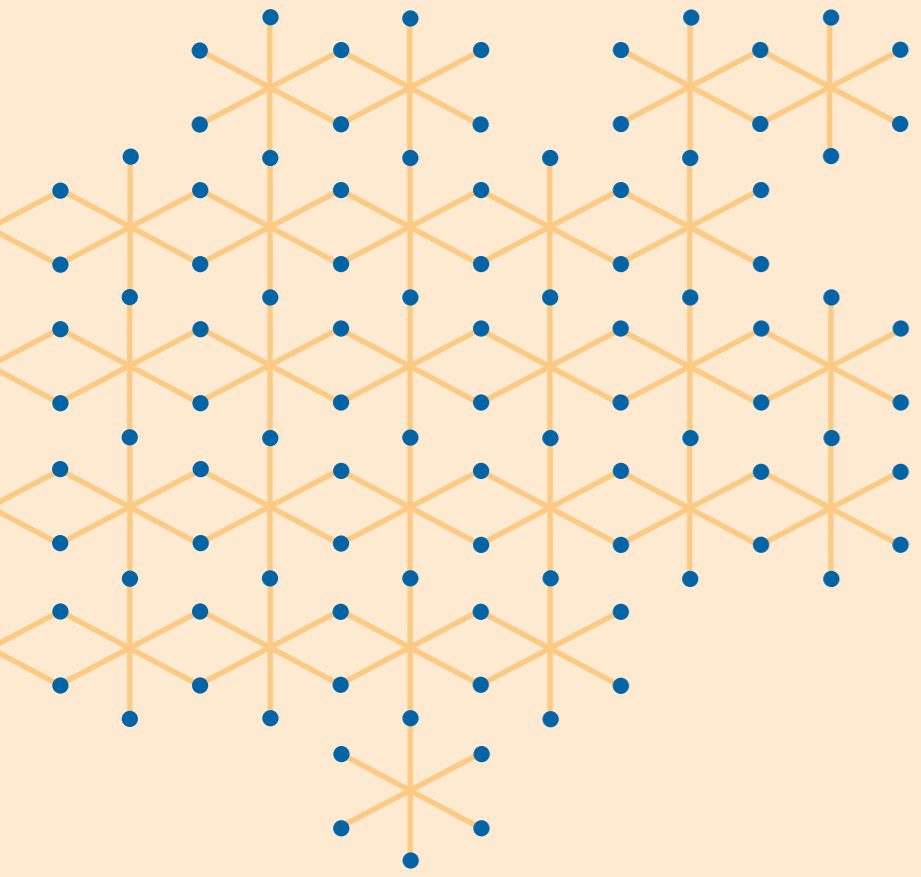
Michael was thrilled that Graeme, who had a previously infected aortic valve which required redo surgery and slow atrial fibrillation, made a wonderful recovery from the procedure and was able to return to his hobbies of clay target shooting and welding.



The Micra pacemaker is implanted within the patient's heart



# Research and education





# Early lung cancer detection



**Epworth is the only private hospital in an international trial being funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). It gives patients the opportunity to be screened for lung cancer as a means for early diagnosis.**

For most patients with lung cancer, diagnosis comes far too late. Often symptoms don't occur until the cancer is well advanced, giving patients and their doctors little chance to successfully battle the disease.

Funded by the NHMRC, Australia's peak funding body for medical research, the International Lung Screening Trial hopes to set the stage for a national screening program so that lung cancer can be detected before it advances.

Clinical Trial Study Coordinator at Epworth Eastern Belinda Dresser works in association with the Eastern Clinical Research Unit, and says the experience has been reassuring for patients.

"Patients have been given access to a free lung cancer screening service that offers reassurance to those with normal scans, but more importantly the opportunity to detect early asymptomatic lung cancer in patients at risk, at a stage when it might be curable."

Epworth Eastern is ideally placed to deliver the trial and support any ongoing treatment required with a strong group of interventional pulmonologist specialists, thoracic surgeons and oncologists on site. Box Hill is also one of the highest catchments in Australia for lung cancer.

Of 170 patients who have been screened thus far, 103 patients were eligible for the trial. To meet the criteria for the study, patients had to be over 55 and a current or ex-smoker. A questionnaire helped screen clients, and those at a calculated risk of developing lung cancer were given a low-dose

computed tomography (LDCT) scan and lung function test. The trial is ongoing.

Respiratory Physician at Epworth Eastern Dr Paul Fogarty explains how eligible patients were broken into groups depending on their risk of lung cancer.

"The tests at their initial visit included a LDCT scan of the chest and respiratory function tests. Based on the results of the scan, patients were then stratified in categories according to the risk of lung cancer. Most patients were Category 1, meaning the scan was normal or showed minor abnormalities with no risk of lung cancer. These patients will have a follow-up scan in two years, which is the second part of the trial," Paul says.

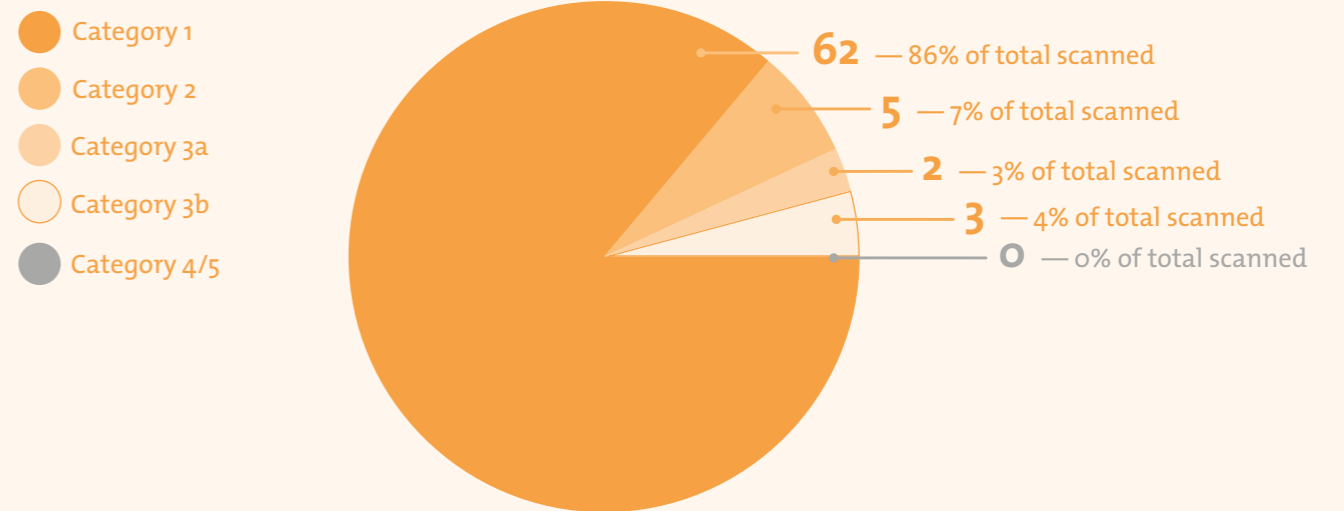
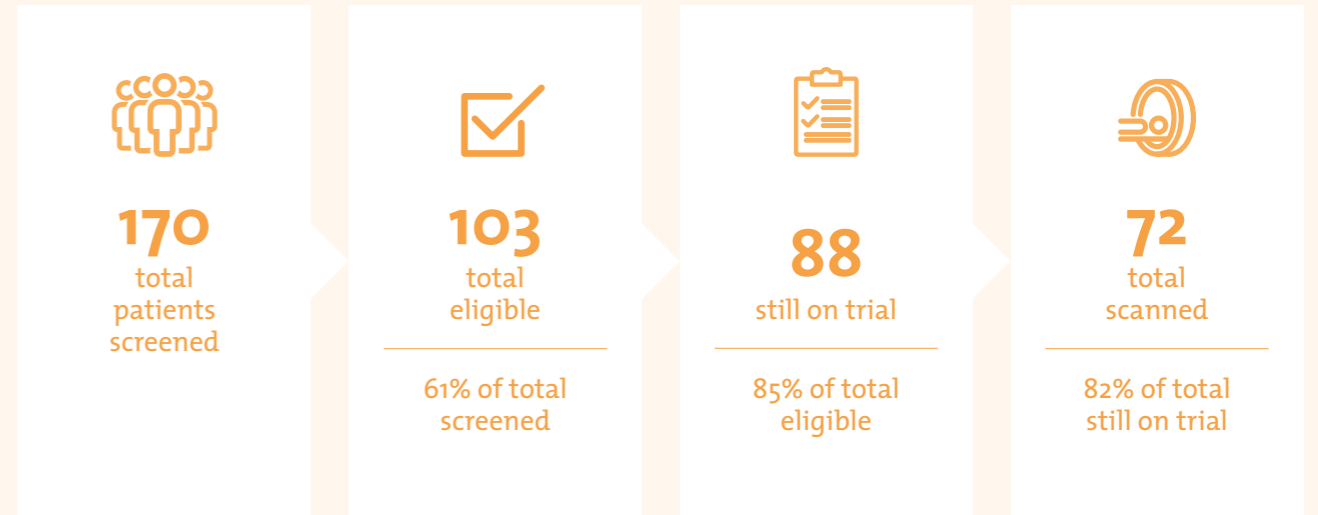
"Category 2 patients have an abnormality which is thought to be of very low risk for lung cancer but requiring an earlier follow-up scan in 12 months. Category 3 patients have a more significant abnormality thought to require close evaluation. These patients are either recommended to have a follow-up scan in three months or referred for a specialist assessment, which may involve further specific tests such as a PET scan or a biopsy. Categories 4 and 5 show abnormalities highly suspicious of lung cancer which require immediate action, but we haven't had anyone in this category on the trial so far."

The idea for the screening trial originated in Vancouver, Canada, and was supported by Professor Kwun Fong at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, who involved several Australian sites to successfully attract NHMRC funding.

However, uniquely, with all other trial sites funded by the NHMRC, Epworth Eastern approached the group and were accepted as a site for the trial attaching their own funding thanks to the generous donations provided through Epworth Medical Foundation.

Executive Director Epworth Eastern Louise O'Connor says the trial meets a vital need.

"Anything we can do as early intervention to prevent someone going through lung cancer is a bonus. My father died of lung cancer. It's a very hard thing to diagnose, so he wasn't diagnosed until he was at Category 4. If the research shows a standardised pathway so we can pick up on even 50 per cent of lung cancers before they spread, that would be an amazing result."





## Pioneering prostate cancer research

**Despite all our scientific advances, almost 3,500 men in Australia die every year from prostate cancer. A new partnership between Epworth and the E.J. Whitten Foundation seeks to change that.**

Announced in June 2018 as part of Men's Health Week, the partnership brings together two leading players in prostate cancer and urological research, while a joint investment of \$2 million helped fund a team of researchers, support employees, facilities and equipment.

"Our aim is to carry on Ted Whitten's legacy to inspire men to take charge of their health. We are passionate about projects that save men from dying too young from this disease," says CEO of the E.J. Whitten Foundation, Nick Holland.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia, representing 33 per cent of all cancers in men, and accounting for around 20,000 new cases diagnosed per year.

Improving and extending the lives of men with prostate cancer is the focus of the E.J. Whitten Foundation Prostate Cancer Research Centre at Epworth, which uses world-first clinical trials to improve the lives of men diagnosed with the disease.

Epworth has long been at the frontline of new treatments in prostate research. It pioneered robotic surgery in Australia, and was the first to offer this treatment for men with prostate cancer. The centre is exploring better diagnosis and treatment options, giving patients the opportunity to be part of studies that might extend their life. It is also enabling researchers and physicians to apply a tailored approach to the disease, so patients get targeted treatments for even better outcomes.

The centre is led by Epworth Urologist, Associate Professor Nathan Lawrentschuk. Nathan brings a highly collaborative approach to

research with local and international recognition for his advancements in imaging and improving outcomes of patients undergoing surgery for urologic cancers.

Nathan believes the partnership will allow the centre to explore more effective ways of treating the disease by fostering a "bench to bedside" approach to prostate research. With Epworth treating half of all men diagnosed in Victoria, the impact of the new centre is likely to be significant.

"The centre will allow various treatment approaches to be tested and validated at the same time. By targeting projects that can be recruited and completed through Epworth and its physicians, we can ensure men have access to cutting-edge treatments. It will also benefit men diagnosed in the future, so we can cure or turn prostate cancer into a controllable chronic disease," Nathan says.

Clinical trials include the GAP4, a sponsored Movember study which runs exercise programs for men with advanced prostate cancer. It hopes to improve quality of life for patients while slowing the progression of the disease.

The centre is also exploring how it can treat prostate cancer without some of the traditional side effects. The FIRE trial uses a device called the NanoKnife to pass an electrical current through prostate tissue, leading to prostate cancer cell death.

"Thanks to better ways of treating and managing the initial diagnosis, many forms of prostate cancer are now treatable, and some are even curable," Nathan says.

For patients with advanced cancer, the centre is researching ways to give them a better chance of long-term survival. TOPAIM, an aggressive first-line therapy, won a Perpetual Trustees competitive grant to use advanced Positron Emission Tomography (PET) imaging techniques to localise and treat oligometastatic disease. These are formed when cancer cells from the original tumour form new tumours in other parts of the body. While still in development, the technique may ultimately be able to cure metastatic prostate cancer, giving hope to thousands of men who historically might have been told their cancer was incurable.

In the meantime, aggressive treatment of the primary tumour is helping prevent some of the associated complications, such as pain and a frequent or urgent need to urinate, and delays or prevents the need for androgen deprivation therapy, which starves the body of testosterone.

Since 1995 the E.J. Whitten Foundation has raised more than \$12 million for men's health and prostate cancer awareness and research in the hope of stopping the leading form of cancer found in men. The E.J. Whitten Foundation Prostate Cancer Research Centre at Epworth is 100 per cent donor funded, thanks to the generous supporters of Epworth Medical Foundation and E.J. Whitten Foundation.



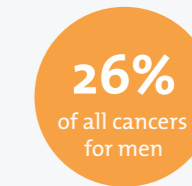
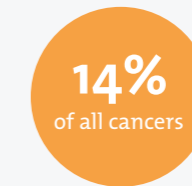
Associate Professor Nathan Lawrentschuk



**Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia**



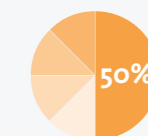
**Prostate cancer is the leading cancer in men**



**Prostate cancer was the third ranked cause of cancer death for men (710 deaths, 12 per cent of total) in 2015 with rates continuing to decrease at 1.1 per cent per year**



**In 2017 Epworth managed 2,309 unique patients with prostate cancer**



**Based on 2015 data from the Cancer Council, Epworth is currently managing just over 50 per cent of the state's prostate cancer patients**



## Enhancing outcomes for children with food allergies

**National capacity to manage children with allergic disorders is limited due to a dramatic increase in the prevalence of these disorders in childhood. The Centre for Paediatric Allergies is dedicated to finding answers.**

Rates of food allergy diagnoses have increased significantly in recent decades in developed countries. Australia has one of the highest incidences of food allergies in the world, with one in 10 babies born today developing a food allergy.

Food allergies can impact childhood development, with lower school attendance rates and reduced quality of life for food-allergic children and their families. Fatalities from food allergies are rare, but emergency presentations at hospitals are not, with deaths from food-related anaphylaxis most common in teenagers and young adults.

To support research into paediatric allergies and immunology, in 2018 Epworth launched the Centre for Paediatric Allergies in partnership with the Australian Food Allergy Foundation.

The Centre is enabling Epworth to expand its inpatient service for children, significantly reducing the burden on the public sector. It is also enabling a dedicated team of clinical researchers to undertake world-leading research into paediatric allergies.

The Centre is headed by Paediatric Allergist and Immunologist Dr Joanne Smart, who has been involved in the care of children with allergic and immune disorders since 1998. She is supported by a group of experienced and passionate nursing and senior medical employees dedicated to providing exceptional clinical care.

"I have had the privilege of caring for children with allergic diseases for the past 20 years. This new partnership will allow food allergy research to be conducted alongside a state-of-the-art clinical service focussed on providing world-class care of children and families affected by food allergy," Joanne says.

"In time we hope to progress from a management approach of allergen avoidance and risk-minimisation to one of primary prevention. Ultimately we hope to see cures for those with established food allergies."

Joanne is joined by Paediatric Allergist Dr John Ainsworth who will coordinate a series of research projects. These include: examining the rate of accidental adrenaline self-injection; identifying the rise in nut inhalation in infants following the shift to early introduction of nuts in infant feeding guidelines; and examining the accuracy of serum AraH2 (a component of the peanut protein) as a predictor of peanut allergy resolution.

Other projects include: investigating the safety and long-term outcomes of oral immunotherapy for milk allergy; determining whether children with fish allergy can safely eat cartilaginous fish and other bony fish; establishing an allergy biobank and developing new allergy tests to better diagnose allergy and tolerance; and determining rates of Jack Jumper Ant allergy in Victoria with the aim of ensuring all Victorian children have access to newly available immunotherapy.

Australian Food Allergy Foundation Founder Patricia Ilhan believes the partnership will improve outcomes for children with food allergies.

"As the mother of a child with a food allergy I know first-hand the importance of this research. It is a privilege to have this opportunity to partner with Epworth and create an environment where patients and their families can know that they will receive the best possible care while contributing to future treatment discoveries," Patricia says.

The Centre for Paediatric Allergies is completely donor-funded, thanks to the generous supporters of the Epworth Medical Foundation and the Australian Food Allergy Foundation.



Celebrating the launch of the Centre for Paediatric Allergies

## Improving thyroid cancer diagnosis

Early and accurate diagnosis of thyroid tumours is vital to avoid unnecessary surgery that can leave patients reliant on medication for life. A combination of diagnostic techniques may be the answer.

Diagnosis of thyroid cancer is still a work in progress. Current diagnosis techniques aren't always sensitive enough to differentiate between benign adenoma growths and follicular thyroid cancer. Thyroid cancers also vary greatly in how quickly they grow, so often surgeons have no choice but to operate, despite research from the Monash University Thyroid Cancer Registry noting that only 17 per cent of removed thyroids have cancer.

Dr James Lee, an endocrine surgeon based at Epworth Richmond, wants to change those rates. He is researching better ways to diagnose, and staging treatment for thyroid cancer using molecular technology to avoid under and overtreatment of the thyroid.

With rates of thyroid cancer increasing by 24 per cent in the past three years, and women three times more likely than men to develop thyroid cancer, the study comes at a critical time.

James hopes to improve diagnosis of thyroid cancer through a combination of standard diagnostic techniques, fine needle aspiration, and molecular technology—which uses genetic testing to identify the most common thyroid cancer mutations. This will allow an accurate diagnosis on as few as 100 cells.

This is a multicentre study involving Epworth, Monash and Peter Mac. James has won significant competitive funding (\$198,256) from Perpetual Trustees (Harry Secomb Foundation, Percy Baxter Charitable Trust and the Lily and John Barlow Fund) and the Epworth Research Institute (\$49,880) to begin the study.



**Women are three times more likely than men to develop thyroid cancer**



**Thyroid cancer is the 7th most common cancer in women**



**Thyroid cancer in Australia has increased by 24 per cent in the past three years**



## Building a skilled nursing and midwifery workforce

Epworth's commitment to nursing employees includes ongoing theoretical and practical training so that nurses can continue to provide a high level of care to patients, and a graduate program that helps new nurses quickly gain experience and confidence supported by senior specialist clinicians, clinical educators and dedicated graduate program coordinators.

### Graduate nurses and midwives

Graduate programs are essential to building a skilled and capable workforce and integrating new graduates smoothly into the Epworth community. The Graduate Nurse and Midwife Program at Epworth continues to grow and improve, with multiple individual hospital-based programs now incorporated into one Epworth group-facilitated program. This new structure has enabled greater collaboration across all hospitals and has streamlined the process for advertisement and recruitment into Epworth programs.

With the Richmond Lee Wing redevelopment and Epworth Geelong both opening in 2016, numbers of employees in Epworth's graduate program have continued to grow. In 2018, more than 150 registered and enrolled nurses participated in the graduate program. This will increase to around 170 graduates across the five divisions in 2019.

### Maintaining and extending nursing skills

Epworth's commitment to continuing education for its nurses includes an Introduction to Specialty Practice and the Perioperative Introductory Program, both of which continue to be developed to best extend the skills of Epworth's nurses.

The Introduction to Specialty Practice Program provides theoretical and practical training in specialty areas such as emergency, intensive care and acute coronary care nursing. It aims to enhance nurses' clinical decision making, expanding their

knowledge and clinical skills so they can provide a higher level of care to more complex patients and improving confidence in responding to challenging clinical situations. Epworth's acute care ward nurses in oncology, medical, general surgery and neurology benefit by recognising and escalating care sooner in clinically deteriorating patients.

This program is now consistent across each of Epworth's hospitals, with the delivery of additional programs at Richmond and Geelong.

A total of 49 nurses completed the Introduction to Specialty Practice Program in 2017, with 53 due to complete the program in 2018.

Epworth Freemasons, Epworth Eastern and Epworth Richmond also run the Perioperative Introductory Program twice a year for nurses interested in working within the perioperative setting. An eLearning platform is being developed for 2019.

## Investing in nurses to deliver high-quality, innovative care

Investing in clinical nursing employees and expanding their knowledge base is a key factor in improving patient care. The Epworth Deakin Centre for Clinical Nursing Research is an academic partnership between Epworth and Deakin University, established in 2004 to expand nursing skills through multidisciplinary research and training.

In 2017, the centre completed the development and evaluation of the MyStay module—an app that helps to engage patients and guide them through recovery following total knee replacement. The module was so successful that the centre has been given extra funding by the Baker Foundation to develop three more MyStay modules.

These modules can be deployed through the Point of Care system at each bedside and integrated into routine postoperative care to improve patient outcomes.

Post Anaesthesia Care Unit Nurse Unit Manager at Epworth Eastern Karen Briggs presented her Epworth/Deakin research project at the Australian College of Perioperative Nurses National Conference on factors that determine length of stay and readiness for discharge from the Post Anaesthesia Care Unit.

The centre also supported a number of research students; two Bachelor of Nursing (Honours), four Master of Nursing Practice (minor thesis) and three PhD students to successfully complete their studies, and published 13 peer-reviewed research manuscripts and six peer-reviewed conference abstracts.



## Speech pathology voice assessment and management

Epworth Rehabilitation Speech Pathologist Tanya Dahl received a scholarship from the Epworth Medical Foundation for Finding a Voice, a two-day workshop she ran at Epworth Richmond on 25–26 May to equip speech pathologists with knowledge and hands-on practice in voice assessment and management.

"Finding a Voice was a professional development event that gave speech pathologists at Epworth and in the community an opportunity to learn, practice, troubleshoot and discuss assessment and therapy techniques and management strategies," Tanya says.

"There was a good mix of lectures from experts in the field, as well as practical, hands-on sessions to help

speech pathologists further develop solid clinical reasoning skills and build confidence in delivering voice therapy."

Some of these experts included Epworth Rehabilitation Senior Dietician Lara Polidori and Speech Pathologist Martin Checklin, who spoke about motivational interviewing in voice therapy. Speech Pathologist Lucy Bath presented on applying the workshop's learnings to real people.

More than thirty-five people attended the workshop, including a number of attendees from Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland.



Attendees at the Finding a Voice workshop

## A new look at concussion

When Australian football players are sidelined through concussion, most of the time they aren't able to give their coaches and healthcare providers a clear figure on exactly how many concussions they have sustained.

A new study run by Epworth Medical Imaging (EMI) Geelong in partnership with Sydney and La Trobe universities, is developing a concussion log for mild traumatic head injury risk assessment using ultra high-resolution diffusion magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

"Concussion logs can provide a record of repeated head knocks to monitor brain changes and inform long-term management of sports concussion. This data can help to determine if and when a player should safely retire to avoid long-term damage," says Dr Paul Smith, EMI Geelong's Clinical Director.

Researchers will examine tiny, microstructural changes in white matter in the brain's deeper tissue after a concussion or a sub-concussive impact, combining

the results with data from clinical assessment and a field study in conjunction with La Trobe University.

The first study involved male players from the Geelong Football League's St Mary's Football Club (AFL Barwon). Players were also recruited from the club's female team, along with players from the Geelong Amateurs and St Joseph's women's teams, so researchers can compare the brains of male and female football players with age-matched controls who have never suffered a concussion.

The EMI study, part of a \$696,000+ three-year inquiry funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, is measuring changes in brain tissue using high-resolution MR tensor images captured on EMI Geelong's state-of-the-art GE SIGNATM Architect.



Players participating in the AFL Barwon Epworth Cup



Dr Paul Smith



## Trialling a new model for stroke rehabilitation

Strokes are one of the main causes of death and disability for adults in Australia, with more than 1,000 people having a stroke each week. Cardiovascular disease increases the risk of both strokes and heart attacks, but while cardiac rehabilitation is routinely provided to patients following heart attack or cardiac surgery, no such pathway exists for patients who have had a stroke.

“Cardiovascular fitness training is so important for its protective effects, yet for some reason, it is not usually prescribed when someone has a stroke. Good cardiovascular fitness also protects a person from a further stroke or heart attack following

an initial stroke,” says Associate Professor Gavin Williams, specialist physiotherapist at Epworth.

Thanks to funding by the Samuel Nissen Charitable Foundation, Gavin and his research team will trial the development of a new model for stroke rehabilitation for Epworth patients, centred on early introduction of aerobic exercise and health behaviour counselling. The Cardiac Rehabilitation in Stroke Survivors to Improve Survivorship Program (CRISSIS) will adapt the established and successful cardiac rehabilitation framework to include acute stroke care.

“There have been a few preliminary studies investigating the effectiveness of cardiovascular fitness training, but nothing has been incorporated into rehabilitation programs. We want nothing more than to see quantifiable results that lead to lasting impacts on our patients’ health, with programs like CRISSIS becoming effective standard post-stroke treatment.”

The \$186,000 grant was received via the Epworth Medical Foundation—Epworth’s fundraising arm.

## Clinical education and simulation



Clinical school graduates for 2018

Three years ago, Epworth became a full clinical school of The University of Melbourne. Students can now spend their entire clinical exposure with Epworth specialists in medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry, geriatrics and rehabilitation across all Epworth hospitals.

The move to incorporate students into the hospital has been embraced by Epworth’s community of patients, who understand that better education and research opportunities for students leads to improved medical standards and clinical excellence.

Dedicated state-of-the-art centres at Epworth Richmond, Epworth Eastern, Epworth Camberwell and Epworth Geelong include simulated operating suite areas, wards areas, mannequins and task trainers to help students replicate real-life scenarios in realistic settings.

These facilities also give doctors and other health professionals an opportunity to continue their own professional development, with courses in interprofessional clinical supervision, ongoing anaesthetic training, advanced life support, and intensive care. Unit registrars have continued to use simulation resources in their training programs.

### In 2017–18 the clinical education and simulation team facilitated:

- 24,658 nursing/midwifery student clinical placement days
- 8,985 medical student clinical placement days
- 2,846 allied health student clinical placement days

Epworth continues to make a significant contribution in trauma care, hosting the Definitive Surgical Trauma Care (DSTC) course in Melbourne which provides practical trauma training to a multidisciplinary group of surgeons, perioperative nurses and anaesthetists.

Despite its recent entry to the scene, Epworth Clinical School is already excelling, being graded equal top clinical school in 2017. The end of 2018 marks the first cohort of Epworth Clinical School graduates to complete their entire clinical training at the school.

## A strong year of rehabilitation research

### For almost a decade, the Epworth Monash Rehabilitation Medicine Unit (EMReM) has worked to better understand the role of rehabilitation in a range of physical conditions and develop new methods in therapy to help people improve their quality of life.

EMReM is one of four research streams under the Rehabilitation, Mental Health and Chronic Pain Clinical Institute. It is led by Director of Rehabilitation, Epworth HealthCare Professor John Olver, who is the Victor Smorgon Chair of Rehabilitation.

“I am passionate about research because it enables us to improve clinical outcomes for our patients,” John says. “Epworth’s rehabilitation and mental health services are delivered by a multidisciplinary team of clinicians who are dedicated to upholding the link between clinical practice, research and education.”

With a team of 18 this year, EMReM has continued its annual increase in research output with 13 research projects, 25 publications in refereed journals, one book chapter, 57 conference presentations and 12 posters. The unit has also gained \$331,151 in grants and scholarships to support research activities.

The unit is supporting seven members currently undergoing PhD projects with one PhD awarded in March 2018 to Epworth Speech Pathologist, Dr Melanie Drummond, for her thesis: Olfactory impairment following traumatic brain injury: The incidence and recovery and consequences over time.

“I was incredibly proud to see Melanie complete her PhD. Through her PhD research, Melanie was able to identify a gap in services to identify and support changes to someone’s sense of smell, often experienced as a consequence of traumatic brain injury or Parkinson’s disease,” John says.

“This has directly translated into the development of the Olfactory Impairment Clinic at Epworth Hawthorn, which helps to assess

and manage the loss of smell and associated changes in taste. Since its inception late in 2015 the clinic has seen 310 referrals.”

In 2012, Epworth was one of several organisations worldwide who were involved in developing the Post Stroke Checklist. Endorsed by the World Stroke Organisation and incorporated into the Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations, the checklist helps health professionals to evaluate 11 long-term problems following a stroke, and determine an appropriate course of action.

This year, in a joint project with Nantong, China, EMReM has been further exploring this area using the Post Stroke Checklist to identify commonly reported long-term problems in stroke survivors. The checklist was applied to 210 patients in Australia and China. The results will now be compared with published data from the UK, Singapore and Italy.

Throughout the past decade, EMReM has supported higher-level degrees and research projects across areas including traumatic brain injury, stroke and orthopaedic injury. Research projects are focused on promoting core outcomes of rehabilitation including recovery from impairment, easing burden of disease, managing associated consequences of their condition and restoring patients to pre-injury activity levels.



Associate Professor Gavin Williams (left) and Professor John Olver at the Epworth Monash Rehabilitation Medicine Unit



# Epworth Research Week

**Research Week is not just for researchers. In 2018, this week celebrated the ground-breaking research undertaken at Epworth and the passionate minds that drive it, with visiting medical officers, colleagues and employees invited to attend.**

Epworth Research Week gives researchers the opportunity to share their achievements with the Epworth community, and demonstrates the wide variety of research projects being undertaken across Epworth to improve patient care. This year's program featured presentations from leaders in data science, molecular oncology, orthopaedics, psychology, cardiac care and nursing.

"Research is fundamental to effective and excellent health service delivery, and an integral part of our values. Research is at the heart of the rationale that allows us to deliver safe and effective care for our patients," says Director of Research and Development Professor Nikolajs Zeps.

"Without research we would have no insights into preventing disease, no new treatments, no way to ensure what we are doing works; no way to understand the needs of our patients and no way to know if we are making a difference."

The Epworth spirit of innovation is fostered through dedicated clinical trial coordinators, research nurses, governance employees and statisticians who support researchers and help their ideas bear fruit.



Mr Campbell Penfold, Dr Graeme Sloman and Mrs Christine Penfold at the Research Awards Dinner

## Epworth Research Awards Dinner

A key feature of the Epworth Research Week is the annual Research Week Awards Dinner, which celebrates researchers dedicated to improving patient care through research and innovation.

The year's Epworth Research Development Unit grant recipients were announced, with keynote speaker Dr Murray Johns, sleep specialist and the brains behind the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS), providing insight into the early days of sleep medicine.

A combined total of \$328,000 in research grants was awarded to 11 recipients, enabling them to steer the future of their chosen topics directly towards improvements in patient care. Four poster award recipients were also announced.

The grants are named in honour of eminent senior clinical colleagues who have made major contributions to Epworth's success, and are made possible by the Epworth Medical Foundation's generous donors.

## Peter J Dohrmann Medal

The Peter J Dohrmann Medal was established to support the professional development of Epworth medical practitioners by assisting the expansion of their knowledge and keep together expertise with a travel and study grant valued at up to \$10,000.

The medal honours the significant contribution made by Dr Dohrmann to Epworth and its patients during his 10 years of service as Epworth HealthCare's Executive Director Medical Services and 25 years as a neurosurgeon.

The 2017 Peter J Dohrmann medal was awarded to Associate Professor Julie Miller, specialist endocrine surgeon, who will be using the grant to further her knowledge and expertise in the use of minimally invasive techniques to ablate benign thyroid nodules through a study tour of centres of excellence in this area. Julie is one of the most experienced endocrine surgeons in Australia and has served on the executive committees of the Australian Association of Endocrine Surgeons, American Association of Endocrine Surgeons and Asian Association of Endocrine Surgeons.

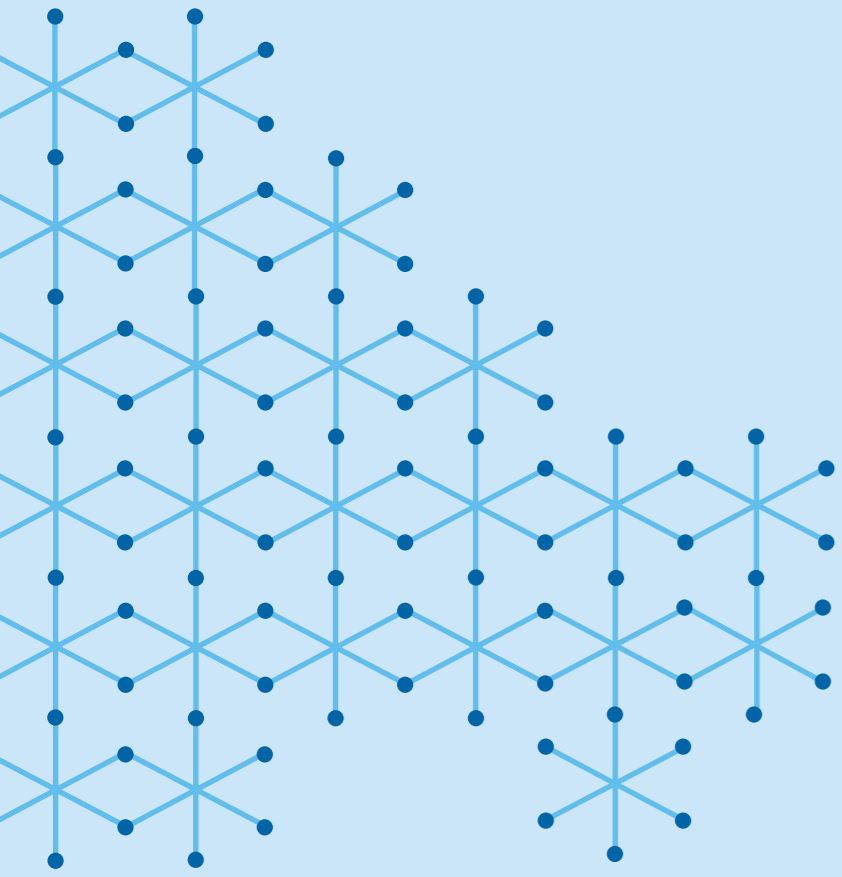


Poster presentations during Research Week





# Building for our future





## New beginnings for Epworth Freemasons

**A \$100 million redevelopment of the Clarendon Street site lies at the heart of the generational change sweeping through Epworth Freemasons. The new Grey Street Centre will provide exceptional care in an unsurpassed patient environment.**

Epworth Freemasons was established in 1937 and underwent redevelopment from the 1950s to the 1970s. The hospital has historical and architectural significance to the state of Victoria and this redevelopment project has commenced the next chapter of the site's history. This year has seen the redevelopment commence with plans finalised, demolition completed and ground works begun across the Albert Street and Grey Street sites.

The architects have aimed for functionality at every turn and these new buildings will link seamlessly with Epworth's existing facilities. The Grey Street Centre façade will be sympathetic to terrace houses that neighbour the site, while the interior will be luxurious and welcoming.

Executive Director Epworth Freemasons & Richmond Nicole Waldron is delighted with the development of the project.

"We're a proud member of the East Melbourne community and have worked hard to ensure that our new exterior will blend in with our heritage-listed surrounds, while inside it will be as modern and innovative as the care we provide," says Nicole.

Epworth Freemasons has built a strong reputation for delivering outstanding cancer care and this will be strengthened by the inclusion of a day oncology unit in the Grey Street Centre. The development will also include four additional operating theatres and 12 additional inpatient beds. Rising to eight levels, approximately 2,000 square metres of premium consulting suite space will be created, with most rooms enjoying 360 degree views over Melbourne.

The new hospital entrance, facing Albert Street, will have an undercover drop-off area for patients and allow easy access to the heart of the hospital. Below this entrance will be a seven-storey car park for more than 300 vehicles, with direct lift access to the hospital. This will ensure Epworth Freemasons patients will have faster and easier access to their health team.

"Our new day oncology unit, operating theatres, research and education facilities will integrate seamlessly into our existing hospital and the on-site parking and dedicated, undercover drop off area will change the way our hospital functions. It will allow us to deliver even better patient care along with a more practical and comfortable experience for our visitors, doctors and employees," Nicole says.

With Epworth continuing to invest in clinical expertise and innovation, the dedicated education, research and training facilities in the East Melbourne medical precinct will enable Epworth Freemasons to be even more responsive to the needs of its patients, doctors and employees. On-site education, research and training facilities will also strengthen Epworth Freemasons' reputation as a teaching hospital.

It is an exciting time for Epworth Freemasons, further developing services, capabilities and capacity for the future needs and care of patients, their loved ones and the whole Epworth community.



Artist's impression of the new look Epworth Freemasons

**On completion of the redevelopment in late 2019, Epworth Freemasons will include:**



**191 inpatient beds**



**12 operating theatres (plus 5 theatres at the Victoria Parade campus)**



**8-bed intensive care unit**



**6-bed sleep studies unit**



**On-site Radiation Oncology service**



**On-site Epworth Medical Imaging at Clarendon Street and Victoria Parade**



**Primary clinics, including GP, men's health and breast clinics**

## A health and education precinct for Epworth Eastern

**An exciting development is set to transform Epworth Eastern and form part of a new health and education precinct located in the heart of Box Hill.**

Melbourne's eastern suburbs are experiencing strong population growth and with this comes increased demand for excellent healthcare. Epworth Eastern has built an enviable reputation as a leading provider of high acuity healthcare in this region, specifically in cardiac, vascular, orthopaedic and general surgery, oncology, urology, plastic and reconstructive surgery and endoscopy services.

To help meet the needs of this growing population, a transformative development will broaden the facilities and services offered by the hospital.

Executive Director Epworth Eastern Louise O'Connor says the development will enable the facility to offer an even better level of patient care.

"The demand for services from patients and doctors alike has led to the need for a redevelopment to increase the hospital services and on-site consulting capacity, to expand and improve the hospital facilities and to fulfil our vision of providing a fully integrated campus that enhances patient care," Louise says.

A tripartite agreement between Epworth Eastern, Box Hill Institute (BHI) and the Salvation Army

will facilitate the greatly needed expansion of Epworth Eastern and allow BHI to develop a state-of-the-art nurse training facility to service the hospital's nursing requirements. The Salvation Army will also relocate to a new purpose-built facility in Whitehorse Road as a result of the development.

This agreement will establish BHI as the sole enrolled nursing training provider for Epworth Eastern. Opportunities will also be available for new generations of patient care assistants, allied health assistants, theatre technicians, and students from diverse fields including food handling, environmental management, maintenance and ward management.

Construction works commenced in mid-2018 and will deliver a new 14-level building with linked podium levels that integrate with the existing hospital. Improvements will be made to the existing building to accommodate additional hospital and medical consulting services, combined with a refurbished pathology space. A new emergency department will be established on

the site, which will reduce the burden placed on other local emergency departments. In addition the development will include:

- new clinical floors
- new theatres
- additional consulting suites
- additional overnight beds for patients requiring acute care
- additional car parks.

The new development will better service patient and employee needs and enable patients to access an expanded range of health care services in their local community.

**"We provide exceptional quality care for our patients each and every day and this project will give us the facilities and services to continue the care that we are recognised for."**

**Louise O'Connor**  
Executive Director  
Epworth Eastern



Artist's impression of the new tower to be built at the Epworth Eastern site



## New services to support a growing region

Greater Geelong is growing rapidly, and so are the services offered by Epworth. This year two unique offerings were launched—a Women’s Health Clinic and a Concussion Clinic—expanding the range of specialty services offered at Epworth Geelong.

### Women’s Health Clinic

With an 11 per cent growth in the number of women living in Geelong identified in the most recent census, Epworth has an opportunity to develop health services to meet the needs of this community. It’s important that women have a local and trusted service that offers expert advice within a caring environment where they don’t feel rushed.

The Women’s Health Clinic is a comprehensive health assessment and advice service for women in the Greater Geelong area. Staffed exclusively by caring female GPs who are passionate experts in women’s physical and emotional health, the clinic provides consultations on complex issues such as infertility, endometriosis, endocrine disorders, polycystic ovary syndrome and hormone therapy.

A wide range of on-site specialists and support services including imaging, pathology and a pharmacy ensure patients can govern their health in a relaxed, supportive setting.

Since opening in February 2018, the Women’s Health Clinic at Epworth Geelong has proved popular with women of all ages, with appointment

times for consultations booked out weeks in advance. To ensure that Epworth continues to provide a high level of support for the women of Geelong, new doctors have joined the team, and clinic opening days and times have been extended.

### Concussion Clinic

This multidisciplinary screening and assessment clinic is an extension of Professor John Olver’s renowned Traumatic Brain Injury Unit at Epworth Richmond. It is led by Rehabilitation Medicine Specialist Dr Reem Al Hanna, and Senior Clinical Neuropsychologist Dr Jo Sherry. They are supported by allied health physiotherapists, exercise physiologists and occupational therapists.

While recent media reports have highlighted the prominence of concussions resulting from sports-related trauma, many concussions occur as a result of other activities.

“We’re seeing a wide range of impacts resulting in mild traumatic brain injury, from sport to recreational activities right through to road trauma and work-related incidents,” Epworth Geelong Allied Health Manager Catherine Carracher says.

“The support, education and intervention we can now provide to patients at the Concussion Clinic enables a successful and safe return to work and activities.”



Dr Reem Al Hanna at the Concussion Clinic

## Mother Nature inspires Freemasons maternity

Epworth Freemasons enjoys a proud history as Victoria’s leading private maternity hospital. Now, it is preparing for a new era with a beautiful, functional refurbishment of its Victoria Parade facilities to enhance the experience of parents-to-be.

A generous donation to the Epworth Medical Foundation will allow Epworth Freemasons to refurbish its maternity birthing suites, post-natal rooms and other vital facilities to help make the experience of new parents even better.

Drawing on inspiration from Mother Nature, the \$1.9 million refurbishment will create rooms styled with elements of fire and earth, or air and water. This will create a nurturing environment, so that patients feel as relaxed as possible during and after the birth of their baby.

Each private suite is fully-equipped with an ensuite, while an a la carte menu invites patients to order the meals they enjoy the most. Partners are also encouraged to stay overnight, with some of the private suites

equipped with double beds. Associate Director Clinical Services Jennifer Francis says the refurbishment will match the quality of the rooms with the quality of the care Epworth’s midwives deliver each day.

**“It’s such a privilege to be a part of a baby’s birth. But, it’s more than that. We are also witness to the birth of a mother. It’s that incredibly special care from our midwives, and bond they share with our patients, that sees families return and have more babies here.”**

**Jennifer Francis**  
Associate Director  
Clinical Services

“Our rooms have always been lovely, more like a hotel than a hospital. But these designs are like nothing I’ve seen in a hospital before.” Jennifer says.

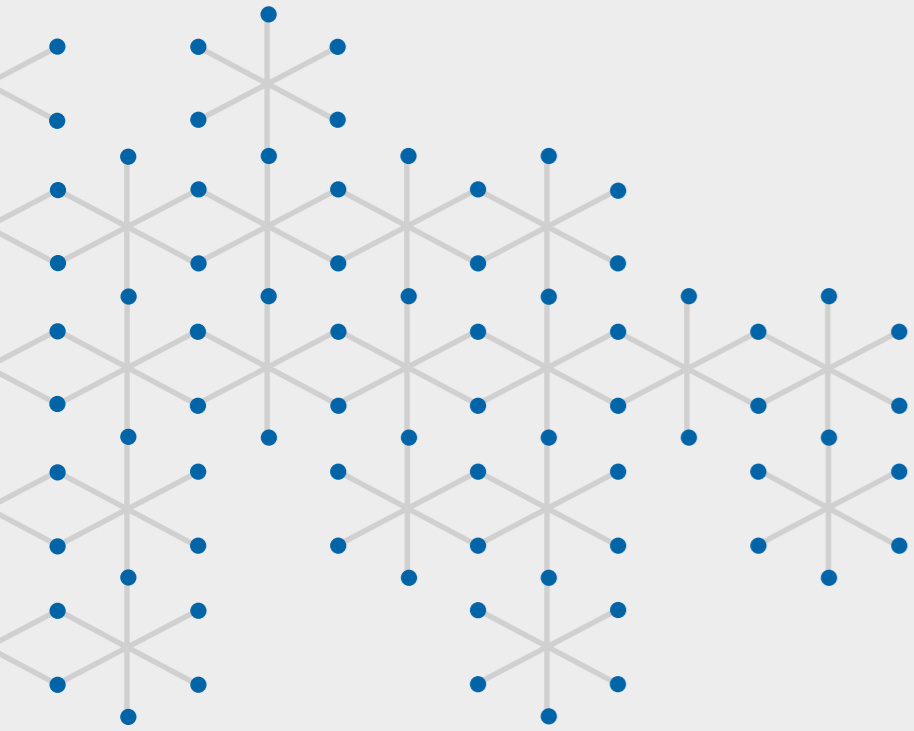
Families who have stayed in the prototype rooms have given warm feedback on the birthing suite and post-natal rooms. The refurbishment is due to be completed by early 2019.



Artist's impressions of the new maternity room designs for Epworth Freemasons



# Partnerships with our community





## Epworth Geelong partners with AFL Barwon

**Since the first season of Women's AFL took place in 2017, women's participation in the sport has increased correspondingly. A partnership between Epworth Geelong and AFL Barwon comes at a growth time for both organisations.**

In early 2018, Epworth Geelong announced a three-year deal with AFL Barwon as the female football naming rights partner for competitions across Geelong.

The growth of women's football throughout Australia has allowed females to play without barriers. In the Barwon region alone, the number of female teams grew from 44 in 2017 to 60 in 2018. In the same period, teams competing for the Epworth Cup in the senior competition increased from two to 10.

The sport has now become a real inspiration to young and older women alike, and the partnership helps build on Epworth Geelong's progressive and personal approach to women's health and employment.

As a healthcare leader within the region, Epworth Geelong will support AFL Barwon with information on player injuries for coach and trainer seminars. AFL Barwon Chief Executive Lee Hartman identified concussion as the most pressing injury concern from clubs in the past two years.

"Traditional footy injuries have been diagnosed forever and a day. They're the easy ones. But concussion is a bit of an unknown, which is why we're so keen to work with Epworth. All the clubs have trainers, but they're not experts in the field. The education process is only just starting, and it needs to keep going," says Lee.

Based on this feedback, Epworth Geelong presented a mid-season information evening dedicated to sports concussion for coaches and trainers of all AFL Barwon teams. Experts from Epworth Geelong's Concussion Clinic and Epworth

Medical Imaging spoke to 100 guests about sports concussion and provided practical advice on how to recognise and treat head-related injuries that occur under their watch.

The feedback from the evening was positive and highlighted the need for more information in this area. With two years remaining in the partnership, Epworth Geelong will work with AFL Barwon and its clubs to improve knowledge and clinical outcomes for players who experience sports-related concussion.

Epworth Geelong Chief Executive Officer Damian Armour says it is important to create local pathways for women.

"Epworth Geelong is rapidly expanding and supporting pathways for women. Over 80 per cent of employees are female and we're continuing to build local opportunities within our community. With the volume of girls and women taking up local football in Geelong, we look forward to seeing our next generation of specialists, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals take to the field."

To further support women's health in the region, a specialised women's health clinic has been opened at Epworth Geelong which provides women with an opportunity to see female general practitioners who are experts in supporting their physical and emotional health.



AFL Barwon Women's Grand Final

## Connecting mothers who need extra care

**A newly formed partnership between Epworth Freemasons and St Kilda Mums is helping mothers doing it tough by supporting the work they do.**

Mother's Day 2018 marked the first joint program between Epworth Freemasons and St Kilda Mums. The program, One Mother to Another, saw members of the Epworth community donate bags of toiletries and messages of support as a special Mother's Day gift to new mothers who need just that extra bit of help.

St Kilda Mums is a volunteer organisation working to ease the burden on families who lack support networks or who are not able to meet the material needs of their children. Many of the mothers are fleeing domestic violence, have had twins or other multiple births.

For mothers experiencing financial hardship, buying toiletries for themselves is often the last thing on their list. Receiving these gifts from the One Mother to Another Program shows families facing hardship that there is someone who cares when they need it most.

Associate Director Clinical Services in Midwifery, Jennifer Francis, was enthusiastic about the partnership.

"Our midwives got right behind the One Mother to Another drive this year. It was the first time we'd been involved, and we were thrilled to see how the initiative resonated with employees, patients and the wider Epworth community," Jennifer says.

"A number of our midwives starred in a video that proved popular on social media, promoting the drive and the fact that we were a drop off point for these special gifts. It was such a positive program to be a part of, spreading a few luxuries to mums doing it tough but also showing them they're not alone."

The One Mother to Another initiative is run by St Kilda Mums. Mothers wanting to contribute fill a gift bag of new women's toiletries along with a note of support for the receiving mother, and share photos of the packs on social media with the hashtag #onemothertoanother.

The partnership is set to grow substantially in the next financial year, with a formal partnership with St Kilda Mums signed in 2018.

Epworth Geelong has a similar relationship in the works with Geelong Mums. Geelong Mums is a branch of St Kilda Mums, operating under its legal entity and governance structure.

Epworth Geelong was a Gold Sponsor for the 2018 Geelong Mums Mother's Day Luncheon held on 11 May at Mt Duneed Estate. Over 450 guests attended the lunch to raise much-needed funds to support the work of the Geelong Mums. As part of the partnership, the Epworth Medical Foundation donated 4,500 newborn nappies for Geelong Mums to distribute to families in need.

In 2018, Epworth Geelong shared the campaign on its Facebook page and offered locals the option to drop their Mother's Day gift off at Epworth Geelong. The partnership between Epworth Freemasons and St Kilda Mums is also set to grow in 2019.



Epworth Geelong donated nappies for Geelong mums



## Epworth community matters

Caring for people and striving to achieve a healthier community is a priority for Epworth, with each of the Epworth campuses typified by employees who don't stop caring when they leave work.

Epworth employees are active members of both their own and overseas communities, helping to build social networks and connectedness and providing invaluable services to those in need. They volunteer in a range of valuable projects out of a desire to improve the wellbeing of individuals and make a positive impact in the community.

### Volunteering with Interplast

Positive volunteering experiences in Australia inspired Acute Pain Nurse Caz McLoughlin to join Interplast, going to Samoa with a volunteer team in September 2017.

Interplast works closely with local organisations such as hospitals, universities and local non-government organisations to provide free reconstructive surgery and surgical services to those who cannot afford or access care in the Asia-Pacific region.

The team consisted of two surgeons, an anaesthetist, a hand therapist and two nurses, including Caz. She found it was mostly children who needed healthcare, and says the team performed a record number of consults and procedures on its trip. She highly recommends professionals volunteer their time to help others in need.

"Volunteering is a great opportunity—it allows you to meet other professionals from around Australia and the world. It also enables you to utilise your skills and knowledge to make a profound difference to those in need and their families. Although there are financial and time sacrifices, what you get back in return is priceless," Caz says.

Caz plans to join Interplast for another trip in March 2019.

### Chicks for Charity

In her work with patients who have been diagnosed with cancer, Sarah Morrison, clinical nurse specialist in oncology and breast care nurse at Epworth Richmond, sees firsthand how chronic disease has a significant flow-on effect to patients and their families.

In operation since 2008, Chicks for Charity came about when Sarah and her girlfriends got together for a catch-up.

"We decided we wanted to make these nights meaningful. I strongly believe in the adages of 'giving back' and 'paying it forward'. Support, in any form, is incredibly beneficial for anyone suffering within our community. We wanted to make a difference to our community, to individuals and organisations in need," Sarah says.

Completely operated by volunteers, Chicks for Charity designates a group of charities for fundraising causes once a year, raising money and awareness for organisations or individuals through events.

Chicks events can be anything from movie nights for a few hundred people, to a group of friends enjoying a glass of bubbly or a morning tea, with all proceeds going to the chosen charity.

With such strong community support, the community-minded friends have been fortunate to secure corporate sponsors that have given Chicks for Charity even more opportunities to help others.

"I love being involved with Chicks for Charity and I am proud to say that I am a founding member. The reward of seeing people we help is indescribable."



Chicks for Charity



Caz McLoughlin in Samoa

## Epworth Eastern welcomes local Box Hill artist

For local student and artist Alex Niglio, the opportunity to design and paint a wall mural at Epworth Eastern was an exciting and rewarding challenge that has significantly enhanced the site's cafe area and hospital grounds.

The artwork commission was part of the refurbishment of Hudsons Coffee and the Epworth Eastern Bistro. Epworth Eastern has a longstanding partnership with Box Hill Institute (BHI), with many nurses studying at the Institute undertaking their placement training at Epworth Eastern. This project provided a welcome extension to that partnership.

Studying an Advanced Diploma in Graphic Design at BHI, Alex was one of two students nominated by the institute who submitted a portfolio of design examples and attended an interview to be involved in the project. In a street art style, the design incorporates themes from the local Chinese community, including



cherry blossoms as a symbol of happiness, love and joy. The mural was installed on Friday 10 March to positive feedback from employees, patients and visitors.

**"The artwork really draws people into the space and provides a welcome distraction in the clinical setting."**

**Nicholas Lyall**  
Project Manager,  
Hudsons

Alex thanked the project team for the opportunity to be involved. "This project has allowed me to gain valuable industry experience and I was incredibly excited to be involved in the project."

Following the success of the collaboration it is likely that this will become an annual partnership event between the three parties: Epworth Eastern, Hudsons Coffee and the Box Hill Institute.

## EMF and Nunawading Toyota partnership supports patients

Epworth Eastern has a strong commitment to partnering its patients throughout every aspect of their care, striving to provide them with the best experience possible. This includes arranging access to safe transport when patients are travelling to and from their renal dialysis appointments.

Epworth Eastern's community partnership with Nunawading Toyota and a generous donation from the Epworth Medical Foundation provided a new patient transport vehicle to ensure renal dialysis patients have access to safe transport.

The patient transport vehicle will be managed through Epworth Eastern's dedicated volunteer employee network. The volunteer drivers are trained and inducted into Epworth Eastern, and are committed to ensuring the experience for Epworth patients is made as comfortable as possible.



Epworth's partnership with Nunawading Toyota will offer new transport options for renal dialysis patients



## Epworth Eastern employees cook last Salvation Army Sunday dinner

A partnership between Epworth Eastern and the Salvation Army in Box Hill that has provided a community dinner one Sunday a month for up to 80 members of the local community came to an end on February 19, due to lack of demand brought about by changed demographics in the area.

Operating since July 2009, the dinners provided food and a sense of community to locals in difficulty, as well as wider support for the Salvation Army in Box Hill.

The partnership also gave a unique sense of accomplishment for the Epworth Eastern employees who volunteered their time to organise, prepare and serve the meals.

Many of the Epworth employees brought their older children or teenagers along so they could give back to the community, with employees commenting that their children gained a great sense of compassion by helping those less fortunate than themselves.



Celebrating the last of the Salvos Sunday dinners

## Epworth Medical Foundation donors support Epworth Eastern ICU

Epworth Medical Foundation donors helped raise funds to purchase two state-of-the-art Puritan Bennet 980 Ventilators to use at Epworth Eastern intensive care unit (ICU), a patient-centred facility which offers the best in evidence-based critical care practice to patients and their families.

"By the time patients need our services, they are in a critically unstable state which leaves both them and their families vulnerable. Having this technology and upgraded equipment will ensure our delivery of care is the very best we can offer," says Sanjee de Silva, nurse unit manager at Epworth ICU.

Ventilators are used for all ICU patients who need to remain intubated and on supported breathing due to the severity of their illnesses or psychological states. The ventilators make use of some of the most innovative breath-delivery technology in the world, helping patients breathe more naturally, and significantly improving patient comfort during this difficult time.

"We are committed to improving patient care and experience through research initiatives, compassion and excellence in the delivery of all our care. On behalf of the nursing employees and patients in the ICU, we would like to sincerely thank the donors for generously funding our new ventilators."



## Wig salons give patients a new sense of style

The Wig Salon is a free Epworth service which helps patients who have lost their hair due to treatment, illness or injury to feel empowered to step confidently out into the world. The program is run entirely by trained volunteers who offer patients wig and scarf consultations in a salon-type environment.

Anne Kelly worked at Epworth Richmond for many years before retiring. She has volunteered at the Wig Salon in Epworth Freemasons since it opened in April 2016, and has found that patients are surprised by how good they feel after being fitted for a wig.

"When patients come in, they often express quite different emotions about having to be fitted for a wig. Some are very apprehensive, some are angry, some teary, but by the time they leave, 99 per cent of the time they are smiling. Once they get their wig and they realise it's not going to be a horrendous 70s style wig but actually looks quite natural, they are very happy. The wigs now are really good," Anne says.

The Wig Salon service grew in 2018 with two new salons opening at Epworth Eastern and Epworth Geelong early in the year, and a salon opening at Epworth Richmond in November.

The salons provide a place where patients can feel listened to and pampered, with a free wig and a care package which includes a silk scarf, bamboo night cap, turban, hairnet, baby shampoo and wig brush as part of the service. It also comes with a referral to Look Good Feel Better who teach cancer patients how to manage appearance-related side-effects caused by cancer treatment.

While the salons help people with wigs, they also offer a range of scarf styles, caps and beanies.

Funded by donations by Epworth Medical Foundation, the Wig Salons could not run without volunteers. The volunteer program manages every aspect, from recruitment and training of appropriate volunteers to organising the volunteer teams. Three to five volunteers in each Wig Salon provide patient-centred care.

Anne believes choosing a wig can be a way for patients to feel they are in control of at least one part of their journey.

"With all the other medical appointments they're just turning up when they're told to. With the Wig Salon, they can say 'right, my hair is going—well I can do something about this, I can go and get my wig today'. It gives them a little bit of power back," she says.

"I love the Wig Salon. It's a really worthwhile thing to do, and it's very fulfilling when the patients leave happy. It's something nice for them while they're going through what can often be a hard physical and emotional process."



Patient Anna Vento with wig salon volunteer Anne Kelly





Committed to  
**our community**





**Epworth**



**EPWORTH HEALTHCARE**

89 Bridge Road  
Richmond VIC 3121  
Phone 03 9426 6666

**EPWORTH BRIGHTON**

85 Wilson Street  
Brighton VIC 3186  
Phone 03 9591 9200

**EPWORTH CAMBERWELL**

888 Toorak Road  
Camberwell VIC 3124  
Phone 03 9809 2444

**EPWORTH CLIVEDEN**

29 Simpson Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Phone 03 9419 7122

**EPWORTH EASTERN**

1 Arnold Street  
Box Hill VIC 3128  
Phone 03 8807 7100

**EPWORTH FREEMASONS**

166 Clarendon Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Phone 03 9483 3833

320 Victoria Parade  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Phone 03 9418 8188

**EPWORTH GEELONG**

1 Epworth Place  
Wairn Ponds VIC 3216  
Phone 03 5271 7777

**EPWORTH HAWTHORN**

50 Burwood Road  
Hawthorn VIC 3122  
Phone 03 9415 5777

**EPWORTH RICHMOND**

89 Bridge Road  
Richmond VIC 3121  
Phone 03 9426 6666

**EPWORTH SPECIALIST  
CENTRE BERWICK**

48 Kangan Drive  
Berwick VIC 3806  
Phone 03 9936 8244

**EPWORTH SPECIALIST  
CENTRE LILYDALE**

Suite 4, 355 Main Street  
Lilydale VIC 3140  
Phone 03 9739 3666

**EPWORTH MEDICAL  
IMAGING**

Epworth Camberwell  
Epworth Freemasons  
(Albert Street)  
Epworth Freemasons  
Medical Centre  
Epworth Geelong  
Epworth Richmond  
Phone 1800 MYXRAY

**EPWORTH PATHOLOGY**

Epworth Camberwell  
Phone 03 9809 0944

Epworth Eastern  
Phone 03 9890 0889

Epworth Freemasons  
Phone 03 9419 0074

Epworth Geelong  
Phone 03 5271 7833

Epworth Richmond  
Phone 03 9429 2222

**SOUTH WEST REGIONAL  
CANCER CENTRE**

28-30 Ryot Street  
Warrnambool VIC 3280  
Phone 03 5565 2000



[epworth.org.au](http://epworth.org.au)