



To mark our 100 year milestone, we've created quarterly newspapers for our patients, staff and community to reflect back and enjoy the present.

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## Christmas at Epworth

Christmas is always a special time at Epworth.

In the early days, the Canterbury Methodist Church Choir was on hand to welcome visitors.

The nurses formed a choir and held their first carols by candlelight concert in the front garden on 21 December 1953. The choir was invited to sing at various church services at Scots Church and Wesley Church, while Epworth nurses were candle lighters at Wesley Church at services before Christmas.

## Caring for the carers

Sometimes a great new initiative is born out of personal experience.

When Jo Goodridge was our Chief Operations Manager, Epworth Rehabilitation and Mental Health (before becoming the Executive General Manager, Rehabilitation), she proposed a support group for the carers of people with Parkinson's Disease. Her brother, Wayne, has had Early Onset Parkinson's for over a decade and his family were looking for a support network.

"The diagnosis has been devastating for our family. We try to focus on what he can do, rather than what he can't. He's a vibrant, active and sociable man, but he can't do all the things he used to do," Jo said.

"His wife was looking for some support, but there were only support groups where the patient went along too. She needed to talk openly about how she was feeling and she couldn't do that if he was there. There was nothing in Victoria that we could find to provide the carer with support like this."

**"There was nothing in Victoria that we could find to provide the carer with support like this."**

Jo's team discussed the idea of a group specifically for carers of Parkinson's, to complement the Epworth Rehabilitation Parkinson's program.

"Part of our strategy is around community and this initiative really aligned with that," Jo said.

"The formation of the group was all consumer-led and they came up with the values and rules of the group."

Run by a psychologist and a social worker, the monthly sessions are partly educational, part bonding and give participants an opportunity for discussion and story sharing.

"We had hoped for about eight people to turn up and we doubled that," Jo said.

"Usually, our patients with Parkinson's are men in their 70's, much older than my brother. But, the similarities that the carers share are more than the differences."

"Everyone's symptoms are idiosyncratic and each journey is different. Most carers

in the support group are in the early stages and are really desperate to know what the future looks like."

With carers generating topics to cover, sessions have included hearing from experts about the progression of the disease, how finances are affected, mood changes and treatment options.

"The changes with Parkinson's are both physical and cognitive," Jo explained.

"For some, a loss of smell is the first sign of Parkinson's, though many don't realise it."

"Generally, sufferers lose the volume in their voice and speak quietly, their movements freeze and arms no longer swing as they walk, face muscles freeze causing reduced facial expressions and dementia occurs as the disease progresses."

"It can be really lonely for carers. It's hard work physically and as sufferers generally lose initiative, they won't ask questions or initiate conversation; that can be quite difficult."

With positive feedback from participants, the Epworth Rehabilitation team is now looking at establishing carers support groups for other disease groups.



**Nicole Waldron**  
Chief Operating Officer  
- Hospitals

## Caring for our community

Hospitals have evolved greatly over the years. Once a place where care could only be provided in the four walls of our hospitals, our services have changed along with the needs of our community. These days, we provide outpatient and day services for acute care, rehabilitation and mental health services for those who no longer need to be in hospital, however still require extra support in their recovery and getting back to daily activities.

We've branched out further in more recent years, looking after the families and loved ones of our patients, providing support and information. For the last 20 years, Hospital in the Home has been invaluable for our patients who prefer to be cared for in the comfort of their own homes.

In each of these initiatives, our community has guided us. Our care has always centred around our patients. Now, we're expanding that further with our Partnering with Consumers program, ensuring our patients always have a voice and are involved with healthcare planning, along with our teams.

Of course, Epworth has always enjoyed a reciprocal arrangement with our community. Beginning with a philanthropic gift of land for a hospital, our community has always supported Epworth in its fundraising, giving back in appreciation for excellent, compassionate care. That continues today in our 100th year and we're so grateful.

Thank you.



## Finetuning memory skills

**As we get older, our memory starts to struggle. The brain starts to slow down and not be as quick to find the right words, remember events or juggle multiple thoughts.**

To tackle this, Epworth Brighton started a memory group in 2017. As other areas look specifically after people with dementia or Alzheimers, with high needs, this group focuses on helping people with mild impairment. Many of the participants have conditions like Parkinson's Disease, multiple sclerosis or have suffered a stroke or head injury.

Dr Brownyn Coward, Senior Clinical Neuropsychologist, says memory problems are a normal part of ageing.

This group morphed from similar ones piloted at Epworth Richmond and Epworth Hawthorn, which targeted people aged under 65. Dr Coward and her team refined the original content to suit an older group and now run the six week program several times a year.

"Numbers are deliberately kept small and we work on strengthening what people are already doing naturally, like using a diary by giving them some structure," Dr Coward said.

"We had one man always asking his wife 'what are we doing today' and that was causing some friction between them. This is a common story we hear. So, we helped them set up their own structure."

Participants set themselves weekly goals, which they reflect on each week. The sessions also include an education component, covering different things that affect the functioning of the brain, like mood, exercise, diet and sleep. The sessions also cover various strategies participants can use to improve their memory. A speech pathologist provides tips on ways to communicate more easily, so people don't get stuck searching for a particular word. An occupational therapist highlights how environment can affect memory. For example, you may find it easier to remember when your room is less cluttered.



**"The memory group gives people a lot more confidence in their memory skills and different ways to negotiate issues," Bronwyn added.**

## On the road again

**It's long been an Epworth tradition to help people get back on the road after injury or illness.**

Dr Pam Ross, Senior Occupational Therapist (OT), assesses some of the 200 patients referred to Epworth, each year.

"Our driving rehabilitation program was the first in Australia – we've had the program going here at Epworth Richmond since 1987," Pam said.

"We see any patient who has been injured or has a disability that may affect driving. This can include those who have had a stroke, traumatic brain injury, amputation injury or illness and also older drivers who may have experienced age-related changes."

The assessment is completed by an OT with specialised qualifications in driver assessment. It includes an assessment of vision, brake reactions and road rule knowledge. Some use our driving simulator at Epworth Hawthorn to help build confidence, which may be impacted after a car accident. An on-road assessment is arranged

with the OT and an external driving instructor in a car with dual controls.

The aim of the program is to keep people on the road, where possible.

"A lot of people think we'll take their licence away. But, occupational therapy is about optimising someone's independence," Pam said.

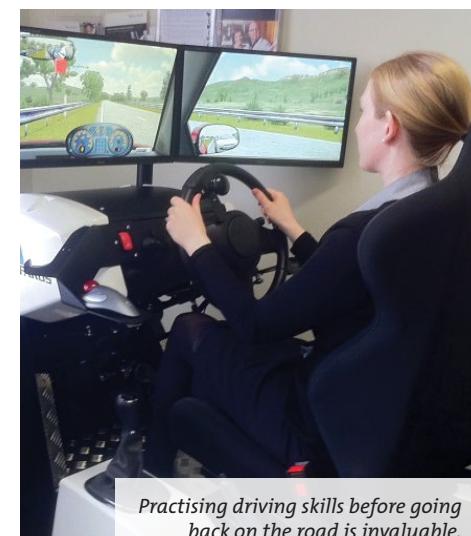
"We've also got to weigh up community and individual safety."

Some patients are given the okay to drive with special vehicle modifications, like a spinner on the wheel, hand controls or left foot accelerators.

"If there are issues, we can suggest driving lessons and then reassess," Pam added.

"With others, like those with who have experienced a stroke or been diagnosed with early dementia, the assessment can be conducted in their local area. It is possible to get a local licence, which allows people to drive within a restricted area from their home, which is familiar to them."

"Then, we can keep people on the road, but close to home to ensure independence and safety."



## Multi-lingual community

**Within the City of Whitehorse, 36 per cent of the community are of Chinese background. As a result, many of our patients at Epworth Eastern speak Mandarin or Cantonese. To cater for these patients, we appointed Chinese speaking concierge volunteers to help our patients.**

This year, we expanded the service to mirror our growing Chinese community. Each year, we have close to 5,000 patients of Chinese background and having someone who speaks their language to provide general information and directions is invaluable.

Our concierges provide assistance with basic admission interpretation and translation for patients, as well as assist visitors with doctor information, monitoring parking and front door traffic flow.

Group Manager, Volunteer Program, Belinda Howard said our volunteer team is dedicated to the goal of enhancing patient care.

"As well as our concierge volunteers, we have many volunteer services that help our patients. An example is our Renal Dialysis Unit Patient Transport Vehicle, where a full roster of volunteer drivers coordinate the pick up and drop off of patients to and from their dialysis appointments.

"It's so wonderful to see our community members give back. I don't think they realise how incredible their contributions are to the overall patient experience."



Belinda Howard, Group Manager, Volunteer Program and Chinese speaking concierge Amy Xie.

## Shining a light

**"There are some who bring a light so great to the world that even after they have gone, their light remains".**

**Remembering those we have lost is proving a heartwarming, cathartic experience for families and staff at Epworth Geelong.**

Since 2018, nursing staff have volunteered their time to organise two memorial services a year.

Nurse Unit Manager Bec Cooke says it's often a busy time after someone dies, with a funeral and legal documents to organise.

"People send casseroles for a week or two, then everything drifts back to normal life. Families are still grieving.

"Our services show families they haven't been forgotten and they are able to reflect with us," Bec said.

"We hold our memorial service in our auditorium, which is a non-denominational space, and we invite families to bring a loved one to add to our photo board. We add each name to an 'honour roll', which we read out."

Bec is one of two nurses who speak at the memorial. "I'd been nursing for 26 years and thought I knew everything when my grandmother died at a nursing home. I realised it was the way the nurses made you feel that mattered, giving us big hugs. I tell that to our graduate nurses today – it's important to build compassion and empathy."

After the ceremony, each family picks a flower out of a large basket of flowers that reminds them of their loved one and puts it in a vase.

"We have supper with the families and they all remember the nurses who cared for their loved one; that's the best bit," Bec said.

"We've been surprised how much the services are appreciated.

"It's quite solemn at the beginning, some burst into tears as they walk through the door, but we've found that many family members want to come.

"It also gives us a chance to do a welfare check, to see how they're going and get them some help if needed."

## Beginnings of IVF

**"My connection to Epworth started back in 1979, when I started practice as a young gynecologist.**

One day, I approached Peter Wilson, who was the manager at Epworth, and said, 'Peter, we're looking somewhere to bring IVF.' And he grabbed me with both hands, said, 'Yes, we'd love to have you'. Consequently, in 1982 we moved to Epworth Hospital and Peter actually closed the chapel and the chapel became the IVF lab. And if one's religious, you might say that the reason it was successful here was, because we had the

right spirits in the room of the laboratory, looking after the embryos. And our first IVF pregnancy at Epworth happened fairly quickly in about February, 1982 and that's a young boy called Joseph, who would be 37 now. And then of course we went on and many hundreds or thousands of babies have been conceived and birthed ever since."

PROFESSOR GAB KOVACS,  
EPWORTH DIRECTOR OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY



Families are given a candle to take home to light and reflect.

# Friends create a special gift for centenary newborns

The nimble fingers of the ladies of Friends of Epworth Auxiliary were extra busy in the lead up to Epworth's centenary. To mark the occasion, our volunteers created gorgeous gifts for our littlest patients.

Every baby born at Epworth Freemasons or Epworth Geelong, on 27 February 2020, our 100th birthday, received some handmade treasures, each made with love.

The ladies say they loved being involved in this special project, which saw them busy knitting, sewing and tying ribbons on

booties and babies hats, and making special centenary teddies for each of the babies who shared their birthday with ours.

President Gail Roche says the group felt "very privileged" that Epworth asked them to be involved.

"It was a feel good project; the ladies loved it," Gail said.

**"We love being able to help Epworth and to be able to give gifts; it's a great time for families."**



Handmade gifts for our newborns



Group Chief Executive Lachlan Henderson and Executive General Manager, Epworth Freemasons Simon Benedict helped present the gifts on our Centenary day.



Our Friends of Epworth Auxiliary

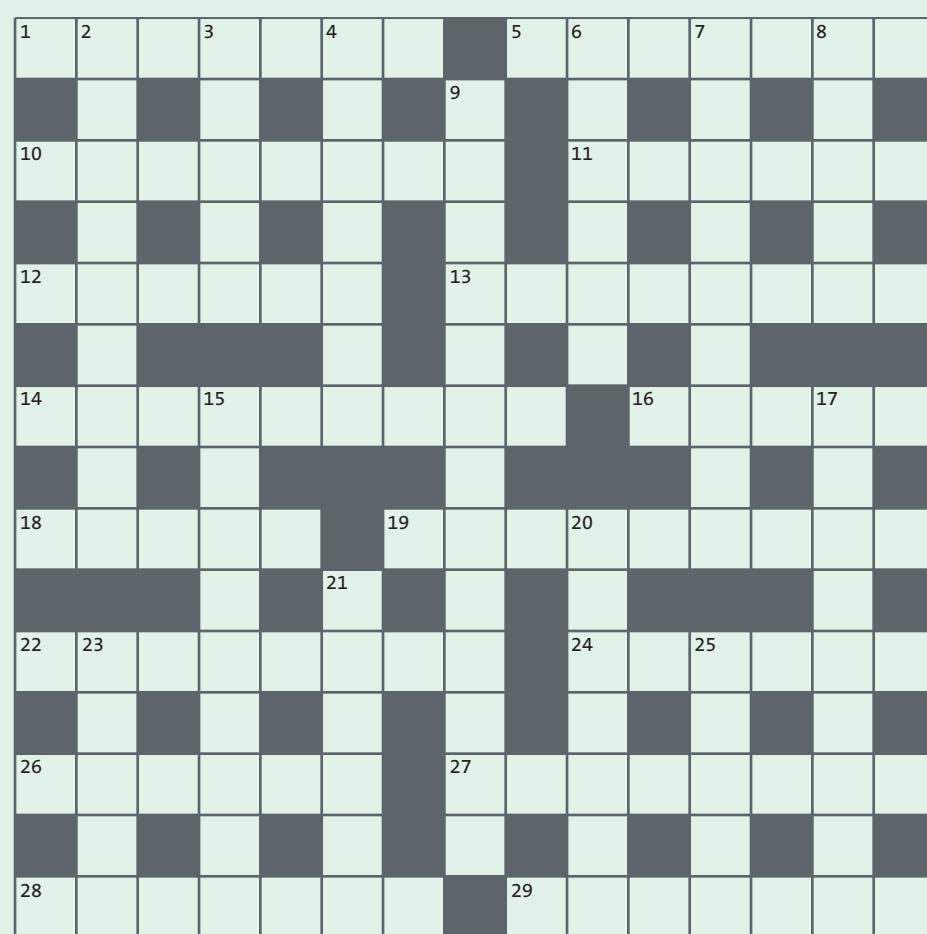
## Crossword challenge

**ACROSS**

- In fun (2,1,4)
- Park, Kew (7)
- Salvation Army hospital which became Epworth Rehabilitation in 1998 (8)
- Turn to bone (6)
- More stingy (6)
- Sending via cyberspace (8)
- Is triathlete at all keen on being messed about? (4,5)
- UK train robber who worked at Epworth as a carpenter (5)
- Throws high into the air (5)
- Like a man-eating giant (9)
- Piano brand once made in Richmond (8)
- Shirt maker (6)
- Jagged mountain range (6)
- Out and out conflict (5,3)
- Gateway City (7)
- Supply with water (7)

**DOWN**

- Wilsons Promontory island (9)
- Doctor who devised the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (5)
- Small falcon (7)
- Epworth's first medical superintendent (6)
- Repudiates (9)
- Small and delicate (5)
- Olympic men's moguls gold medallist, 2006 (4,4-5)
- One kind of college (9)
- Region south of Brisbane (4,5)
- Emotional identification (7)
- Hold in custody (6)
- Banish (5)
- Outlaw who became Speaker of the Victoria Legislative Assembly (5)



ACROSS: 1 As a joke, 5 Studio, 10 Bethesda, 11 Ossify, 12 Closer, 13 Emailling, 14 Katie Allen, 16 Biggs, 17 Gold Coast, 20 Empathy, 21 Detain, 23 Exile, 25 Labor, 18 Skies, 19 Ogresihly, 22 Wertherm, 24 Peleco, 26 Sierra, 27 Total war, 28 Geelong, 29 Hydrate.  
DOWN: 2 Shelliaback, 3 Johns, 4 Kester, 6 Thomas, 7 Discalims, 8 Efim, 9 Dale Beggs-Smith, 15 Eleotra,

## Community pitches in

From humble beginnings, community support was a key element of Epworth.

**"The Reverend Palamountain was tireless in encouraging donations. (Trainee nurse) Gwen Summers recalled: 'He was very strict and used to nag everybody to do something for the hospital'. As a child she went around selling 'bricks' for the hospital, seeking donations equivalent to the cost of bricks. The Reverend Palamountain wrote a weekly report in the Spectator outlining progress with fundraising and developments at the hospital. Although it was not a war memorial hospital, as was its counterpart in Sydney, some donations were made in memory of sons killed in the war. The Reverend C. Tregear donated £50 for five cots in memory of his son and an 'Anzac mother' sent in £5. Six girls from Graham Street Sunday School in Port Melbourne held a bazaar and raised £15, the equivalent of two nurse's beds, and girls from the Methodist Ladies' College undertook to endow a cot for a year with a first instalment of £25."**

EPWORTH: A TRADITION OF CARE 1920-2010 — JANETTE BOMFORD



Reverend Palamountain and Matron Ethel Gray lay the foundation stone for the Hill Memorial Wing 1929.