



Epworth

Caring with compassion

Epworth HealthCare
Annual Report 2018-19

We care with compassion, combined with expertise

Every patient matters and we are committed to providing high-quality patient care, delivered by a skilled, dedicated, compassionate workforce.

We continue to innovate and find new ways of caring, in line with community need.

Continually improving our patients' experience, on each and every touchpoint of their journey with us, is always our goal.



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About us

Epworth HealthCare is Victoria’s largest not-for-profit private hospital group, renowned for excellence in diagnosis, treatment, care and rehabilitation. Epworth is an innovator in Australia’s health system, embracing the latest in evidence-based medicine to pioneer treatments and services for our patients.

Our vision: Caring for people. Innovating for a healthy community.

Our purpose: Every patient matters. We strive to improve health outcomes and experience through compassion, collaboration, learning and innovation.

Our values: Respect, excellence, community, compassion, integrity, accountability.

Our history

Epworth was founded in 1920 as a 25-bed community intermediate hospital in Richmond by a Methodist minister for those on moderate incomes. We will celebrate our centenary next year. Today, our care is world-class, our technology is state-of-the-art and our ethos remains focused on our patients.

About this report

This Annual Report details achievements and highlights of the 2018–19 financial year. It follows the pillars of our Strategic Plan: Connected Care, Empowered People, Innovative Practice and Sustainability. This report is available online at epworth.org.au We also highlight some of our patient stories - as patients are at the heart of all we do.

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.

From the President



We have enjoyed a successful year at Epworth HealthCare, expanding our services, building new facilities at Epworth Freemasons and continuing a culture of compassionate care for all.

As President of the Board, I am proud of our work in providing care

through more than 200,000 patient admissions and undertaking more than 128,000 procedures across our 10 sites. Our success is built with a team of nearly 10,000 staff, doctors and volunteers all working together with a common goal—exemplary patient care.

A history of philanthropy

As we draw close to celebrating our 100th year, we remember that Epworth was built on the philanthropy of a group of leaders in the Methodist Church. The first foundation donation came from Sir Aaron Danks and the Danks family remain great supporters, through The Danks Trust. One hundred years on, our not-for-profit organisation remains reliant on the amazing generosity of our donors, large and small. As a private hospital group, our not-for-profit status sometimes goes unnoticed, but it is at our core. It is the reason why we invest back into our organisation to keep improving patient care, invest in research to uncover new, more effective treatments, develop the skills of our people and update our facilities to ensure we have state-of-the-art equipment to deliver the best care.

Epworth is known for providing world-class care and it is the support of donors and volunteers that enables us to go above and beyond what we would otherwise be able to do. In the past 12 months, we've had more than 10,000 individuals making donations.

This year, we built on this legacy of giving by establishing the Ethel Gray Benevolent Fund, a workplace giving fund

named after the hospital's iconic first matron. The fund follows the values and beliefs of our organisation—to show compassion, excellence and respect. With the generosity of Epworth employees, the fund directly helps patients, their families, or colleagues at a time of need with transport, meals, accommodation or other forms of support.

We have been working on a book about philanthropy and Epworth that will be released next year. It reflects on a history of unwavering community support.

Sustainability

While our services and care are front of mind, we must also strive to be financially sustainable. In the last five years, we have invested considerably in our facilities. That has been essential in maintaining a level of care expected by our community. Our Board is now committed to achieving an operating surplus after depreciation and interest within the next two years.

While we still have more work to do, we have made great strides in being environmentally sustainable this year, developing a strategy to ensure we reduce our use of gas, electricity and water, minimise waste and increase our recycling. Our water savings particularly stand out as significant, as do our efforts in being innovative around reducing waste.

Epworth Strategy—top 10

Now that our Strategic Plan has been embedded, I am excited about next steps. We have identified 10 priority projects. In a difficult marketplace for private health operators, these priority projects reflect the need to think about revenue growth and diversification, while also ensuring we maintain patient, Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) and employee experience. Patient and staff experience is our absolute focus and we are committed to making sure every patient matters, every single time. Further, partnering with consumers is vital so we can hear directly about ways we can further improve care, learn from lived experience and deliver the right services for our patients and their families.

“Epworth is known for providing world-class care and it is the support of donors and volunteers that enables us to go above and beyond what we would otherwise be able to do.”

Looking to the future in healthcare is vital—we need to think differently about our workforce and our patients to provide better care and outcomes. We are also looking at how we can better integrate technology into healthcare with improved digital and communication pathways, to meet the needs of our consumers and partners.

The mental health of our community is important too. We are looking at ways to expand our mental health services to cater for this growing need in our community.

In the next year, we will also progress a diversity and inclusion plan and focus on caring for healthy communities.

Clinical excellence

I know the care delivered at Epworth is excellent, but it is still heartening to hear this from external experts. Independent surveyors who completed our Periodic Review awarded Epworth seven 'Met with Merits' – where we exceeded standard requirements. Those merits were in a range of very important areas—monitoring of patient quality and safety, our medical credentialing processes, the introduction of self-reflecting for nursing, midwifery and allied health, and staff training and education on safety and quality and emergency services. The surveyors also noted the teamwork, dedication and participation of all Epworth staff.

Board changes

While we regretted the departure of Associate Professor Alex Cockram from the Board on 28 February 2019, we are proud that she has joined the Victorian Government's Royal Commission into Mental Health.

In November 2018, we welcomed Wendy Thorpe to the Board. Wendy, who was a Council member at Swinburne University for nine years, brings with her a wealth of experience in technology and finance fields.

Centenary celebrations

In 2020, we will reach our century of caring for the Victorian community. While it is justifiable to look back at the history of an organisation when you celebrate 100 years, we are taking this milestone as a chance to focus on the future. By looking forward, we can ensure the next 100 years of care are just as significant.

I must thank my fellow Board members for their unstinting dedication this year, which resulted in many achievements. I thank Epworth Executives for committing themselves to the organisation's purpose: putting patients at the centre of all we do. Thank you also to all our people who make Epworth such a distinguished and respected organisation, and to all those in our community who continue to support and celebrate Epworth.

Ms Maryjane Crabtree

From the Group Chief Executive



It's been another exciting, successful and busy year for Epworth HealthCare. Looking back on the past 12 months, we have numerous achievements to celebrate. While continuing to invest in our people and our facilities, our main focus remains the same—providing expert patient care.

Activity continues to increase

All Epworth sites continued to be busy over the last year. We have outperformed the private hospital sector in terms of same-day and multiday admissions.

This year, highlights of this activity include:

- an 8% increase in patients admitted with the figure exceeding 200,000 for the first time in Epworth's history (201,846 patients admitted)
- an 18% increase in paediatric presentations to Epworth hospitals
- an incredible 9.5% increase in surgical procedures undertaken
- a significant increase in emergency department presentations to almost 40,000 this year and a 14% increase over the last three years
- increasing patient acuity at Epworth hospitals as evidenced by a 9.4% increase in ICU bed days.

Epworth is engaging with our partners in the health sector, including the private health insurance industry and all levels of government. In addition to the successful ongoing delivery of the Barwon Health public contract in Geelong, Epworth undertook more than 2,800 public elective theatre cases in early 2019 to assist The Alfred, while it renovated facilities. This was not without its challenges and great credit goes to the teams at Epworth Richmond and Epworth Freemasons for accommodating the increased workload at a busy time of the year.

Redevelopment of sites

Epworth Freemasons has been transformed in its latest redevelopment and will benefit from a new day oncology unit, four new operating theatres, 12 new inpatient beds as well as a dedicated research and education facility. The staff at Epworth Freemasons have done an outstanding job in continuing to provide great care to our patients while working around a significant building site which includes much-needed expanded car parking.

At Epworth Eastern in Box Hill, it's been an incredibly busy time as the complex preparation to redevelop facilities has finally reached the starting gate. The East Wing Tower redevelopment will provide for a new emergency department, new clinical floors, an 'Australian first' hospital Chinese medicine department as well as five newly built operating theatres, an additional cardiac catheterisation lab and doctor consulting suites.

To enable Epworth Eastern to continue meeting patient demand and provide a great hospital experience, we have taken a three-year lease of a former hospital site in Kew to ensure patients are not disadvantaged by reduced Epworth Eastern bed and theatre capacity during the redevelopment. The new site, known as Epworth Eastern Kew, began admitting patients in early September 2019.

Epworth Strategy 2018–22 progress

After launching our five-year Epworth Strategic Plan last year, much has been achieved under our four strategic pillars of Connected Care, Empowered People, Innovative Practice and Sustainability.

Connected Care: Epworth is always looking for new and better ways to connect with our patients. Examples include using technology like Skype to monitor our patients after they have been discharged from hospital and giving new parents all the information they need via our new Mobile Midwife series of videos. This is in preparation for enhanced digital communication between patients, GPs and Epworth specialist doctors as we further invest in technology in the months and years ahead.

Epworth's investment in clinical trials and research has enabled us to trial new treatments that give patients greater care options, particularly in the areas of oncology, mental health and rehabilitation. In addition, a new Clinical Governance Framework has been developed to ensure Epworth remains at the forefront of the latest quality and safety programs and initiatives.

Empowered People: During the last 12 months, Epworth has continued to recognise and celebrate the role of women in our workplace. In addition to a very successful International Women's Day in 2019, we introduced the first in a series of Future Women's Forums, a program that will continue to expand throughout 2020.

Epworth staff members also continue to benefit from the philanthropy that supports the Epworth Medical Foundation (EMF) and our highly valued scholarship program. This year we awarded 153 scholarships valued at over \$800,000 to our talented staff members. Our scholarship program enables participants to explore ideas and initiatives from around the world to benefit both their colleagues as well as future Epworth patients.

Our VMOs have benefited from the introduction of a new masterclass lecture series and the inaugural Epworth Summit VMO Leadership Program. A joint initiative of Epworth and Monash University, these VMO programs have been developed to foster the brightest medical talent via a unique professional development opportunity. By applying new knowledge, skills and insights, participants will be equipped to support Epworth to stay at the leading edge of healthcare.

Innovative Practice: Priority projects over the last 12 months have included a new Digital Strategy, with a defined roadmap to integrate technology with care at the bedside, to ensure patients benefit from the latest advances in medical treatment. The strategy outlines the way in which Epworth best responds to the changing needs and expectations of our patients, clinicians and staff. Investing in digital technology to respond to the needs of our patients and doctors is a priority for Epworth, albeit at an increasingly challenging time for the private hospital sector in Australia.

This year, Epworth's extensive research program continued to support a variety of initiatives that will directly benefit Epworth's clinical service delivery. Aided by significant philanthropy, Epworth has significantly invested

in robotic surgical technology with a program that leads the way in any hospital, public or private, in Australia.

Sustainability: During the last year, Epworth has developed a new Environmental Policy that has established sustainability targets in the areas of electricity, gas consumption and emissions, waste production and paper consumption. Early initiatives to minimise waste and increase recycling are already showing promise, and in future reports, I hope to provide commentary on the impact Epworth has made as we track the outcomes of these projects and our investment.

In terms of financial sustainability, I am pleased to report that Epworth achieved its full-year budget target in FY19 and has developed a solid operating base to deliver strong results in the years ahead. However, the current environment of low health fund rate increases, with a slight decline in private health insurance membership year on year, does create challenging operating conditions for our sector. Epworth is exploring new and innovative ways to respond to this challenging environment. Leveraging our scale in Victoria and partnering with other organisations are strategies Epworth is adopting in response.

The year ahead

There is much to look forward to in the year ahead including the major milestone of the centenary of Epworth in 2020. While this will be a year to celebrate and reflect on our past, we are also committed to ensure Epworth is well placed to deliver the next 100 years of outstanding, compassionate care for our patients and the community.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank Epworth Board President, Maryjane Crabtree along with the Epworth Board and Executive for their outstanding support again this year. Thanks also to our nearly 10,000 staff members, doctors, volunteers, donors and partners for their incredible dedication and commitment to this fantastic organisation.

Dr Lachlan Henderson

Epworth highlights

Primary specialty	Episodes of care	Bed days
Medical oncology	22,810	45,615
General surgery	16,476	35,969
Orthopaedic surgery	15,473	53,397
Gastroenterology	15,283	20,123
Nephrology	15,207	24,540
Urology	13,802	22,180
Gynaecology	11,303	18,579
Plastic surgery	8,187	14,564
Rehabilitation	7,550	76,703
Clinical haematology	7,318	14,092
Cardiology	7,043	23,666
General medicine	6,177	15,522
Psychiatry	5,163	22,499

14%
increase in emergency presentations over the last three years

4.1%
increase on last year

3,246
births

8.2%
increase in patients admitted over last year

11.4%
increase in same-day procedures in the last year

9.4%
increase in ICU bed days over the last year

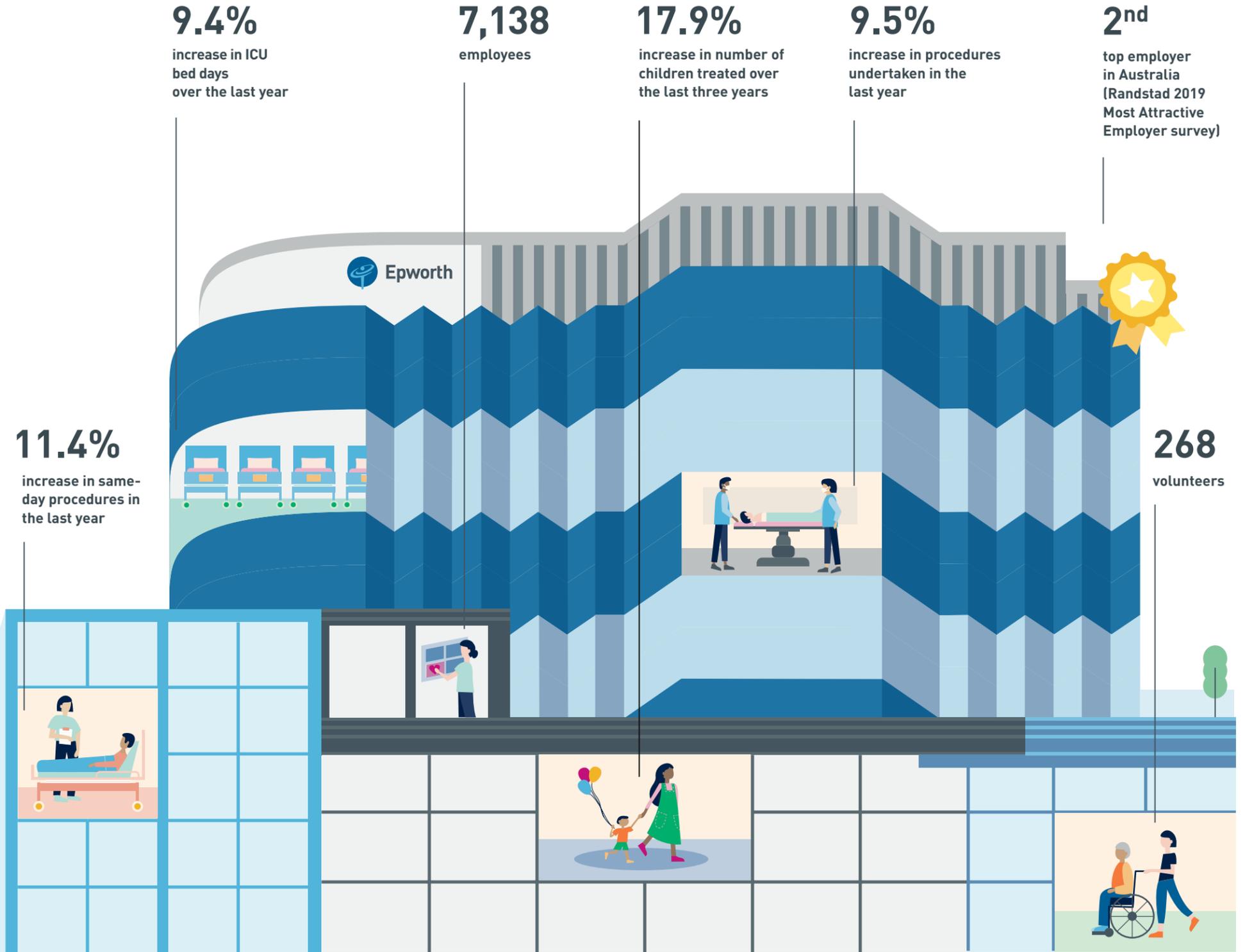
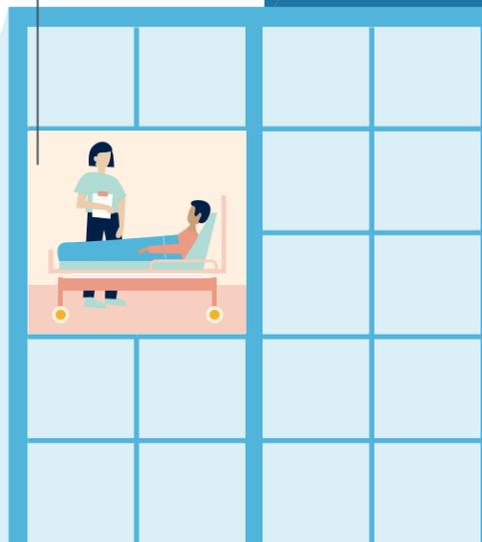
7,138
employees

17.9%
increase in number of children treated over the last three years

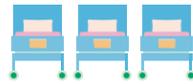
9.5%
increase in procedures undertaken in the last year

2nd
top employer in Australia (Randstad 2019 Most Attractive Employer survey)

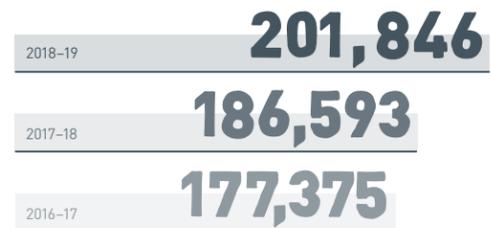
268
volunteers



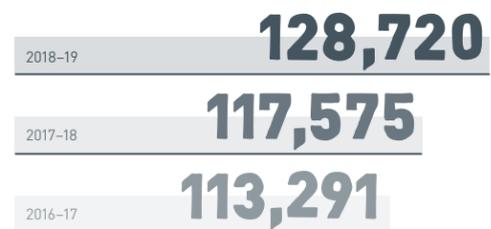
Year at a glance



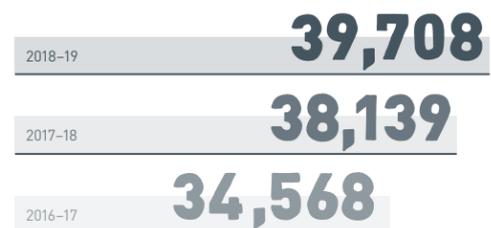
Patient admissions across all Epworth hospitals



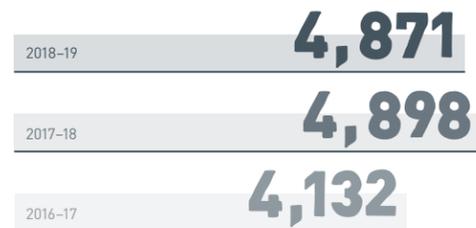
Surgical procedures undertaken



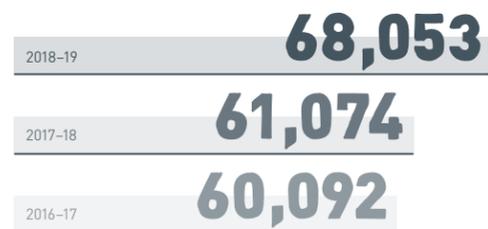
Emergency Department care



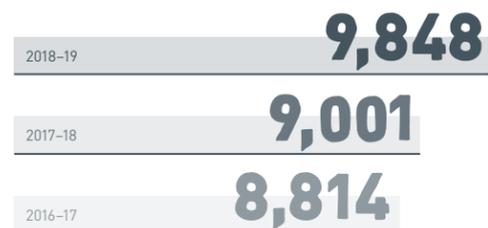
Children treated



Same-day procedures



Critical care



Epworth Strategy 2018-22

We launched our five-year vision in August 2018 through the Epworth Strategy 2018-22. Focused on creating healthy communities through collaboration, the plan works around our core premise: patients are at the centre of all we do.

The strategy is underpinned by four pillars:

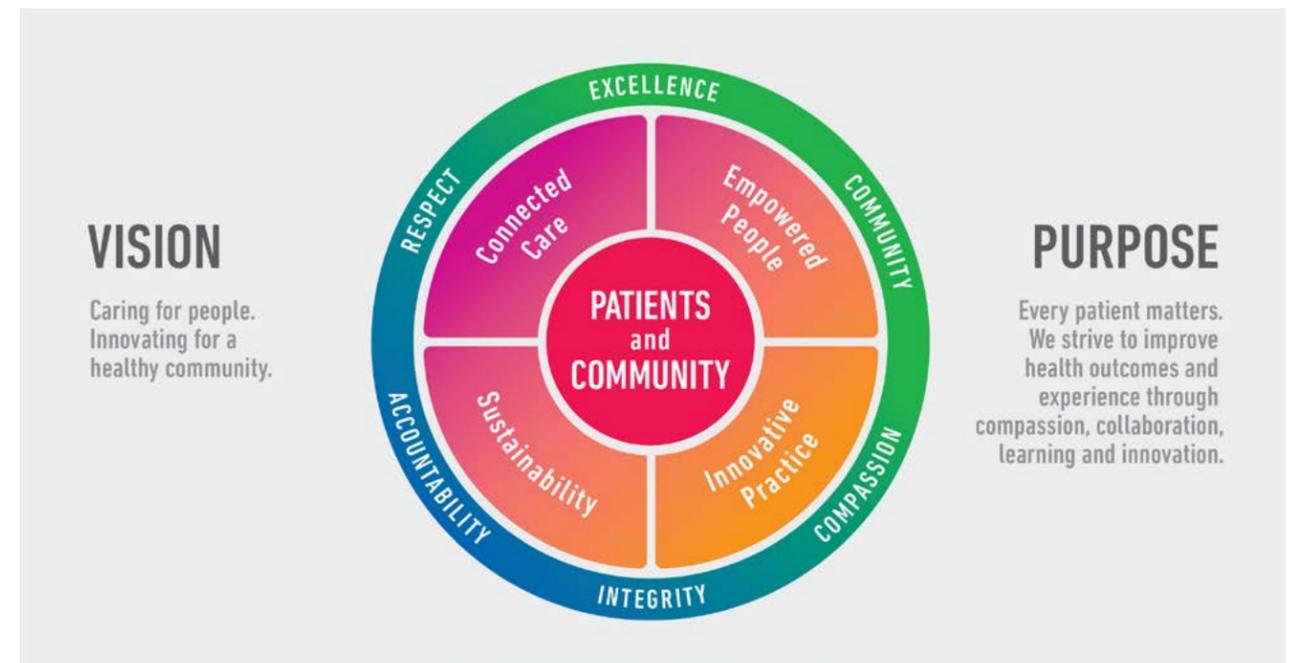
- Connected Care
- Empowered People
- Innovative Practice
- Sustainability.

The strategy was informed by extensive engagement with our people, our Board and wider stakeholders. These include our VMOs, patient representatives, donors, volunteers, health sector leaders, funders and providers, and experts from the technology, academia, infrastructure and financial sectors.

Our strategy responds to the following themes for the future:

- the patient of the future is empowered with information
- care will be delivered in a range of locations, within and beyond hospitals
- partnering with our doctors is vital to create a shared sense of purpose
- disruption will continue to challenge us to create solutions to improve the patient experience
- collaboration and partnerships will be key
- a commitment to learning and innovation through our education and research programs
- private hospitals should have a strong connection to community.

Our future success demands new thinking, enhanced care models and innovative approaches.



Connected Care

“We get frequent compliments from patients pleased that we’re able to provide expert care.”

Ron Sultana, Director of Emergency Medicine,
Epworth Richmond

Our patients

Our patients come from many different parts of the community.

We had more than 201,800 presentations across all Epworth sites during 2018-19. Of those, the bulk of our patients (56 per cent) identified as female. Female patients outnumbered male patients at all our hospitals, except Epworth Richmond, where the numbers were evenly split.

Other than Australia, our patients most commonly hailed from:

- United Kingdom
- China
- Italy
- South Africa
- Greece
- India
- New Zealand
- Germany
- Sri Lanka
- United States of America.

While we see patients from newborn to the elderly, the most common age bracket of our patients is from 65 to 74 years. At Epworth Freemasons, the most common age bracket is 30 to 39 years due to the large maternity service at that hospital.



Some of our nurses are multilingual, helping them communicate with patients whose first language is not English.

87% our overall patient satisfaction score



76% of patients would definitely recommend Epworth to others



89% mean satisfaction scores of our doctors and nurses

69% rated Epworth 9 or 10



Patient experience

We regularly survey our patients to gain feedback on their experiences. This feedback provides us with opportunities to continually improve our services.

Our patient experience survey, which is conducted independently by Insync/Press Ganey, is mailed to a random selection of patients. This monthly survey asks patients a wide range of questions about their hospital stay, including the overall quality of care, the care received from doctors and nurses and the discharge process.

This year, our overall patient satisfaction score is well above the benchmark of other Australian hospitals participating in the survey and an increase on last year's score of 86.6 per cent.

Epworth's evaluation is also well above the international benchmark. Patients were also highly satisfied with our staff, with overall mean scores consistent with 2018.

Food services

The expansion of meals on demand, via our Point of Care terminals, has continued across Epworth. This has led to positive feedback and an increase from last year in the mean score at Epworth Richmond to 86.3 per cent for the overall standard and quality of food.

Our patients have told us:

- "very impressed with the quality and variety of food"
- "the menus would rival most five-star restaurants"
- "the quality, variety and options of meals surpassed my expectations".

These achievements were recognised by the Institute of Hospitality in HealthCare (IHHC), who awarded our Epworth Richmond room service model 'Project of the Year 2019'.



Our kitchens provide high-quality, nutritious food.

Shaping our services

Our work in partnering with consumers is being strengthened, with increasing opportunities for our consumers to help shape our services.

During the year, the Clinical Services team gathered information on how to set up a consumer advisor register, consulting with public and private health services. Patients, family members, carers and community members will be invited to provide input to help drive improvements across Epworth. Consumers will be sought to join a number of committees including governance, safety, patient experience and service delivery across all our divisions.

Group Director, Patient Experience and Clinical Services Improvement, Sheila Daly says that while consumers have always been involved in helping improve our services, we have not had a structured approach that supports engaging with consumers in the most meaningful way. "Our consumer advisor register will ensure that our services are better aligned to what patients tell us they need, rather than us designing the service from an organisation perspective," Sheila said.

Epworth's consumer strategy was released in August 2019, with the Consumer Advisor Register commencing from September 2019.

Continual improvements in clinical care

To keep our patients safe, well and able to return to their daily lives as soon as possible, we monitor key clinical indicators. Our aim is to exceed targets and always improve our care.

Preventing falls

Some inpatients are at risk of falling while in hospital. A program introduced in 2017 for rehabilitation patients proved successful in reducing the severity of falls.

This initiative extended to all our acute hospitals in April and May 2019 and helps manage patients at risk of falls through:

- a staff resource package that provides clear instructions on their roles and responsibilities in the assessment and management of a patient's falls risk
- a falls huddle—a process where staff gather following a patient fall and use a checklist to ensure all contributing factors are identified and targeted strategies implemented to reduce the risk of subsequent falls.

We are monitoring the effectiveness of this initiative over the next six months.

Tackling pressure injuries

After an increase in significant pressure injuries, the Group Pressure Injury Committee developed and implemented the Back to Basics program in May and June 2018. This program, designed to support staff and improve care of patients, resulted in:

- the introduction of a process to ensure all acute wards have the necessary equipment (the 'Pressure Bundle') at their fingertips to manage risk and treat a patient's pressure injury
- an education package, with presentations given to all wards regarding assessment and management of pressure injuries
- specialised wound care in-service education for staff.

Infection prevention

With influenza prevalent in the community, it is essential that we protect our Epworth community, colleagues and patients through vaccination. Our target is to vaccinate 80 per cent of staff annually.

We exceeded this target last year, with an overall uptake of **82** per cent of staff vaccinated across Epworth sites. At 30 June 2019, 76 per cent of permanent staff were vaccinated.

Planning for the 2020 campaign will begin in November so that Epworth maximises the protective benefit from influenza vaccination.

High standards maintained

A midway Periodic Review Survey, undertaken by independent assessors in October 2018, highlighted Epworth as a leading provider of private healthcare in Victoria.

All actions were met and seven actions were awarded 'Met with Merit' (exceeding standard requirements), including:

- monitoring of patient quality and safety performance by the Board and senior executives
- scope of practice management for medical, allied health, nursing and midwifery. Particularly highlighted were our medical credentialing processes and the introduction of the self-reflection and self-guiding rating tools for nursing, midwifery and allied health
- staff training and education on safety and quality and emergency procedures.

Surveyors also highlighted the excellent management of a serious emergency situation that occurred at one site prior to the survey.

The teamwork, dedication and participation of all Epworth staff were noted by the surveyors, who commented positively on our:

- Point of Care system and the opportunities it provides to improve patient outcomes
- robust and superior medical credentialing system
- fantastic volunteers, whose efforts enhance the patient experience

- numerous quality improvement projects including the:
 - patient identification project in outpatients, throughout our Rehabilitation and Mental Health division
 - Skyping project trial at Epworth Eastern, where orthopaedic patients are reviewed post-discharge
 - staff safety rules
- invaluable patient services, particularly the Concussion Clinic and the Return to Driving program.

Epworth's next assessment will be held in June 2020.

Personalising cancer care

Individualising cancer care, with the use of a new blood test, is the aim of a large haematology project.

Epworth's Director of Molecular Oncology and Cancer Immunology and haematologist Professor Miles Prince is studying a potentially revolutionary test for the diagnosis of blood cancers. The team, in the second year of a project, aims to develop and validate a diagnostic test for use in routine clinical genomic testing for cancer. The usual diagnosis of blood cancers is to remove tissue from a lymph gland and/or bone marrow for analysis. This sort of biopsy is invasive and takes time to heal and recover.

"Instead we're trialling an alternative way of examining the blood cancer tissue, specifically a blood test which some call a 'liquid biopsy'," Prof Prince said. "This blood test allows us to detect minuscule tumour fragments hidden in patients' bodies through DNA analysis."

Recently scientists discovered ctDNA (circulating tumour DNA)—genetic material that has leaked out of a patient's malignancy into the bloodstream. With a blood sample, we can now analyse minuscule tumour particles and work out more accurately where cancer cells are hiding in the body.

"It's only been in the last few years that we've had the capacity to detect cells at this tiny DNA level," Prof Prince said. "This will be a real game changer and allow us to use that information to better personalise treatment. It will help us identify a broader spectrum of cancer mutations hiding in the patient's body and give us better insight into the tumour's 'personality' through molecular testing.

"We can look at whether the cancer is passive or aggressive and work out which treatment is more likely to be successful. This sort of testing will also allow us to follow the cancer better.

Chinese services at Epworth Eastern

- **Chinese concierge who speaks Mandarin and Cantonese assisting with admissions, paperwork and health funds**
- **more than 50 specialists who are multilingual**
- **Traditional Chinese Medicine department in development.**



"For example, we can monitor to see if a patient is going into remission or if their disease is starting to relapse. In this way it will be complementary to new scanning and imaging techniques. This ongoing work will create a large clinical database, allowing researchers to compare ctDNA with PET scanning and will guide best practice worldwide."

Prof Prince's study will have broad application for all cancers but is initially focused on haematological (blood) malignancies. The project is being undertaken at the Molecular Oncology and Cancer Immunology service at Epworth and Peter MacCallum laboratories, using Epworth and Peter Mac patient biopsies.

Complementary service: an Australian first

At Epworth Eastern, Chinese-speaking patients are the second-largest group of patients after those who are English-speaking. To better serve this large community, Executive Director Louise O'Connor is planning to open a Traditional Chinese Medicine department, which will be the first of its kind in Australia.

"We have always been paying attention to the field of eastern medicine, hoping to find ways beyond western medicine to protect and preserve people's health," Louise said. "A great amount of research on how eastern and western medicine complement each other has been undertaken and we have discussed this with many doctors and staff."

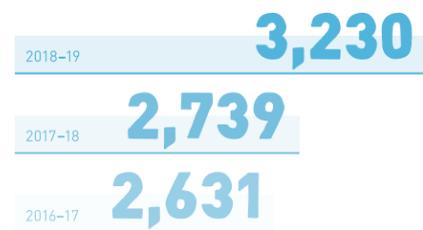
The Traditional Chinese Medicine department will be housed on Level 8 of Epworth Eastern's new 14-storey tower, which will open in 2021. It will be set up as part of the Epworth Eastern Chinese-Western Medicine Precinct. To ensure best practice, the Traditional Chinese Medicine service will operate in partnership with a sister hospital in China, as well as RMIT's Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute, where doctor exchange and ongoing training and education are priorities, underpinned by evidence-based research.



Associate Professor Nathan Lawrentschuk with the new IRE machine.

Epworth and the E.J. Whitten Foundation have partnered to commit \$2 million over five years into translational research in the field of urology, specifically for prostate cancer.

Neurosurgery episodes



Nano-Knife treating difficult-to-reach tumours

Patients with prostate, liver or pancreatic cancer now have access to minimally invasive treatment following the launch of Irreversible Electroporation (IRE), also called NanoKnife, enabling treatment of cancerous tumours that were previously inoperable or difficult to reach.

With IRE, a surgeon can carefully use real-time imaging via ultrasound (or MRI) while their patient is under general anaesthetic to guide several thin electrodes into the cancerous tumour. The needles are strategically placed at points around the perimeter of the tumour. When activated, the IRE system sends electrical pulses or currents between each set of needles to puncture permanent nanometre-sized holes into the tumour. This process causes the cancer cells to become unbalanced and triggers a cell 'suicide', thereby destroying the tumour.

Associate Professor Nathan Lawrentschuk, a urological surgeon and urologic oncologist, says Epworth surgeons have performed around 20 NanoKnife procedures since late last year for patients with prostate cancer.

"It really puts Epworth a step ahead, and gives more options for men with localised prostate cancer. It also helps men who have not had successful radiation therapy to avoid significant and risky surgery," A/Prof Lawrentschuk said.

Growth in neurosciences

We continued to increase our work and grow our expertise in neurosciences this year, with more than 4,300 patients admitted for neurological care.

Nurse Unit Manager Jade O'Keefe from Epworth Richmond says while the core group of our neurology patients are being treated for stroke or seizure management, an increasing number of patients are needing care for neuropathic spinal pain or degeneration.

"We're building relationships with more pain specialists, as this becomes a more common part of our work," Jade said. "Stroke care is still one of our main areas of care and we are also seeing a lot of patients with Parkinson's disease coming in for new treatments like infusion medication."

During the 2018-19 year, at Epworth Richmond we cared for more than:

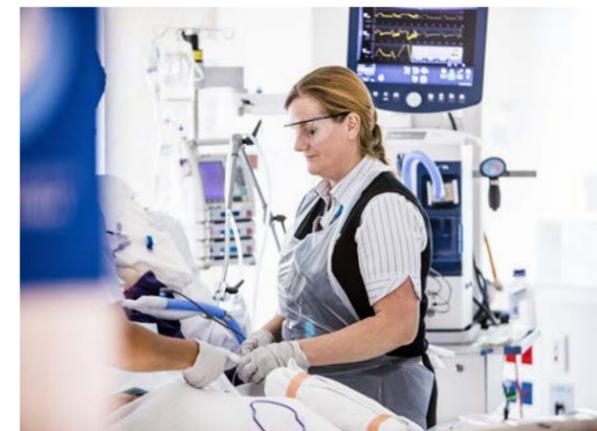
- 2,100 patients needing spinal neurosurgery
- 530 patients with chronic and neuropathic pain
- 260 patients with degenerative neurological disorders.

We saw a significant boost in patients requiring neurosurgery this year: a 17.9 per cent increase on 2017-18, with over 3,200 presentations including five paediatric presentations.

Sun Hwang, Nurse Unit Manager Lee Wing theatre at Epworth Richmond says new equipment in our theatres and inpatient areas is providing more tailored and personalised treatment and care options for neuroscience patients. There has been a significant increase in the number of patients requiring spinal surgery. To support this, we have invested in additional spinal navigation equipment and instrumentation. Complementing this has been the recent addition of two new 3D imaging machines.

"This technology improves accuracy and enables surgeons to undertake minimally invasive procedures," Sun said.

"We also purchased modified trans-sphenoidal instruments to accommodate more pituitary tumour cases."



We have seen a significant increase in neurosurgery patients.

Emergency care in demand

We have seen significant increases in presentations at both our emergency departments. This past year, Epworth Richmond cared for over 29,000 patients and Epworth Geelong has continued to grow at a rapid pace, caring for over 10,000 patients. Associate Professor Ron Sultana, Director of Emergency Medicine at Epworth Richmond, says the team strives to meet patients' expectations every day.



Both our emergency departments have been caring for greater numbers.

"We get frequent compliments from patients pleased that we're able to provide expert care, diagnose their condition quickly, provide appropriate tests, refer to our specialists and admit to hospital, if need be. We understand our patients want affordable private emergency care and to get back to their home, work or sports as quickly as possible."

Associate Professor Bill Nimorakiotakis, Deputy Director of Emergency Medicine, has worked at Epworth Richmond for 21 years and is surrounded by a highly experienced team.

"Our emergency department is staffed by very experienced emergency physicians, many who have worked in our department for well over a decade. Our longest-serving emergency physician, Dr Robert Poulton, first started working at Epworth nearly 30 years ago," A/Prof Nimorakiotakis said.

Our state-of-the-art emergency departments are able to look after a variety of conditions. We have an extensive on-call roster and over the past few years have been seeing an increasing number of paediatric patients since the opening of our paediatric ward.



It's the highly experienced teams in our two emergency departments at Epworth Richmond and Epworth Geelong that make all the difference.

We listen and we provide quality care.

“Epworth Richmond Emergency Department sees 30 per cent more patients than any other private hospital emergency department in Victoria and is the busiest private emergency department in Australia.

“It's our experience that makes the difference. All our doctors are emergency specialists or trainees in the final year of training. As many of our doctors have worked in the department for many years, we're able to provide a better and more consistent service for our patients.

“A good example is when we had two patients arrive within an hour of each other recently, both with myocardial infarction (heart attacks). We were able to move quickly to ensure both were taken up to the catheter lab quickly.”

A/Prof Nimorakiotakis
Epworth Richmond Emergency Department



Meeting the needs of the Geelong community—emergency department Nurse Unit Manager Chris Norton cares for one of the 10,000 seen in our emergency department this year.

Growth in emergency care at Geelong

Epworth Geelong Emergency Department has proven to be a popular choice when it comes to emergency medicine for both locals and tourists alike. In its third year, emergency department presentations increased by 19 per cent, with more than 10,000 patients seen.

In May, the department reached a record 1,000 presentations for the month. The coastal regions of Geelong experience an influx of short- and long-term visitors between December and February each year. Our emergency department treated 350 patients from overseas, interstate and Victorian areas outside of Greater Geelong throughout this period.

Epworth Geelong Director of Emergency Medicine Dr Matt Ryan says having a private option for emergency care has led to positive impacts for the Greater Geelong community.

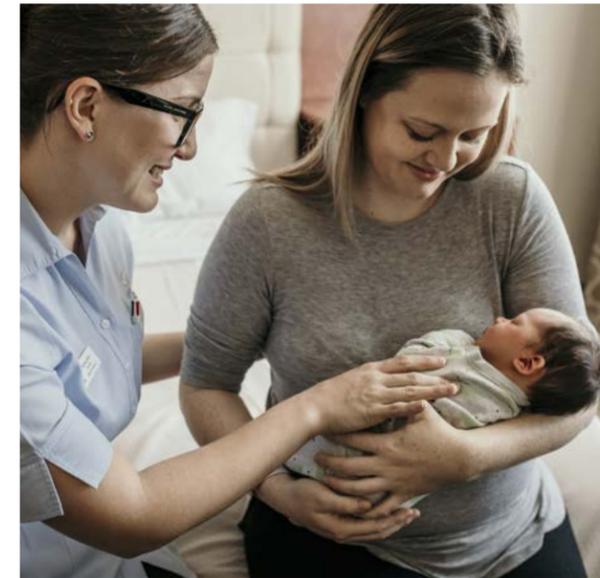
“The fast-growing population of Greater Geelong naturally places additional pressure on the region’s public health services. Having an additional private emergency department provides patients with a choice when it comes to emergency care,” Dr Ryan said.

“The growth of the unit in the past year is a reflection of our hard-working emergency team. The department is well regarded within the community and has developed an excellent reputation for prompt assessment and diagnosis of patients and quality treatment.”

more than
10,000 patients seen



19% increase in emergency department presentations



Our mobile midwife goes home with new parents—they can access informative educational videos online.

Mobile Midwife: resource for new parents

Babies don’t come with an instruction manual and being a parent can be overwhelming. This year we introduced an initiative to help our new parents at Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Geelong—Mobile Midwife.

Our midwives used their decades of clinical knowledge and hands-on experience to develop a series of videos to guide, support and empower new parents. The series of short videos are accessible to all online, as well as on our Point of Care system at the bedside. The videos are divided into distinct sections that cover pregnancy, birth and beyond.

Topics include how to stay active during pregnancy, strengthening abdominal muscles and swaddling your baby.

“Our popular childbirth education classes cover a large amount of information about pregnancy and childbirth. This series complements what our patients learn and makes it that much easier to go back and watch again—whenever and wherever they need to,” said Lola Valent, Nurse Unit Manager Postnatal at Epworth Freemasons Maternity.

Epworth Geelong acting Maternity Nurse Unit Manager Hayley Carter says midwives have an important role in guiding new parents in their parenting roles.

“Our families often comment that they wish they could take a midwife home with them,” Hayley said.

“This educational video series offers the next best thing, providing an extension of our care from hospital into the home.”

The highly popular video series was made possible by a generous donation to the Epworth Medical Foundation.

18.2M
people reached

70K
visitors to Epworth's Blog

7K
incoming messages

Bigger role in health promotion

We have taken a bigger role in reaching our community and new audiences this year, with important health messages, key services and Epworth news promoted through social media. Across our social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, we have reached 18.2 million people.

Using channels like Facebook Live, we can speak directly to our community about topics where more information is sought in an easy-to-digest format, including endometriosis and breast health. During each session we are able to answer real-time questions.

The Epworth Blog, which covers the latest Epworth news, important health and wellbeing topics, inspiration and updates from the local community, has been well received by our community, with more than 70,000 visitors. Most visited posts provided information on:

- cancer staging
- breast pain
- where to find healthy food in and around Box Hill.

We're also hearing from our community more online, with the number of incoming messages received increasing by 180 per cent. Annually, we received more than 7,000 incoming messages across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The value of rehabilitation in Fleur's life



Patient Fleur Armstrong was determined to walk again—she's helped here by Hannah Teasdale, Deputy Physiotherapy Manager at Epworth Geelong.

Rehabilitation services expand

Rehabilitation at Epworth Geelong grows in both patient numbers and range of services provided. After a 65 per cent increase in rehabilitation inpatients in 2017-18, activity continued to grow in 2018-19, with over 11,000 bed days—a six per cent increase on the previous year. With the inpatient rehabilitation unit at capacity, rehabilitation services have expanded to accommodate an additional 15 patients per day in an alternative ward. Outpatient rehabilitation activity grew by 25 per cent, with over 24,000 sessions provided over the year. A number of new clinics were introduced in the areas of:

- oncology
- arthritis
- Parkinson's disease
- memory skills
- spasticity.

The true value of rehabilitation is seeing the difference we make in the lives of patients, such as Fleur Armstrong.

Fleur attended intensive outpatient therapy at Epworth Geelong for over 12 months after a car accident in 2017.

Fleur suffered a severe head injury and was hospitalised at Caulfield for nine months. She was discharged home to Geelong and has received centre-based therapy with us, including physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, exercise physiology, occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychology services. As part of her therapy, Fleur made some goals. Top of that list was to walk into her 21st birthday party unaided. Fleur's milestone celebration was held in June and members of our team witnessed her walk up to the podium to make her speech, while linking arms with her mum.

Outpatient therapists Hannah Teasdale, Tess Anderson and Steph Gill say Fleur's commitment, drive and determination have been key in improving her independence and quality of life.

Using technology to further care

A pilot project using videoconferencing capabilities (Facetime, WhatsApp, Skype) to ensure patients are progressing well at home after hip and knee replacements has received strong support. The trial, which commenced as a pilot of 10 patients in July 2018, involved the treating physiotherapist and Nurse Unit Manager calling patients two to three times after leaving hospital over a two-week period. The aim is to ensure patients are progressing satisfactorily with their rehabilitation from discharge up until their surgeon review.

The Nurse Unit Manager asks patients about wound care, pain control and medications and post-operative complications, while the physiotherapist covers areas of transfers, mobility and gait progression, home environment and exercise program. Calls are designed to ensure patients have adequate pain control, are free of complications, are progressing with their functional rehabilitation and are linked in with their home-based therapy services. It is an ideal opportunity to problem-solve and address any issues that have arisen in real time. It allows us to keep involved in the patient's journey outside of their physical stay.

This initial phase of the trial involved patients who were discharged home with no follow-up, either because they did not require it, were not eligible for it, or lived in areas where follow-up care could not be arranged.

Following early positive feedback from patients and families, phase two commenced in January 2019. This saw an expansion of the trial to include patients discharged with home-based therapy services, like physiotherapy, as well as those without. Like the pilot phase, those requiring inpatient rehabilitation were excluded. During this period, 43 patients were followed up. They rated their satisfaction with both the inpatient stay and follow-up videoconference calls as high (88 per cent based on 26 follow-up surveys returned).

It is hoped this project will improve length of stay and prevent readmissions from occurring. The project is continuing, with a review of ongoing sustainability and effectiveness to be undertaken in October 2019.

Cardiac care: complexity and expertise increasing

Cardiovascular disease is one of Australia's largest health problems. Epworth's care in diagnosing and treating heart and circulatory system problems continues to grow. We regularly perform a number of specialist, complex procedures.

Cardiac surgery

Cardiac surgery numbers at Epworth reached their highest level in 2018. Survival rates were also the highest since 1995, despite treating increasingly complex patients.

The Cardiac Surgery and Australia and New Zealand Society of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgeons registry shows that at Epworth:

- 798 cardiac surgical procedures were performed at Epworth Richmond and Epworth Eastern
- our hospitals achieve an average mortality rate well below other contributing hospitals
- we achieve very low rates in:
 - return to theatre for bleeding
 - deep sternal wound infection
 - stroke
 - readmission to hospital
 - ICU and hospital length of stay.

Cardiology

Cardiology interventional procedures, using angioplasty and stents, to treat coronary artery disease save lives. Epworth performed 980 percutaneous coronary interventions (PCI) at Epworth Richmond, Epworth Eastern and Epworth Geelong.



Cardiac patient Marion McKinna with Critical Care Service Manager Sanjee De Silva at Epworth Eastern.

Increase in TAVI procedures

Replacing a diseased aortic valve without open heart surgery has proven to reduce complications.

Since 2010, we have taken on a lead role among Australia's private hospitals in performing aortic valve replacement via a minimally invasive surgical procedure—the Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI). TAVI is used for the treatment of aortic stenosis for patients who are deemed as high risk or unsuitable for surgery. Patient benefits include shorter ICU and hospital stays and earlier activity.

Associate Professor Ron Dick says a different group of patients can be treated with this procedure.

"With TAVI being less invasive than open heart surgery, we are able to treat patients who would struggle with conventional surgery. And as the procedure is carried out under conscious sedation, the downside of anaesthesia in the elderly is avoided," Associate Professor Dick explained. "All our patient cases are presented to a multidisciplinary team, which includes surgeons, to ensure we are offering the right patients the right therapy."

In November 2018, Medicare added this procedure to its Benefits Schedule, so we anticipate the patients receiving this treatment will continue to steadily increase. Procedures undertaken in the first half of 2019 already almost match procedure numbers for the whole of 2018.

TAVI cases performed at Epworth Richmond

60 January–30 June 2019

63 January–December 2018



We believe it's not just physical care patients need, but care for their whole wellbeing.

Compassion an Epworth focus

So important is compassion for our patients, their families and community, that Epworth Rehabilitation social worker and Monash University PhD candidate Debbie Ling has created a world-first compassion training module for Epworth workers.

"Compassion is universally acknowledged to be fundamental in healthcare," Debbie said. "It's defined as a sense of concern that arises when we are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to see that suffering relieved. Compassion increases helping behaviours and a sense of care and connection to all others. It boosts healthcare worker wellbeing as well as leading to improved patient care."

Prior to developing the training program, Debbie investigated the relationship between the level of compassion and perception of common humanity—that is, recognition that all humans are the same in wishing for happiness and wanting to avoid suffering.

The study involved showing 75 Epworth workers common humanity scenarios. They completed validated scales on perspective, common humanity and compassion before and after viewing the material. Results showed that levels of compassion were significantly increased by viewing the common humanity scenarios.

A face-to-face compassion training session for over 100 staff was trialled and evaluated, before being delivered to over 250 staff, mainly in the Epworth Rehabilitation and Mental Health division, but also to nurses in our Epworth Richmond Emergency Department.

The compassion training evaluation was published in *the Czech and Slovak Social Work Journal*, which has an international readership. There have since been requests from around the world for compassion training. The research has also been presented at conferences in the USA, UK, Ireland and Australia.

The training, which is based on the compassion training content, will be trialled in Epworth Rehabilitation and Mental Health division first, with a view to a wider rollout across the organisation.

"There is now major interest in compassion training around the world and it's exciting to be part of research that is at the cutting edge of innovation," Debbie added.

"Compassion is universally acknowledged to be fundamental in healthcare."



Our staff have undergone compassion training, which increases a sense of connection to others.

Concussion is a clinical syndrome, and a mild subset of traumatic brain injury which results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function and impairs the ability to return to daily lifestyle.



Highlighting concussion risks

Our Concussion clinics at Richmond, Hawthorn and Geelong is continually growing and reporting positive patient outcomes.

Professor John Olver, Medical Director of Rehabilitation, along with Dr Rose Acher and Dr Reem Al Hanna, leads a medical and therapy team which is an extension of Epworth Rehabilitation's Traumatic Brain Injury program.

"The Clinic has had a high referral rate since its opening in 2016, which has led to an increase in our medical and allied health staff to provide timely intervention for our patients," Prof Olver said.

During the year:

- 195 referrals to the clinic
- 270 patients in our concussion database
- awarded just under \$200,000 in research grants to investigate predicting outcomes post-concussion and the purchase of diagnostic equipment.

"Treatment of concussion currently relies mainly on clinical judgement as there are no available biomarkers (blood tests or imaging) to diagnose the condition. There are still a lot of unknowns when predicting outcomes for an individual from a concussive episode," Prof Olver said.

"We know that 85 per cent of people who have had concussion see symptoms resolve within two to four weeks. The majority of patients in our clinic are the 15 per cent whose symptoms persist, sometimes for up to six months or more."

Epworth Concussion Clinic uses a multidisciplinary team that focuses their therapies on alleviating ongoing symptoms.

"Our physiotherapists deal with neck, balance and dizziness issues. Our clinical psychologist helps patients with depression and anxiety with various techniques, such as mindfulness. We also have occupational therapists helping with return to work. You have to turn off patient symptoms to aid recovery and return to daily activities," Prof Olver explained.

"We're seeing positive results at the clinic. Those coming in with activity levels of 40 per cent of their pre-injury normal are being discharged with greater than 80 per cent activity levels."



Professor John Olver, Medical Director of Rehabilitation, Epworth Richmond.

The Oregon Post-Concussion Symptom Checklist of 23 symptoms has been introduced to look at the effectiveness of therapy on symptom severity, predicting outcomes and recovery time. A database of patient outcomes is helping to monitor the effectiveness of our interventions.

International recognition

Professor Olver presented a poster on the effectiveness of interventions on concussion at the World Congress on Brain Injury in Toronto in March 2019.

His paper—*The Predictive Value of Persisting Post-Concussion Symptoms on Recovery Trajectories*—measured how initial symptom severity post-concussion can predict patient activity levels on clinic discharge. Preliminary results showed that of 63 patients discharged:

- 68 per cent of patients were male
- average age of 33 years
- primary causes of concussion were sport-related (41 per cent), falls (24 per cent) and motor vehicle accidents (13 per cent)
- 57 per cent had a prior history of concussion.

This information can be used to further develop and tailor the rehabilitation program to achieve better functional outcomes and symptom resolution after concussion.

School children and concussion

The Epworth Concussion Team has been working with Catholic Church Insurance to raise awareness of concussion and the need for protocols to deal with children who have suffered this condition. We have also worked with insurance companies looking after independent schools.

Prof Olver says all schools should have a concussion protocol.

"Schools should have standardised tools for on-field assessment of concussion, and seek medical review as necessary. The school protocol should also help students deal with ongoing effects of concussion and aid students with a graded return to sport and study."

In May and June 2019, Prof Olver and Dr Rose Acher presented on concussion at seven national forums in Melbourne, Brisbane, Launceston, Adelaide, Sydney, Perth and Darwin. They spoke to school principals, teachers and insurers about the clinical features and symptoms of concussion, rehabilitation management, guidelines for return to work or learning, and presented preliminary results from our concussion database.

Project Refresh

To ensure our facilities are comfortable for our patients and meet the expectations of our community, we have undertaken a series of refurbishment works at Epworth Richmond and Epworth Eastern this year.

Following a review of overall patient experience at Epworth Eastern, Project Refresh was born. The review, undertaken in late 2017, looked at patient experience and expectations, signage and wayfinding opportunities and found improvements were needed. With funding secured by Epworth Medical Foundation, the opportunity was taken to refresh all patient rooms, reconfigure foyer and waiting areas and bring dated areas of the hospital back in line with patient expectations.

A survey of patients and visitors found that respondents believed:

- the physical appearance of the hospital was as important as patient care
- the waiting area could be more comfortable.



Project Refresh at Epworth Eastern saw chairs replaced and foyers refreshed.

The \$300,000 upgrade was completed at the beginning of 2019 and included:

- reupholstering of bench seats in patient rooms and chairs in the hospital foyer and Patient Services areas
- replacement of visitor and patient chairs in each room
- replacement of curtains with block-out and transparent blinds in patient rooms
- purchase of 10 customised bariatric and higher chairs at Admission Level 3 to meet patient needs as they wait for their admission
- strategies to improve boards for staff and patient communication.

At Epworth Richmond, refurbishments were undertaken and included:

- Ward 3 Bethesda fully refurbished and the reception area redesigned
- emergency department reception refurbishment
- new paint and carpet in the Patient Service Centre
- additional lockers and dedicated breastfeeding room in staff change rooms on Level 2
- creation of a family room on Level 2, complete with baby change facilities and breastfeeding chair
- Bridge Place Café on the ground floor opened in June 2019, offering table service for our patients, staff and relatives.

Best on ground in brain injury rehabilitation outcomes

Epworth Rehabilitation received the best score for patient outcomes in acquired brain injury patients when compared to all other rehabilitation providers in the country. This achievement led to a green status given in the Australasian Rehabilitation Outcomes Centre (AROC) benchmark report released in February 2019.

To achieve a green status, rehabilitation facilities need to deliver a high change in the functional independence measure (FIM), while maintaining a low length of stay. FIM scores are recorded on admission to hospital and again on discharge to assess a patient's progress towards functional independence, the ultimate rehabilitation goal. FIM is scored against 18 motor and cognitive functions such as eating, dressing, problem-solving and social interaction.

"AROC was established to improve clinical rehabilitation outcomes by benchmarking rehabilitation providers in Australia and New Zealand," Professor John Olver, Medical Director of Epworth Rehabilitation, said. "I'm a strong advocate for translating data into clinical practice and we are able to use FIM data and AROC benchmarking results to assess the rehabilitation programs across each of our four sites."

Epworth has a high percentage of patients admitted to rehabilitation with a brain injury:

- Epworth Rehabilitation Richmond patients with brain injury: 5.9 per cent
- overall average of brain injury patients admitted with rehabilitation Australia-wide: 2.5 per cent.

Epworth Rehabilitation Brain Injury Unit's positive results can be attributed to the high standard of rehabilitation provided by the interdisciplinary treating team, and a focus on accurate reporting of admission and discharge FIM and AROC data.

A new Clinical Documentation Manager role was implemented to review reports, coordinate reporting requirements between clinical staff, health information services and AROC, deliver training programs and develop resources to support accurate and comprehensive FIM reporting. This includes the 'Fundamentals of FIM' guide, a printed resource which is available at all staff bases and offices and is designed to simplify the scoring process against every functional independence measure.

"We're empowering staff at all levels and all departments to speak up for safety."

Safety in focus for Epworth Rehabilitation and Mental Health

Epworth Rehabilitation and Mental Health has taken steps to embed safety into their DNA, implementing two major initiatives to create a safer place to work.

Safety huddles were first trialled at Epworth Brighton and are now in operation across all sites. Each morning, all available staff from every department attend a daily stand-up meeting where two questions are asked and discussed:

- are there any key issues to be made aware of?
- how are we going to stay safe today?

These questions are designed to encourage staff to think about their work environment and patient management.

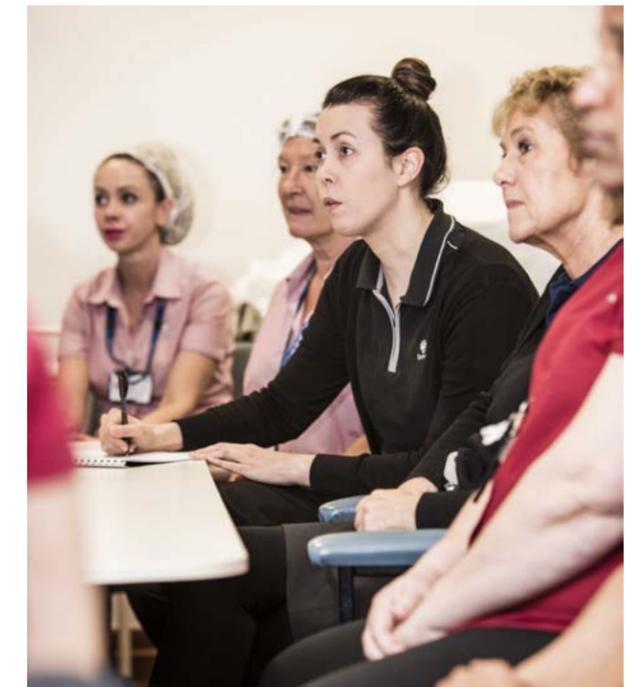
Since the introduction of the site safety huddles, the division has seen its LTIFR (lost time injury frequency rate) decrease from 6.31 to 2.72.

"The safety huddles provide a daily opportunity to think about safety, communicate ideas and report any issues or concerns related to workplace health and safety in a short, sharp group huddle each day," said Emma Oliphant, Health and Safety Adviser. "We're empowering staff at all levels and all departments to speak up for safety and provide the opportunity to work across silos of operation and seek solutions to issues that are relevant for the team and site as a whole."

While occupational violence can occur in any workplace, there is an increased risk in healthcare. The division has recognised this and implemented a range of initiatives to improve safety for our staff, such as education and safety awareness programs and duress response systems that allow staff to call for assistance both onsite and out in the community with patients. Staff in the Transitional Living

Centre and on the road conducting our rehabilitation in the home program now use a security-monitored app that allows them to activate a panic button should they ever feel unsafe when conducting their job at patient homes or in the wider community. Within the hospital environment, our teams now have a duress system that enables them to call for assistance from mobile and fixed line phone systems to receive immediate back-up.

The system has already demonstrated results in managing difficult situations without adverse effect on staff.



Staff from a range of departments participate in the daily safety huddles.

Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

Patients come to us at all stages of life: in pain, with joy, with hope. Some patients are experiencing challenges in their lives and are faced with obstacles ahead. Many inspire us with their courage and determination.

Our team

As carers, we find many of our patients become our second family and we become a supporter and carer.

Every patient impacts us; it is a privilege for all of our people—from nurses and doctors to allied health professionals, administrative staff and volunteers—to care for our patients and their families.

...Here are some of their stories.



Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

At the heart of the yogi

Belinda Burke

Belinda Burke teaches yoga and meditation. She is fit, eats well and is calm and centred. She does not fit the mould of people at risk of cardiac problems.

Belinda, 65, had noticed feeling puffed when walking up the steps to the park, but brushed that off. One day she awoke feeling a bit unwell. Anxiety, wine and wet hair were her first explanations for her symptoms.

Nanci Thurston

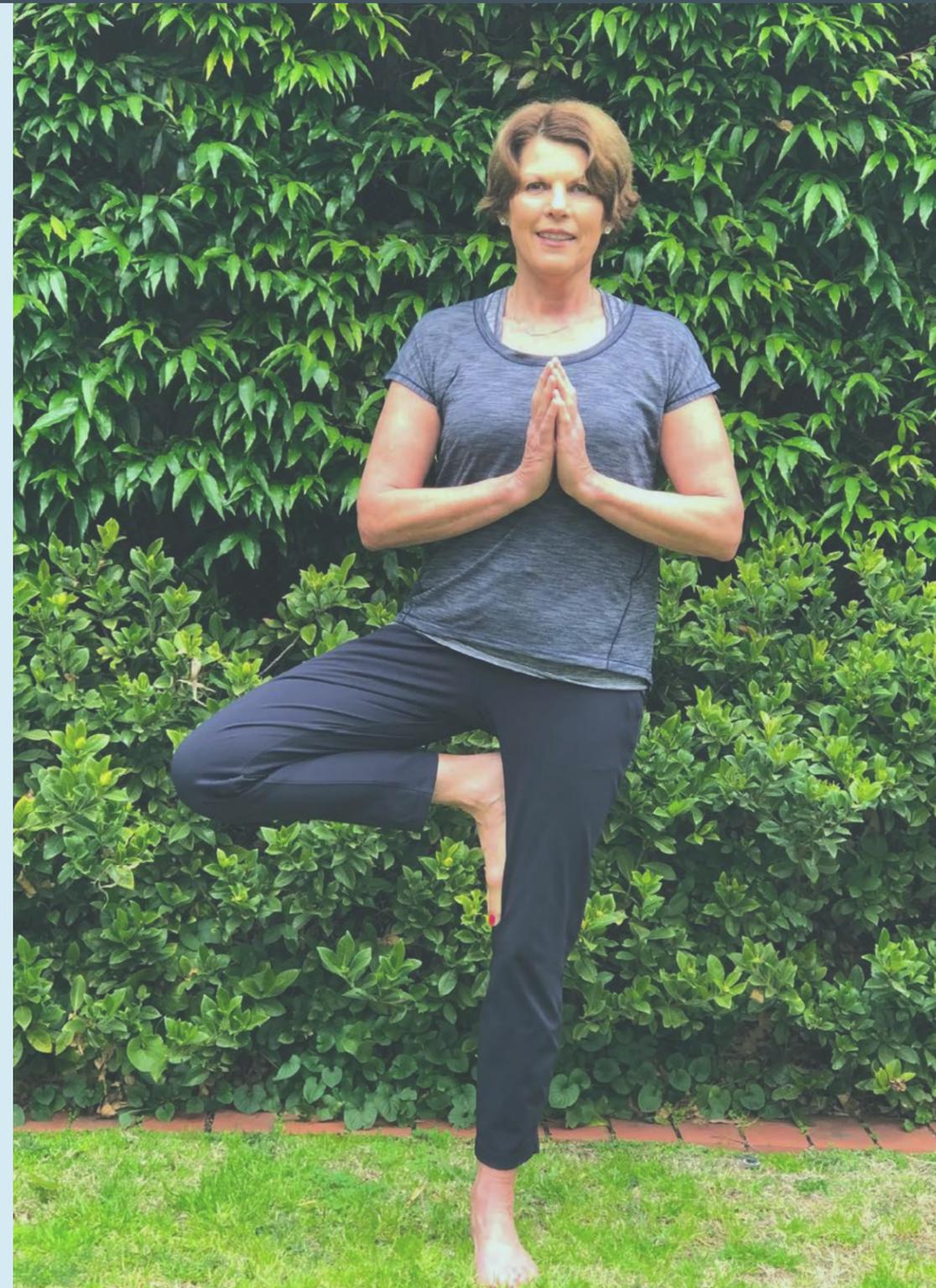
HeartSmart coordinator and cardiac nurse

HeartSmart coordinator and cardiac nurse Nanci Thurston says just 20 per cent of her patients are female.

“Women are protected by their hormones until about 54 and after that it becomes an equal opportunity killer,” she said.

Our team

At right: Belinda enjoys practising yoga for her health and wellbeing.



Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

Exercise, good food and yoga play a large part in Belinda Burke's life. She does not fit the mould of people at risk of cardiac problems. In fact, her apparent wellness almost fooled the paramedics. When Belinda woke up feeling a bit unwell, she thought she was getting a cold.

"But it wasn't enough to stop me going to my 7.30am Deep Water Running class, where I felt absolutely fine," Belinda said.

After her husband Bill went to work, Belinda again felt a bit unwell, but explained all her symptoms away—blaming the glass of wine from the night before, and wet hair for the coldness between her shoulder blades.

"The nausea intensified and I rang my daughter Andrea who is a nurse, and said I feel really sick. She said it could be anxiety. My mother has Alzheimer's, we have a wonderful but busy life with family, with seven grandsons under seven, and family living with us at various times."

Belinda has a history of family cardiac disease.

"My dad smoked—that's why he had a heart attack—I thought. Two years earlier, I had heart tests and had perfect results. I thought I was looking for problems where there weren't any."

While resting in bed, Belinda googled heart attack symptoms, knowing the signs were different in women. She ticked some boxes—nausea and feeling faint—but had no pain in her arms, jaw or neck. Her daughter advised ringing 000. On arrival, the paramedics told Belinda she looked good, but decided to take her to hospital to be on the safe side.

"When we got to Epworth, I just handed myself over—I was so pleased to be there and was so confident in the staff."

Our team



Yoga has become a family affair: Belinda's grandson Hamish enjoys joining her in some yoga moves.

The ECG wasn't definitive, so Director, Cardiac Services, Associate Professor Ron Dick advised an angiogram.

"I was so happy to be at Epworth with these calm people who know stuff," Belinda said. "I'd rung for an ambulance at 11am, and by 3pm I was in the cardiac unit with a stent in my previously blocked left anterior descending coronary artery."

Belinda had had a heart attack and spent four days in the cardiac ward. Being fit and generally well, she recovered quickly.

HeartSmart coordinator and cardiac nurse Nanci Thurston says Belinda has had a great recovery.

"Many of our patients are rattled by such a big event; it is life-altering. It's really a time of reassessing how you do things and to take really good care of yourself."

"Science is now proving things that yogis have always 'felt' and it was encouraging to hear about the heart-mind-body connection from the psychologist," Belinda said. "Genetics play a major role in our physical health, but there are other ways we can help our bodies so we live well. I'm not going to rush back into life full on like it was—I want to give my body and mind the best opportunity to recover and I know it will take time. I am swimming, doing yoga, walking and four weeks into recovery I feel six out of ten and very happy."

HeartSmart is part of Epworth's range of cardiac rehabilitation programs available at Epworth Richmond, Epworth Brighton and Epworth Camberwell, which provide education and exercise for people with heart problems so they can recover quicker, stay healthy and minimise the recurrence of cardiac events.

Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

When complex patients need extraordinary care

Janet Gregory

Two years ago, Janet Gregory was a high-powered, successful Deputy Vice-Chancellor and CEO of Swinburne University in Borneo, Malaysia.

Then her life changed dramatically and she's had the battle of her life—much of it spent in hospital. A myriad of health problems has challenged her independence and her mental health.

Our team

Wendy Pattenden

Nurse Unit Manager, Hospital in the Home

A high proportion of patients prefer to receive their care at home rather than come into hospital.

“When we heard about Janet, we set about seeing how we could help,” said Wendy. “She was so weary of constant hospital appointments and, quite understandably, preferred to undergo her four-hour treatment in the comfort of her own environment.”

“Nurses now come to my home, which has been wonderful. I can't tell you what a difference that has made to my state of mind. It's really helped me feel much better psychologically.”



Janet at home with one of her Hospital in the Home nurses.

Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

Janet Gregory loved her challenging, high-powered job overseas.

"It was an exciting job but I was also looking forward to returning to Melbourne to take up a great position here," Janet said.

But life doesn't always progress the way you'd expect. Janet has spent much of the last two years in hospital.

"Initially the doctors in Malaysia thought I had lupus but as I got worse, I flew back to Melbourne. After an up-and-down period, a PET scan in November found lymphoma. Lymphoma came first, then I contracted several fungal infections in my kidney and my lungs and my immune system broke down," Janet explained.

In March 2018, she had a kidney removed, and in April, suffered a pulmonary embolism and cardiac arrest, resulting in weeks in ICU.

"I'm only alive today because of the ICU nurses and doctors at Epworth Freemasons," Janet said. "But when I came out of ICU, I couldn't move."

Janet had developed the very rare Lance-Adams Syndrome (LAS) and is one of only 150 diagnosed worldwide to have this neurological condition. LAS is a rare complication of successful cardiopulmonary resuscitation and is likely to be caused by a lack of oxygen to the brain. Janet sees Epworth neurologist Professor Richard Gerraty, who manages the symptoms of LAS. Symptoms include halting speech, but the disease does not seem to have dimmed a very bright mind.

Married with four adult children, Janet says she relied heavily on her family.

"I was unable to move. I couldn't feed myself, couldn't toilet myself. But I was lucky it wasn't worse," Janet concedes.

Our team

"I'm only alive today because of the ICU nurses and doctors at Epworth Freemasons."

After six months of rehabilitation, Janet is more independent. However, she relies on a wheelchair and carers and now needs fortnightly chemotherapy.

Janet felt exhausted and dreaded each long day in hospital.

"I got to the point where I was despondent every time I had to go in. Having to be in hospital by 8am is really hard when you're sick because it takes so long to get up and the days were incredibly long."

Epworth staff listened and arranged alternatives to make Janet's life easier. Hospital in the Home stepped in and have made a huge difference in the quality of Janet's life.

"Nurses now come to my home, which has been wonderful. I can't tell you what a difference that has made to my state of mind. It's really helped me feel much better psychologically."

Now 61 years old, Janet is philosophical.

"I've experienced a lot of personal grief. I don't know if I've entirely come to terms with it all, but I'm getting there. It's a day by day proposition. It's full of ups and downs."

Epworth nurse educators have Janet's permission to share her story, so our neurological clinicians can further progress their knowledge in this area.

Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

Our team

Ongoing value of research

Nat Deague

Nat Deague was a happy, healthy wife and mother of two, leading a busy life when she noticed a lump during a gym workout in September last year.

Doctors told Nat she had stage 4 incurable follicular lymphoma, which led to a series of painful biopsies, scans, blood tests and chemotherapy. After exploring a range of options, Nat sought out the opinion of renowned Epworth haematologist Professor Miles Prince.

Professor Miles Prince Epworth haematologist

Prof Prince gave Nat a very different diagnosis from her initial doctors.

He noticed that her tumour had been present for a while and was not progressing rapidly, meaning Nat's disease was in stage 2 and she had a good chance of beating it.

At right: Nat, her husband Will and children Hugo, 11, and Sibella, 10.



Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

Now 46, Nat is having ongoing chemotherapy and antibody treatment to keep the blood cancer in remission.

She is now an advocate for further cancer research, raising more than \$600,000 at a cocktail event for Epworth Medical Foundation (EMF), in partnership with the Snowdome Foundation, so that further research can occur. EMF matched the funds raised with another \$600,000 for vital research.

She is feeling positive and very thankful under the watchful eye of Prof Prince.

“What happened to me can happen to anyone. It’s clear that nobody is immune to blood cancer,” Nat said.

Prof Prince’s research into ctDNA (read more on page 16) has been key in Nat’s recovery.

“I hope this research can now be used to help other people and improve the quality of their life during their treatment. Having gone through treatment myself, I know the biopsies were quite painful for a month after, so for other patients, the ctDNA test offers less invasive testing than I endured.”

1,200 Australians are diagnosed with blood cancer every year



Our team



Nat and her family present a cheque to the Epworth Medical Foundation to enable further research.

Our patients are at the heart of everything we do...

Our patients

Our team



“I hope this research can now be used to help other people and improve the quality of their life during their treatment.”

Nat and her husband Will are grateful for her treatment. Nat is now an advocate for more research on blood cancer.

Empowered People

“Having volunteered at Epworth for 13 years, it has always been a meaningful way of giving back to the community.”

Epworth volunteer Keith Cozens

Our people

Epworth's 2018-22 Empowered People Strategy has seen us shift our focus—we want to further enable our people to make a difference to the patient experience. This includes our employees, doctors, Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs), volunteers and our community.

While we are proud of sustaining a highly engaged, values-based workforce, this last 12 months has seen us strive further to build a culture where individuals and teams feel truly empowered to drive improvements and value, across both employee and patient experience at Epworth.

7,138 employees
3.9% increase on last year

3,000+ Visiting Medical Officers

268 volunteers

1,395 new employees

over
50% workforce in nursing and midwifery



More than 10,000 Epworth people work to make a difference every day.

Our Board

Epworth Foundation is a body corporate established under the Epworth Foundation Act 1980 (Vic) that principally operates under the registered business name Epworth HealthCare.

Our Board of Management consists of 10 members.

Ms Janet Matton

Emeritus Professor Christiaan Mostert

Professor Paul Douglas

Ms Maryjane Crabtree
President

Ms Wendy Thorpe

Reverend Sue Withers

Associate Professor Nerina Harley

Mr Robert Macmillan
Deputy President

Dr Lachlan Henderson

Ms Laura Anderson



Our Board

Ms Maryjane Crabtree,
(President) BA, LLB, FAICD

Appointed to the Epworth board of management in 2012 and President since November 2017. A retired lawyer and executive partner, Ms Crabtree specialised in occupational health and safety, product and environmental liability, class actions and risk management before retiring to focus on non-executive director and committee positions. Ms Crabtree is also on the council of Ormond College and Rugby Victoria and is a member of Chief Executive Women.



Ms Laura Anderson,
BMath, BLit

Chairman of SVI Global Pty Ltd, OneGlobalVenture Pty Ltd and the Foundation for the Advancement of Science and Technology, Ms Anderson is also on the board of the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, the Defence Science Institute, the National Basketball League and the Defence Council Victoria.



Mr Robert Macmillan,
(Deputy President) LLB, B Com,
F Fin, GAICD

Appointed to the Board in 2011 and Deputy President since 2017. Beginning his career as a lawyer, Mr Macmillan then moved into senior roles at Foster's Group Limited, Pacific Brands Limited, BlueScope Steel Limited, Grill'd Pty Ltd and Australian Pharmaceuticals Industries Ltd. He has extensive financial, commercial, business development and legal experience at executive and board level.



Professor Paul Dougas,
BE, MEngSc, FAICD, Professorial
Fellow Melb Uni, Harvard OPM 24

Professor Dougas has had an extensive career in business and consulting engineering with 15 years as CEO of Sinclair Knight Merz. He has spent over 30 years with this employee owned business that has grown to be a global leader in consulting engineering. Prof Dougas was appointed to the Melbourne University School of Engineering to connect with industry and introduce leadership and management into the engineering programs.



Associate Professor Nerina Harley AM,
MBBS, MD, FRACP, FJFIM, FCICM,
PGDipEcho, AFRACMA

A/Prof Harley is the Chair of Epworth's Group Medical Advisory Council, a Director of Epworth's Intensive Care Council, Director of Epworth Freemasons Intensive Care Unit, a director of Epworth Research Institute and the Deputy Chair of the DHHS Victorian Clinical Critical Care Network. A/Prof Harley gained her medical degree from the University of Melbourne and trained as a physician specialising in nephrology and intensive care.



**Emeritus Professor
Christiaan Mostert,**
BA, BD, MA, PhD

Professor Mostert is an Emeritus Professor of the University of Divinity and was a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia for 39 years, exercising his vocation through congregational ministry, missionary service overseas and theological and ministerial education in various places.



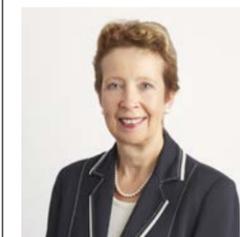
Dr Lachlan Henderson,
MBBS, FRACGP, MHSM, GAICD,
Cert Sports Med

Dr Henderson is the Group Chief Executive Epworth HealthCare and a general practitioner who has 30 years' experience in the health industry. He joined Epworth in February 2017 and was previously CEO St John of God (SJoG) Subiaco Hospital. Dr Henderson is the Vice President of the Australian Private Hospitals Association and a Board Member of Cricket Australia.



Ms Wendy Thorpe,
BA, BBus, Grad Dip Applied Finance &
Investment, GAICD, FFin, Harvard AMP 172

Ms Thorpe is Chair of Online Education Services, a non-executive director of Tower Ltd, AMP Bank Ltd, Very Special Kids and Ausgrid and is a member of Chief Executive Women. She was a Council member at Swinburne University for nine years and a Director of AXA Business Services in India for three years. Ms Thorpe has had an extensive executive career leading technology and operations within large, listed financial services companies.



Ms Janet Matton,
BBus, GAICD

Ms Matton has had extensive experience in the IT industry and in business management. She spent 34 years with IBM, including time as vice president of operations and 12 years holding key roles for IBM in Southeast Asia, the United States, Japan, China and Europe. Named the 2010 Victorian Telstra Business Woman of the Year. Ms Matton is also Chair of the Eastern Community Legal Centre and ACMI and on the board of Better Care Victoria. She is also a member of Chief Executive Women.



Reverend Sue Withers,
DipTeach, BTh, GradDipPsych

An ordained minister of the Uniting Church of Australia, Rev. Sue Withers has been the Ministry Integration Co-ordinator and Field Education Co-ordinator for Pilgrim Theological College since 2012. She held previous management roles associated with the Synod (Victoria & Tasmania) of the Uniting Church of Australia and was the Chaplain of Methodist Ladies College from 1997 to 2003 following an early career in secondary teaching.



Our Executive

Epworth HealthCare is led by an executive team of 11. Our Executive bring a wealth of experience to this private hospital group.

Dr Lachlan Henderson,
Group Chief Executive,
Epworth HealthCare

A medical practitioner, Lachlan has 30 years' experience in the health industry and joined Epworth in February 2017. Lachlan's focus is on driving patient care, doctor and staff satisfaction and business outcomes in a changing healthcare landscape.



Mr Damian Armour,
Chief Executive Officer,
Epworth Geelong

An experienced healthcare executive, Damian has worked in public and private not-for-profit sectors for over 17 years. After almost 10 years at Barwon Health, where he was the General Manager of Surgical Services, Damian joined Epworth HealthCare in June 2007 as the Executive Director of Epworth Freemasons and was appointed the CEO Epworth Geelong in April 2014.



Ms Carolyn Bell,
Executive Director, Epworth
Rehabilitation and Mental Health

Carolyn's career began in medical, surgical and coronary care nursing before a transition to clinical and senior leadership positions at the Royal Women's Hospital and BreastScreen Victoria. She started at Epworth in 2015 as Chief Operations Manager at Epworth Richmond before being appointed Executive Director in 2017, leading a team across four locations.



Mr Scott Bulger,
Executive Director, Epworth Medical
Foundation and Brand

Scott joined Epworth in 2012 as the Executive Director of Epworth Medical Foundation and in 2017 assumed responsibility for Brand activities across Epworth. Prior to Epworth, Scott worked as Pro-Vice Chancellor, Development and External Relations at Bond University and Director of International Fundraising at ChildFund International.



Ms Liz Camilleri,
Executive Director, Finance and
Commercial Services

Liz joined Epworth as a pay clerk in 1990 and during her career was promoted to Payroll Manager, Hospitality Services Manager at Epworth Richmond and became the inaugural Business Manager of Epworth Eastern in 2004. She was appointed Executive Director, Finance in 2009 and to her current position in 2017.



Ms Maree Feery,
Executive Director, People & Culture

Maree joined Epworth as Human Resources Manager at Epworth Richmond before becoming Executive Director in 2012. Prior to Epworth, her roles included national human resources manager at Healthscope, and director of organisational development at Melbourne Health.



Ms Karen Kinmont,
Chief Information Officer

Karen has worked in private healthcare for over 25 years. Since joining Epworth in 2013, she has made great inroads into modernising the IT environments at Epworth and has helped the organisation to commence its digital transformation journey.



Ms Louise O'Connor,
Executive Director, Epworth Eastern

With a passion for clinical safety and excellent patient outcomes, Louise has spent more than a decade in clinical services management, including five years at Epworth Eastern as Director of Clinical Services, and as Deputy Director of Nursing and Business Manager at Box Hill Hospital. She was appointed Executive Director, Epworth Eastern in March 2014.



Associate Professor Dr Luis Prado,
Executive Director, Academic and Medical
Services and Chief Medical Officer

For over 20 years, Luis has held a number of senior medical administrator roles across Queensland Health and in the private healthcare sector. He has also served as a medical officer with the Australian Regular Army. A practising GP, Luis joined Epworth in 2016.



Ms Paula Stephenson,
Executive Director, Clinical Services
and Chief Nursing Officer

With over 30 years' experience, Paula has a wealth of clinical, education, leadership and management experience. She has held senior operational and strategic management positions in major metropolitan public health services, a not-for-profit medical professional association and a multinational Big Four consulting firm. Paula joined Epworth in June 2018.



Mrs Nicole Waldron,
Executive Director, Epworth
Freemasons and Epworth Richmond

With an extensive background in healthcare management across the public and private sectors, Nicole joined Epworth in February 2011 and was appointed as Executive Director Epworth Richmond in March 2014 and as Executive Director Epworth Freemasons in May 2018.





We have a large, committed, diverse and inclusive workforce.

Our workforce

More than 10,000 people work across Epworth, including our employees, VMOs and volunteers.

Our people provide a 24 hours a day, seven days a week service, while living the organisation's values and behaviours and working together as a team to make a difference to our patients and community.

This year we:

- welcomed 1,395 new employees, with 1,093 attending orientation on their first day of employment
- negotiated and finalised new enterprise agreements for Epworth's Health Professionals and Health & Allied Services employees.

At Epworth, we have a large, committed, 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 2018-19.

Everyday focus on health, safety and wellbeing

Care for our patients is a primary focus, however the wellbeing and safety of all our people is held in the same high regard.

A refreshed Health, Safety & Wellbeing Strategy was developed and launched in October 2018 by Group Chief Executive Dr Lachlan Henderson. The strategy looks at embedding a safety culture, including enhancing safety leadership, awareness, capability and accountability to ensure everyone stays safe and returns home safely at the end of each day. We reinforce a safety-first culture, where everyone is committed to Epworth's safety expectations and has the knowledge and skills to do their jobs safely.

A new safety awareness campaign, Make time for your safety and wellbeing, was developed as part of the relaunch and has been progressively implemented to further raise awareness and to ensure all our people look after themselves and their colleagues every day.



Speaking Up for Safety

An organisation-wide patient safety initiative, which focuses on empowering staff to support each other and to raise concerns to keep our patients safe, was introduced in 2019.

Paula Stephenson, Executive Director, Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer, said the Speaking Up for Safety program was introduced as an important instrument of cultural change for Epworth.

"It has helped us move towards a culture in which more staff feel safe to speak up if they observe potential, unintended patient harm," Paula said.

"In such a culture, exceptional patient care can flourish."

This evidence-based training program, developed by the Cognitive Institute, is leader-and peer-driven, assisting staff to develop effective communication skills so that concerns are heard and addressed. Delivered in more than 180 hospitals throughout Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the UK, Speaking up for Safety training is being delivered to all Epworth employees by 21 accredited trainers.

"Speaking Up for Safety is the most important initiative Epworth is undertaking this year. All of us come to work to do our best for patients and to minimise the chance of patient harm. This initiative will normalise a different way of speaking to each other in healthcare teams. It will help embed a culture of safety and checking and really place patient safety front and centre of all we do here at Epworth."

Dr Matt Ryan, Director of Emergency Medicine, Epworth Geelong

Empowered and enabled people

To truly enable our people, we first need to have insight into their experience, so we conducted two Pulse surveys over the last year to measure employee experience and engagement. The Pulse surveys were conducted across selected departments and teams, particularly those who have experienced significant change. The surveys showed:

- a lift in engagement, with an overall engagement score of 71 per cent
- 90 per cent wanted to 'improve how things are done at Epworth', showing a drive to make a difference
- 75 per cent feel 'optimistic about the future of Epworth'.

We continue to ask our people for feedback regarding their experience in their first few months of joining Epworth. Reasons for joining Epworth were:

- reputation as an employer of choice 91 per cent
- reputation for patient care 92 per cent.

Top ranking for Epworth HealthCare

Epworth ranked second in Australia in the Randstad 2019 Most Attractive Employer survey. Global recruitment agency, Randstad, surveyed more than 10,000 Australians to compile the list of the nation's best employers, which was dominated by big-name firms, universities and government agencies. Epworth was declared second overall, behind Qantas and ahead of Apple who claimed third spot. Our high ranking was based on:

- engaging and unique job content
- balanced financial credentials
- strong brand
- attractive salary packaging and benefits.

Looking at overall benchmark results across the Victorian health and social work sector, Epworth ranked first. We were also ranked first for pleasant working atmosphere, strong reputation, work-life balance and job security. Maree Feery, Executive Director, People & Culture, was pleased to see Epworth publicly recognised as a top employer.

"It's great to see our hard work translated to enable and empower our people and teams to be their best and make a difference to the patient experience," Maree said.

Celebrating Epworth women

Gender equality

Epworth figures submitted to the Australian Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency paint a picture of a female empowered workforce.

Overall workforce:

- 77.7 per cent females
- 22.3 per cent males.

Promotions awarded to women:

- 85.5 per cent of employee promotions
- 72.7 per cent of all manager promotions
- 86.5 per cent of all non-manager promotions.

In 2018-19, Epworth welcomed 78 employees, including 55 women, into formal leadership programs and six employees—all women—into future talent programs. Epworth has also committed to establishing a Medical Leaders program for our doctors and Visiting Medical Officers, which will include the objective of levelling out the gap that exists in female representation at the most senior medical level.

Women's events

A collection of events and initiatives to support and empower all women across Epworth was launched at the inaugural International Women's Day Breakfast at Leonda by the Yarra in March 2019. The engaging forum featured an interactive panel and special guest speakers including Dr Bridie O'Donnell, Head of the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and a former Epworth medical specialist, and professional cyclist and entrepreneur Sarah Holloway.

While we celebrated the many diverse women across Epworth, we also launched Epworth's Future Women's Forum, an initiative to unleash the potential of women within Epworth for the future. This dedicated program is designed to ensure our women flourish and take advantage of every opportunity to be the best in their careers and lives.

Maryjane Crabtree, Board President, said Epworth's Future Women's Forum would include symposiums on topics relevant to women and a bespoke mentoring program for "talented women of all ages, levels and campuses".

International Women's Day in numbers

350 attendees

93% rated the event overall as good/excellent

96% thought speakers good/excellent

95.5% are likely to attend a similar event in future



Epworth International Women's Day breakfast: Board member Janet Matton, Executive Director, Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Richmond Nicole Waldron, Epworth Board President Maryjane Crabtree and Paula Stephenson, Executive Director, Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer.



Maree Feery, Executive Director, People & Culture, Associate Professor Nerina Harley, Board Member, and guest speaker Dr Bridie O'Donnell, Head of the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, professional cyclist and former Epworth specialist at the International Women's Day breakfast.

“Don't be intimidated of what you don't know, be confident, fearless and strive towards your goals.”

Deb Bajada, Environment Services Manager, Epworth Geelong. Deb leads a team of 60 and is one of Epworth's youngest female managers.

“You are what you think about every day. Work on developing your mental strength, persistence and dedication to achieve your goals and dreams. Absolutely anything is possible if you are prepared to work hard and most importantly you believe in yourself.”

Kirstin Bull, Cardiac Educator, Epworth Richmond. Kirstin has a Masters in Professional Education and Training and is currently the fastest Australian woman to run 100 kilometres.

“My past was not without drama and chaos. It has made me the woman I am today... still imperfect but striving to make a difference every day.”

Millie (Amelia) Flowers, Nurse Unit Manager, Epworth Eastern. Millie is known to sometimes play the ukulele for patients and recently donated a kidney to a friend.

Investing in the next wave of leaders

We continue to develop competent leaders who inspire and empower their teams to deliver the best in patient care. In the past year, we supported:

- 18 participants to start the Strategic Leaders program, which includes a key strategic action learning project sponsored by a member of the Executive team
- 15 participants to continue their development in the Operational Leaders program and another 15 to commence this program, which aligns to a Diploma of Leadership and Management with Swinburne University
- 30 participants to continue their participation in the Frontline Leaders program, which aligns to a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management with Swinburne University
- over 240 participants to attend one-day leadership workshops, covering a range of relevant topics to support leaders in achieving Epworth's key strategic priorities.

The investment Epworth makes in leadership development continues to deliver impressive results, with the observed behavioural changes of participants significantly exceeding global benchmarks.

Following graduation, leaders noted:

- 54 per cent behaviour changes in themselves, compared to a 29 per cent benchmark.

Observers noted:

- 34 per cent change in behaviour, compared to a 20 per cent benchmark.

Growing our own talent

Epworth's approach to talent development sets the organisation apart, with our significant investment in staff allowing us to place highly talented individuals in critical roles. We continue to offer tailored, accelerated development opportunities to staff, which has resulted in:

- retention of talented and passionate leaders
- people committed to our strategic vision
- 50 per cent of appointments to nurse manager roles being internal candidates.

Scholarship program

The Epworth scholarship program, which is funded by Epworth Medical Foundation, continues to offer extraordinary professional development opportunities for our people:

- 153 scholarships valued at over \$800,000 were awarded in the last year to extend learning and development
- \$1 million and 170 scholarships will be awarded in 2020, our centenary year.

Many scholarship winners bring back new ideas on ways to improve patient care. A few of our winners this year include:

- **Jacki Moore**, Change and Training Manager, and **Rhiannon Shortal**, Outcomes Manager Point of Care, received the Dorothy Wood Scholarship to attend the Beryl Institute Patient Experience conference in Dallas, Texas. They also visited a facility that has had success in implementing technology to improve the patient experience
- **Lisa Edwards**, Director of Clinical Services, was awarded the Robert Bulley Nursing Scholarship to participate in the Women in Leadership program facilitated by Leadership Victoria
- **Julia Tucker**, Talent Acquisition Manager, won the Tony & Virginia Brown Scholarship to attend the WorkHuman conference
- **Rachel Fielding**, cardiorespiratory physiotherapist, received the Medtronic Scholarship to attend the Mechanical Ventilation symposium: From Physiology to Clinical Practice in Toronto, Canada in April 2019.

It is the generosity of our donors that has enabled our extensive scholarship program.

“As Epworth moves further into embracing technology that will be used by patients, the knowledge and information that we have gained during our visit to Texas will help us to better engage with both staff and patients. It was great to see how the Epworth scholarship program is connecting people around the world.”

Jacki Moore, Change and Training Manager, Epworth Richmond



Epworth scholarship winners with their teams.

Scholarship study tours

As part of the scholarship program, and a strategic alliance between Epworth and Northwell Health in New York, the Northwell Health Study tour was awarded to 10 leadership nurses and two leaders (Executive Director, Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer Paula Stephenson, and Group Director, Patient Experience and Clinical Service Improvement Sheila Daly). The participants work in various areas across Epworth hospitals, including dialysis, oncology, perioperative, rehabilitation and patient experience.

The group spent 10 days in the United States attending a conference and training workshop plus visiting several healthcare sites.

Focused on immersive learning, the program is designed to bring global best practice and innovation back to Epworth to help deliver an even more positive patient experience, drive quality improvement efforts and prompt innovation and engagement.

Staff recognised

Sheila Salonga, Epworth Richmond Emergency Department Nurse Unit Manager, was a finalist in the 2019 HESTA Australian Nursing & Midwifery Awards. Nominated for her leadership while Intensive Care Unit Nurse Manager, Sheila was recognised for her work in building an inclusive team culture that led to improved patient care outcomes.

She introduced a number of employee recognition programs that recognised and rewarded good work, to encourage more collaboration. This included a 'pay it forward' initiative that encouraged staff to lend each other a hand, a staff member of the month award and cultural days to celebrate the team's diversity.

“The ICU team allowed me to empower and engage them to become the most amazing clinicians that they are,” Sheila said.



Part of the Working Well team: Steph Oxley, Deidre Sweeney and Alanna Keating.

Working well

This year, we identified the need to significantly shift our culture and support our people to redefine the way they work. Adopting the approach of human-centred design (also referred to as design thinking) a number of teams have created new ways of working, actively involving individuals and teams across Epworth in all steps of the problem-solving and solution process.

Up to 50 people within three teams (Awareness, Project and Masters) worked together to tackle problems and enhance experiences for our people in the areas of learning, workloads and data access and analytics. Human-centred design has been leveraged as an approach to driving improvements and has also been introduced as a means to approach future business challenges.

On the ground, specialised training

Recognising that mental health nursing is very different from general and medical nursing, our mental health staff teamed up to develop a new educational program to help nurses transition into this very specialised field.

The Fundamentals of Mental Health Nursing is a 22-week course that provides a multimodal approach to the development and consolidation of clinical knowledge and critical thinking skills required to work as a mental health nurse. The course includes online modules, e-learning tasks and facilitated peer discussion through a private online education forum.

Clinical Nurse Educator Rosie Barnes, who co-developed the course, says the first group who enrolled in February were from diverse backgrounds including aged care, dialysis and medical nursing.

“We had a lot of nurses passionate about mental health, but had never worked in the area. They were keen to learn but had a gap in their knowledge,” Rosie said.

“Our students learnt some great practical skills, like how to do a mental state assessment and compile a case formulation, which is very different from general nursing where you are looking at physical health problems. They need to be able to risk assess and identify suicidality, for example, and then use goal-directed interventions so they can empower patients to develop skills themselves to recover. The psychiatrists depend on mental health nurses’ ability to provide targeted individualised care, so we’re also teaching critical thinking and analysis.”

Each participant is actively engaged with their ward mentor, an experienced senior mental health nurse, with whom they attend monthly Reflective Practice Sessions to discuss and enhance clinical practice.

Six nurses graduated from the inaugural program. Mentoring is continuing on the ward. The next enrolment will occur in early 2020, with a waiting list of applicants.

Our volunteers

Epworth’s volunteers are an example of how personalised care and delivery of patient-centred services can have a profound impact on the overall patient experience. Through the varied work that they do—caring for cancer patients in the wig salon, guiding visitors, waiting with patients when they feel vulnerable or driving sick people home after treatment—our volunteers demonstrate compassion and care.

Our 268 volunteers come from a range of backgrounds and are aged from 18 to 80. They help at multiple hospital sites to improve the patient experience.

Volunteers

93 Epworth Richmond



53 Epworth Eastern



31 Epworth Geelong



18 Epworth Freemasons



7 Epworth Rehabilitation



66 Heartbeat and auxiliary



268 total

Auxiliary volunteers

We also have 66 Heartbeat and auxiliary volunteers who help raise funds to support our patients by running events and selling raffle tickets, handcrafted goods and knitted items.

Volunteer growth

Growth in the volunteer program this year has seen expansion across all sites in the areas of:

Wayfinding/concierge—Our volunteer concierge is often the first point of contact for Epworth patients and visitors. The role embraces the highest principles of customer service, with volunteers providing information, support and guidance to patients and visitors. In particular, Epworth Richmond and Epworth Freemasons have been a target of significant growth in this role. We aim to have a volunteer present at all patient entry points.

Driving program—Our volunteer drivers provide a safe and comfortable free transport service to and from hospitals for patients receiving dialysis treatment (available at Epworth Eastern and Epworth Geelong). More recently, Epworth Geelong Allied Health added another volunteer drivers’ program, providing free transport for some patients attending outpatient services.

Wig salon—Our salon volunteers help patients with wig fittings, guiding their choices and providing information about wig care. The newest wig salon was launched at Epworth Richmond in December 2018 and already has seen a positive uptake from patients.

Patient support—Patient visitor volunteers support those who are admitted into a ward by engaging in conversation, reading to them, sharing tea or coffee, playing board games, delivering books and other in-room support. Epworth Camberwell Cardiac Rehabilitation Unit introduced a patient visitor program this year, which also ensures patients and carers receive any health-related information available.

Our volunteers



Kate Kelly volunteers in the wig salon, helping oncology patients at Epworth Eastern.

Mario Pianezze (with patient Christina Nicholas) enjoys delivering newspapers and having a chat with patients in his volunteer role at Epworth Eastern.



“I would like to pass on my sincere thanks for the assistance I received upon my arrival (to Epworth). Arriving from Launceston, I was on crutches and, in tow, I had my cabin bag. From the main entrance, a volunteer assisted me by providing directions to the café and the doctor’s suite. Then as I proceeded to walk towards the lift the same lady came up behind me and offered to take my bag.

“What a beautiful conversation we had! That wasn’t the end of it. Another volunteer suggested that I leave my luggage in the discharge lounge—I could not have been left in better hands.”

Former patient



Volunteer Gill Bell takes a guide dog to visit and cheer patients at Epworth Eastern.

Celebrating our volunteers

National Volunteer Week 2019 was an opportunity to celebrate the time and commitment that volunteers continually provide under the theme of 'making a world of difference'. A highlight of the celebration was the nomination of Epworth volunteer Keith Cozens, who was shortlisted for the 2019 Minister for Health Awards in the category of Outstanding Achievement by a volunteer. This award recognises volunteers across Victoria who go above and beyond.

"Having volunteered at Epworth for 13 years, it has always been a meaningful way of giving back to the community," Keith said. "Patients and their families are always so grateful for the work that we do and it's nice to know that we have made an impact, even in the smallest of ways."

Best practice

In the first half of 2019, our volunteers undertook an Australia-wide survey by Best Practice Australia that was designed to benchmark the program alongside other similar organisations.

Results showed that of Epworth volunteers surveyed, 84.5 per cent were engaged with their work, significantly higher than the average 66 per cent result from benchmarked organisations.

84.5% Epworth volunteers engaged with their work



Clinical education

Continual learning and education have been a focus within Academic and Medical Services to ensure our clinicians are up-to-date and constantly improving.

Epworth Summit 2020 VMO Leadership Program

We introduced a masterclass series for our Epworth doctors, with the first held in May 2019. 'Managing Melbourne's health in the 2020s' saw demographer Bernard Salt AM give a thought-provoking look at how Melbourne society will change and what this means for our medical community. Additional masterclasses for our doctors will be held throughout the year.

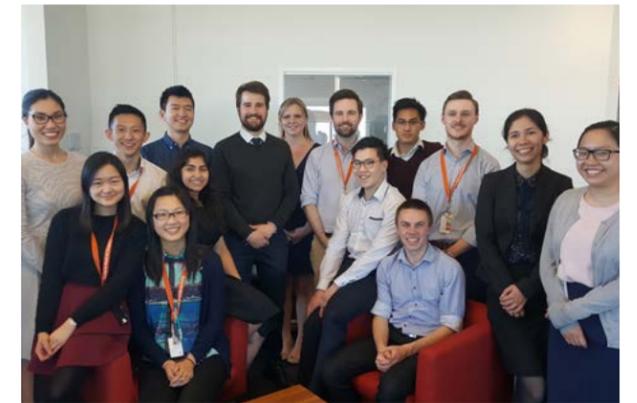
Our inaugural Epworth Summit 2020 VMO Leadership Program was developed. This bespoke 12-month program for 24 selected participants will begin later in the year and involve doctors at all career stages, across specialties and sites. The program will be delivered in collaboration with Monash Business School and the Monash University Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. Successful graduates will receive an Executive Graduate Certificate of Business.

Junior Doctor of the Year award

In 2018, Epworth introduced its Junior Doctor of the Year award, which recognises an Epworth junior doctor who has made an outstanding contribution to leadership and advocacy in:

- quality of care and patient safety
- teaching, education and mentoring
- doctors' wellbeing and advocacy
- medical research
- private healthcare and community service
- humanitarianism/philanthropy.

Applications were received from clinical staff members. The inaugural recipient was Joel Murray, who was presented with his award at the Epworth HealthCare Medical Leaders Dinner.



Clinical School graduates.



VMO Marco Larobina attends the VMO masterclass on managing Melbourne's health.

Junior medical initiatives

Some new initiatives for our junior medical staff included:

- reinvigorated orientation including mandatory basic life support course completion on first day
- new comprehensive 'Junior doctor's clinical practice at Epworth' publication provided to all trainees
- attendance and participation of junior doctors at Clinical Institute symposiums and Grand Rounds.

Epworth Clinical School

We are proud to be involved in developing the next generation of healthcare professionals through our medical clinical school. Epworth was the first Australian private hospital to become a full clinical school in 2015, collaborating with the University of Melbourne. In 2018, we saw the graduation of the first Epworth Clinical School doctors, who have been taught to deliver excellent patient-centred care with compassion and dignity.

In 2018:

- 62 University of Melbourne and Monash University medical students did their placements with Epworth, all of whom passed their exams. Of the 31 Monash University of Melbourne students, 30 passed receiving honours.

In 2019:

- 35 students joined the Epworth Clinical School, with a total of 60 currently in placements at multiple Epworth sites. They are working through their study by observing our VMOs in clinics and wards and are also learning clinical skills at the Clinical Education Simulation Centre.

Professor Geoffrey Metz, inaugural Dean of the School, stepped down in December 2018 after an illustrious and highly successful term. Dr Vivek Nigam, new Medical Director for Epworth Freemasons, has joined the Epworth Clinical School and is acting in this position. Recruitment of the new Dean will commence at the end of 2019.

Undergraduate nursing program

In the undergraduate nursing clinical education department, we provided placement across nine sites:

- for 26,590 student days from 14 education providers in Bachelor, Diploma and Midwifery Nursing and Paramedicine courses
- in rehabilitation, mental health, midwifery, community, acute, critical care and peri-operative areas.

Our nursing fellowship programs with Deakin University, Holmesglen TAFE and ACU College continue to produce excellent registered and enrolled nurses, many of whom have been successful in our graduate programs. Our Staff Rewards Program initiative recognises clinical staff who work with students and encourages staff to be mentors, buddies and educators to our undergraduate nurses.

Educating staff and peers

In 2018-19, 2,482 staff, VMOs and external practitioners participated in our extensive clinical education and simulation programs across medical, nursing and allied health domains.

Neonatal resuscitation

A new initiative this year was the First 20 Minutes Neonatal Resuscitation program for obstetricians, midwives, nurses, intensive care and special care nursery staff who are involved in the rare event of a resuscitation of a newborn. These interactive simulation-based sessions were led by neonatologist Lisa Fox, the simulation team and midwifery educators, and provided to over 130 obstetricians and midwives at Epworth Freemasons.

Surgical and Anaesthetic Trauma Care Course

Epworth hosted the annual Melbourne Definitive Surgical and Anaesthetic Trauma Care Course in November 2018, which was attended by trauma clinicians from around the world. Directed by Epworth VMO A/Prof Martin Richardson, the course provided training to 32 surgeons, five anaesthetists and 17 theatre nurses in technical and non-technical skills for treating trauma patients.

For the first time, the course included an anaesthetics stream, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of trauma care. A pre-course online module was developed by our Epworth e-learning team and a high-fidelity trauma scenario was conducted by our Epworth simulation team, involving the Human Patient Simulator. Following the course, participants expressed increased confidence in their capacity to treat major trauma patients.

Symposia

We also shared our expertise through nine Clinical Institute symposia in 2019, an increase from six held last year. Epworth's world-leading specialists and experts take part in these events.

The program included:

- Perioperative Symposium—Challenges in Perioperative Medicine, which attracted 150 delegates and 28 local speakers
- Third Epworth Urology Masterclass—Advances in Female Urology, with international (US and NZ), interstate and local guest speakers and 162 delegates
- Practical Quality Colonoscopy Skills Update Workshop, which featured five 'live feed' surgery cases on the day, 50 delegates, local speakers and sponsors
- Chronic Diseases Symposium, which was presented by the Rehabilitation and Mental Health division of Epworth and included 138 delegates and 13 speakers.

Delegates' backgrounds range from surgeons, GPs, physicians, specialists and nurses to physiotherapists, occupational therapists and rehabilitation physicians.

Grand Rounds

Weekly Grand Rounds sessions are presented to all Epworth staff from the Epworth Richmond Auditorium and broadcast live to our hospitals at Epworth Freemasons, Epworth Geelong and Epworth Eastern.

Grand Rounds are held to educate our staff on a range of topics from internal and external speakers, including:

- cardiac care
- cancer
- obstetrics and gynaecology
- rehabilitation and mental health
- urology
- health and wellbeing
- physiotherapy
- research.



Staff attend our symposia to further their education, hearing from a range of expert speakers.



Numerous medical symposia were held during the year at the Park Hyatt.

2,482 participants in our clinical education and simulation programs



Innovative Practice

“It’s also exciting to try new things in the hope of making a difference.”

Associate Professor Kate Hoy,
Epworth Camberwell

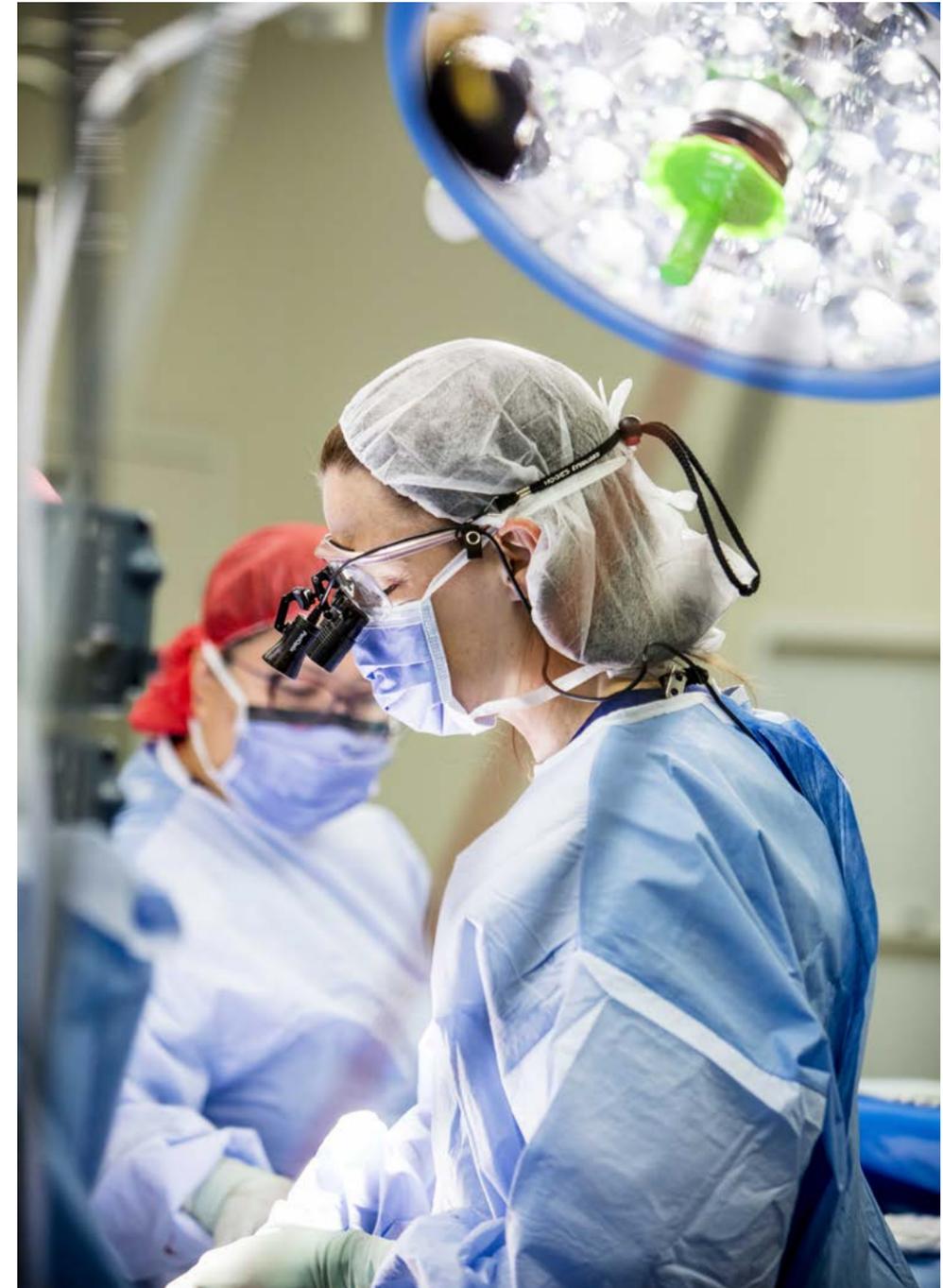
Pushing the envelope

At Epworth, we’re not interested in being left behind. We’re interested in doing more and making a greater contribution.

Innovation is about improving practices so that we’re more efficient, expanding our research to create better treatments and pathways for our patients, and partnership with others to make more possible.

Innovation is also about creating new facilities and programs to provide care in a different, more effective way.

Our focus is on improving care for the whole person—their physical health, mental health and overall wellbeing.



Epworth research

A wide range of research studies are being undertaken across Epworth, aimed at improving the care of our patients and delivering better outcomes. Our Research Strategy 2019-23 is focused on working with our patients and community to guide important projects and to build our internal capacity to deliver.

At 30 June 2019, 127 clinical studies were in progress across five Epworth sites. Epworth invests over \$4 million each year in research and is generously supported through donations received by Epworth Medical Foundation, which fund over half of our total program.

Our research covers a wide range of areas, from oncology to mental health to rehabilitation. Studies by Clinical Institutes include:

- 33 rehabilitation, mental health and chronic pain
- 31 cancer services
- 14 critical care
- 11 uro-renal and vascular
- nine cardiac sciences
- nine musculoskeletal.

Of our studies:

- 94 are investigator initiated
- 29 are commercial trials
- four are from collaborative groups.

While the majority of our research currently occurs at Epworth Richmond, Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Camberwell, there will be a focus to grow activity at all our sites in 2019-20.

Inspiring hope and fostering the best

Building on our tradition of research excellence, healthcare innovation and a commitment to world-class education, we are committed to growing our research capacity.

In 2019, we launched a five-year research strategy for our organisation. Through clinical research, our vision is to inspire hope and enable better health for our patients and community.

The strategy's purpose is to foster evidence-based research that matters to our patients, while also involving patients and consumers more.

Dr Nikolajs Zeps, Director of Research and Development, said the strategy seeks to amplify opportunities to positively impact patient experience and create a new era of innovative research at Epworth.

"Our passion lies in providing the very best care to our patients. It drives everything that we do," Dr Zeps said.

"We will have a clear implementation strategy to ensure rapid translation of relevant findings so that our patients obtain the benefits as soon as possible. We will also create a culture that embeds research into every facet of our service delivery."

Our strategic goals include:

- establishing ways for our patients to advise and inform our research development program, with all projects initiated by Epworth researchers to have consumer input
- creating a supportive research culture, where research is embedded into routine care, meaning that every patient interaction is an opportunity for improvement and learning
- ensuring all research activity is externally and internally validated by independent reviews
- further engaging with our external partners at universities, research institutes, clinical trial networks and industry partners
- consulting widely to ensure that we are working towards goals that are valued by our patients, our clinicians and our community.

The strategy also includes a commitment to supporting, mentoring and training the next generation of researchers from within our own workforce. We will introduce 'protected time' for our clinicians to undertake research, while continuing to offer scholarships and advanced training opportunities for our staff.

"We believe this culture of self-improvement attracts the very best clinicians to come to work at Epworth," Dr Zeps added.

"It was amazing to see the difference after the surgery. I had my eyesight back, even better than before."



Dr Elvis Ojaimi uses the new microscope to improve Jenny Evans' eyesight.

Surgical microscope restores sight

A new surgical microscope has enabled an Epworth eye specialist to restore sight to a woman who lost half her vision. The \$600,000 technology, a generous donation from Epworth Medical Foundation, enables doctors to operate with extraordinary precision.

The Lumera 700 microscope combines real-time imaging of the eye and microscopic technology to help restore sight. This means that surgeons can access 3D imaging of the eye in the operating theatre and make essential, real-time decisions and adjustments to ensure the best outcome for patients.

"It enables me to see things in real time that I cannot see with my own eyes," surgeon Dr Elvis Ojaimi explained.

Grandmother Jenny Evans, whose eyesight started deteriorating in late 2018, was

one of the first to benefit from the new technology at Epworth Freemasons. She had lost more than 50 per cent of her sight to macular scarring and the surgery was life-changing.

Dr Ojaimi was able to use the surgical microscope to improve the tear in Jenny's macular and give her crystal-clear sight. "Her sight is actually back to over 100 per cent vision," Dr Ojaimi said.

Jenny says she's now able to drive again and look after her grandkids.

"It was amazing to see the difference after the surgery," Jenny said.

"I had my eyesight back, even better than before."

Epworth Centre for Innovation in Mental Health successes:

460 peer reviewed publications



10 major/national awards



- \$9 million grant funding
- 50+ student supervisions
- 20+ substantive clinical trials
- 45+ experimental research studies
- 16 clinical TMS courses, 380 clinicians trained
- three Australasian brain stimulation conferences convened
- 12 leadership positions on national and international committees

Delving further into mental health

Finding new treatments for a host of debilitating illnesses is the goal of Epworth Centre for Innovation in Mental Health (ECIMH).

Conditions like depression, Alzheimer's, fibromyalgia and obsessive compulsive disorder are common, but many sufferers do not have any effective treatments at hand.

The ECIMH team, under the leadership of Professor Paul Fitzgerald, has doubled in the last year and the expansion has allowed the commencement of numerous new clinical trials.



Professor Paul Fitzgerald and Associate Professor Kate Hoy are investigating new treatments.

Tackling depression

"Depression is still a major problem. We have established treatments that work on two-thirds of people, and with 15 per cent of the population having depression in their lifespan, that leaves a lot of people remaining unwell," Prof Fitzgerald said.

New hope for depression treatments comes in the form of a collaboration with a small biotech company in Boston, US.

"We're trialling a new antidepressant drug, called PRAX-114, and giving it to patients for the first time ever. It has been tested in healthy controls but never on patients. This study could have been taken anywhere in the world and they came here. We have the research capacity and the proper medical facilities," Prof Fitzgerald explained.

This Phase 2 clinical trial is testing the efficacy of the drug with patients who have major depressive disorder. The first 12 patients are spending a week as inpatients and then being treated at home.

"We are hoping it will be a rapidly acting antidepressant," Prof Fitzgerald added.

"The very early data looks promising; TMS appears to have some positive effects on symptoms."

Depression and young people study

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) is now an established treatment for depression and other psychiatric disorders. It uses magnetic fields to stimulate the brain in a non-invasive way, which leads to changes in brain activity. Epworth researchers are extending their work to use other forms of non-invasive brain stimulation such as transcranial alternating current stimulation (tACS) to treat young people at home, with a device they built themselves.

"We are treating people aged 15-30 years with depression with a new device," Prof Fitzgerald said. "We built 50 of these, we designed the circuits and the software and added some basic headsets to take home. The devices are fully locked down, so people can just start, stop and pause the device. We program the device and have full control. It records all the data so we know the treatment is done to requirements."

This study has just commenced and will involve the recruitment and testing of patients for the next two years.

New research on Alzheimer's treatment

With brain stimulation approaches proving effective for depression, ECIMH researchers are trialling these methods in patients with Alzheimer's and mild cognitive impairment. The centre's Interventional Neuropsychology research program, led by ECIMH's Deputy Director Associate Professor Kate Hoy, is currently conducting three such clinical trials which aim to correct impaired patterns of brain activity typically seen in these patients.

"Currently, the main focus of the program is in Alzheimer's and dementia, which I see as the biggest challenge and the biggest need. There are no effective treatments for Alzheimer's currently," A/Prof Hoy said.

The first trial, which began a number of years ago, will involve 60 people with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease who undergo a course of a type of TMS at ECIMH to investigate how this treatment affects memory and thinking as well as brain activity.

"We know that with Alzheimer's, amyloid proteins build up in the brain and affect the way neurons talk to each other, which is thought to lead to problems with memory and attention," A/Prof Hoy said.

"TMS boosts activity in those regions; we're hoping that this will strengthen those connections allowing brain networks to talk to each other more effectively. The very early data looks promising; TMS appears to have some positive effects on symptoms."

The trial is on schedule to be completed by the end of 2019.

At the same time, the team is testing the tACS device to see if this can improve cognitive performance in patients treated at home. This trial will involve 100 people with mild cognitive impairment using the stimulator helmet for one month twice a year, over three years.

"This trial will involve people who notice changes predominantly in memory. They are usually over 55 years with no functional impairment, and have noticed a decline in their memory which doesn't affect their ability to live day to day," A/Prof Hoy explained. "This group is a known risk population for Alzheimer's. It's roughly estimated that a third of people go on to develop Alzheimer's, one-third see symptoms improve and one-third see no further change."

The aim of the trial is to improve memory and thinking skills and possibly stop people progressing to dementia.

A third study, involving 50 people, will use the same device to see if it can be used to improve memory in people with mild Alzheimer's.

"It is challenging to do something in an area that has had so much research for so long without any real signs of significant breakthrough," A/Prof Hoy said. "It's also exciting to try new things in the hope of making a difference."

Chronic pain

A new and more efficient form of TMS is being used for those suffering chronic pain from fibromyalgia.

Theta burst stimulation (TBS) is more suited to those suffering fibromyalgia as they are often unable to sit still for longer periods required for traditional TMS due to their severe pain. TBS gives short, quick bursts of stimulation to the brain at high frequencies. This trial is giving patients three-minute treatments, followed by a 15-minute rest. This first-ever study on fibromyalgia using TBS is so far looking promising. Results are expected from this trial in the next six to 12 months.

New hope for under-researched disorder

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can be disabling, with some sufferers unable to work or study.

A new three-year trial, funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), uses brain scans to localise brain stimulation and improve the application of TMS in this disorder.

"OCD is an under-researched and under-regulated disorder," Professor Fitzgerald said. "It affects one to two per cent of the population and they don't do well; it is a silent, disabling disorder."

"These patients are usually not in hospital, but many are really troubled by their illness. There are very few treatments for this disorder. We have been conducting the first research with TMS in OCD in Australia and will now extend this into a new approach using patients' own brain scans to improve treatment delivery."

New technology to lessen phantom limb pain

A new virtual reality device is delivering promising results for amputees suffering phantom limb pain at Epworth Hawthorn. Epworth Rehabilitation's Deputy Physiotherapy Manager Chris Weiers and amputee and trauma physiotherapist Jemma Keeves travelled to Sweden on an Epworth Medical Foundation scholarship to learn how to use this exciting new technology.

"Our younger population of patients love it—they love anything cutting edge and it's certainly not traditional therapy, which can be tedious."



Using virtual reality to tackle phantom limb pain.

"This device is driving our clinical rehabilitation, especially for our younger patients who want to return to a high level of mobility," Jemma said. "We know that about 70 per cent of patients experience phantom pain (in the missing limb) and 30 per cent continue to experience pain in the long term. They report it as burning, sharp, stabbing or shooting pain, so it causes physical and mental distress."

While the standard treatment is to use mirror therapy to help the patient visualise the missing limb, this has not been effective in treating phantom pain. With reduced connectivity between the left and right parts of the brain and a sensory motor incongruence, the pain is difficult to treat. A Lancet study in 2016 alerted Epworth physiotherapists to a new trial that involved using virtual reality to train limbs. It uses a mobile device that fits into any laptop, with a camera

on top of the screen. Electrodes are placed onto the patient above the amputated limb and they see a complete arm on the computer screen. The program allows patients to learn multiple movements, including those needed to turn a steering wheel in a computer game.

"Not only are the games fun, they help the brain neurons to work together and seem to undo phantom paralysis," Chris said. "Many patients report their missing limb feels in a peculiar position and this program seems to undo that and give our patients greater motor control."

Epworth Rehabilitation is currently trialling the device and reports positive early results.

"Our younger population of patients love it—they love anything cutting edge and it's certainly not traditional therapy, which can be tedious," Jemma said.

On introducing the device to patients in August 2018, Epworth became the first Australian hospital to use this virtual reality device in rehabilitation for amputee patients.

Cancer care services expand at Geelong

Plans for a new radiotherapy service at Epworth Geelong were confirmed during the year. The state-of-the-art centre is the first private radiation oncology facility within the Greater Geelong region and will provide patients with increased choice and greater access to advanced radiation for cancer treatment.



Marking the start of construction for a new cancer centre for the Geelong region —Icon Group State Manager Paul Fenton, Member for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman and Epworth Geelong Chief Executive Officer Damian Armour.

The new Icon Cancer Centre, scheduled to open in early 2020, will offer a range of radiation therapy techniques, including advanced stereotactic radiation therapy. This technology provides pinpoint precision when treating small tumours commonly located in the brain, spine or lung, while limiting radiation doses to surrounding healthy tissue. The Icon Cancer Centre will be the only private radiation oncology centre within the region, strengthening Epworth Geelong's commitment to comprehensive cancer care, adding to our existing medical, surgical and rehabilitation cancer services.

New imaging service to boost oncology care

A new PET/CT service approved during the year for Epworth Freemasons will provide further care for our oncology patients. The new equipment is additional to the expansion of the hospital's already comprehensive cancer services and will be housed next to the existing Epworth Medical Imaging (EMI) service at Clarendon Street.

EMI's Director of Radiology Associate Professor Pramit Phal says that PET/CT has emerged as a powerful imaging tool for the detection and staging of various cancers.

"This new PET scanner is combined with a CT scanner to provide CT images that pinpoint the anatomical location of the PET radiotracer injected into the patient to detect the abnormal metabolic activity of cancer within the body," A/Prof Phal said.

"By identifying any changes at the cellular level through the use of different PET radiotracers, we can detect early onset of disease, in particular cancer, much earlier than you can on other imaging tests. By having a combined scanner, we can look at structural information provided by the CT scan and add that to the PET's functional information—that gives us a much more accurate test."

The \$4.5 million project, including building works, equipment and fit-out, was partly funded by Epworth Medical Foundation.

With building works scheduled to commence in September 2019, the new PET and CT service is due to be operational by March 2020.

New program driving quicker recovery

Resting for over a week after joint replacement surgery is no longer the advice given by doctors.

Leading Epworth orthopaedic surgeon Professor Richard de Steiger says while nine days rest used to be prescribed in the early days of joint replacements, it's now important for patients to start moving as soon as possible. Virtual rehabilitation assistants, developed by Epworth and Deakin University, have been introduced at Epworth Richmond to help with this goal.

Called MyStay, the 3D computer mobility program takes patients through their exercises and daily physical goals. A Deakin University study found patients are experiencing less pain and getting home quicker thanks to the support program. The program, which includes interactive information delivered to patients via a tablet-like device, explains what to expect post-surgery and how patients can participate in their own care. The virtual medical team allows patients to do their rehabilitation exercises without any assistance. While the program does not replace human care and support, it presents an effective way of reducing pain and getting patients out of hospital sooner. An evaluation of the program's first intervention for recovery post knee replacements was published in the journal *BMJ Quality and Safety*, showing a raft of benefits.

As part of the study, 241 patients at Epworth were randomly assigned to use MyStay to supplement their regular care. The study found that patients:

- spent a day less in hospital, on average
- were able to move more because they had less pain
- had a better understanding of their goals for recovery.

Project leader Professor Mari Botti from Deakin's Institute for Health Transformation and Epworth Nursing Chair said the program has helped patients take control of their own rehabilitation.

“Patients who used MyStay had a better understanding of their goals for recovery and were more satisfied with their care. It’s a game changer for engaging patients in their recovery.”

“MyStay provides patients with clear information to complement guidance from clinicians, and the great thing is patients can access this support any time they want, quickly, easily and consistently,” Prof Botti said. “Patients who used MyStay had a better understanding of their goals for recovery and were more satisfied with their care. It’s a game changer for engaging patients in their recovery.”

MyStay is delivered on the Epworth's Point of Care system, a bedside information system that patients can access for a range of services, with nurses and physiotherapists also using MyStay with patients in guided sessions.

The success of MyStay with joint replacement rehabilitation has led to the development of a cardiac and spinal surgery program. The cardiac program will be developed with the assistance of collaborators at the Deakin Software and Technology Innovation Laboratory, with plans to trial this intervention across multiple sites.

\$150,000
raised by Gather to Graze gala



With a growing number of paediatric allergies, our team is researching new treatments.

Allergy answers

The combined forces of Epworth Medical Foundation and the Australian Food Allergy Foundation have enabled the creation of the Centre for Paediatric Allergies at Epworth. In doing so we have been able to establish the first research centre into paediatric allergic disorders in the private sector in Australasia.

In November, Epworth Medical Foundation and the Australian Food Allergy Foundation held their inaugural fundraising food gala—Gather to Graze—and raised over \$150,000 for the newly formed centre. That funding has allowed the centre to make some important progress into improving our understanding of childhood allergy in its first 12 months, with expectations this will have global implications.

Head of the centre Dr Joanne Smart says there has been a gathering of momentum over the last 18 months.

“We have established a trainee position that has been instrumental in progressing us from the ‘think tank’ stage to commencing clinical studies,” Dr Smart said.

Dr John Ainsworth, inaugural Centre for Paediatric Allergies registrar, said the centre has focused on both quality improvement and clinical trials to improve outcomes for children with food allergies.

Clinical trials are focusing on learning more about cow's milk allergy in infants, moderate-to-severe eczema and oral immunotherapy for food allergy.

Unravelling childhood fish allergy

Children with fish allergy are routinely advised to avoid all other fish due to high rates of cross-reactivity between different species. However, it is known that fish allergy can be species specific, with individuals able to tolerate select species. This study will recruit children with fish allergy and determine how many are able to tolerate flake.

“Fish is an important part of the Australian diet. We want to ensure that children with fish allergy have a better dietary option than just blanket avoidance,” Dr Smart said.

Desensitisation and peanut allergy

Epworth is collaborating with The Children's Hospital at Westmead in conducting a landmark trial that will investigate whether the body can be trained to become tolerant to peanuts. The Oral Peanut Immunotherapy with a modified dietary starch adjuvant for treatment of peanut Allergy (OPIA) trial will give small doses of peanuts to allergic children, along with a dietary fibre supplement. The use of oral immunotherapy—or desensitisation therapy—appears to be a promising treatment for children with food allergy, possibly working to dampen the abnormal immune response to peanut in allergic children.

Exploring unknowns of eczema

A multi-site trial, looking at the characteristics of patients with moderate-to-severe eczema, involves 300 patients across multiple sites worldwide.

“Severe eczema, a chronic inflammatory skin disease, appears to be a crucial first step in the path to food allergy,” Dr Ainsworth said. “We know that 50 per cent of children with severe eczema will go on to develop at least one food allergy and yet very little is known about the disease burden of this challenging and debilitating condition and how it is formally managed.”

This industry-sponsored (Sanofi) trial, which commenced in mid-2019, will describe the patient demographics, comorbidities and treatments used across multiple international sites and help identify which patients will most benefit from exciting, new treatments.

The gut and allergy

Epworth is the lead site of an industry-sponsored (Nestle) trial to study babies with cow's milk allergy.

The PLATYPUS trial will examine the growth and microbiome—a unique collection of micro-organisms within each person's gut. The microbiome appears to be crucial in shaping the developing immune system, and is thus linked to allergy.

“Studies like PLATYPUS, that focus on the developing immune system and its relationship to the microbiome may potentially lead to ways of preventing allergy in the future,” Dr Ainsworth said.

Quality improvement projects have included:

- looking at people with diagnosed peanut allergy being able to tolerate peanuts. While those who have a peanut allergy or strong positive skin test to peanuts are often counselled lifelong avoidance, we found that a simple blood test can examine reactivity to a small part of the protein, meaning they can tolerate peanuts, despite a high skin test result
- a collaborative project with the ENT department of the Royal Children's Hospital found that a move to introduce peanuts early in high-risk infants (babies with severe eczema and/or egg allergy) has led to a sharp rise in the inhalation of whole nuts in infants. We expect this will lead to further revisions of infant guidelines on a global scale.

Dr Smart says future plans, which include establishing a biobank to answer the research questions of tomorrow and ‘Don't Soap the Bub’ allergy prevention study, are exciting. “It is our vision that over the next 10 years we will have contributed to the research base to further inform us on potential prevention strategies for eczema and food allergy, optimising current management of patients and families with allergic disease, and potential mechanisms for food allergy cure,” Dr Smart said.

Baby cam

Maternity services at Epworth Freemasons continue to grow and challenge the status quo, with benefits for patients and babies.

The latest upgrades to the birth suite theatre include the installation of a wireless camera that allows mothers who are undergoing a caesarean section to watch their babies via a screen.

Birth Suite Nurse Unit Manager Narelle Tunks said this simple concept makes a big difference.

“The nature of a caesarean often means that the baby has a number of checks by the paediatrician, away from where the mother is lying. This technology allows mum to feel closer to what's happening during the final stages of the operation,” Narelle said. “The camera runs live, so mums don't miss a thing and don't have those feelings of separation from their newborn. We're getting wonderful feedback from mothers and doctors alike,” Narelle added. “We're thrilled to be able to improve the support we give our families, be it physical or emotional.”

“We know that 50 per cent of children with severe eczema will go on to develop at least one food allergy and yet very little is known about the disease burden of this challenging and debilitating condition and how it is formally managed.”

Our research is exploring many unknowns in the area of paediatric allergies.



New mothers can now see their babies while they undergo checks.



Epworth patients use a new device to regain visual skills.

Vision Coach returning sight

In an Australian first, Epworth Rehabilitation has introduced a visual-motor technological device to help brain injury patients regain some of their visual skills.

Occupational therapist Kylie Rice learned about a device called Vision Coach on a visit to the USA as part of an Epworth Medical Foundation scholarship.

"I saw the Vision Coach in action in clinical practice at numerous rehabilitation centres and at the annual American Occupational Therapy Conference," Kylie said. "The experience and evidence presented indicated that Vision Coach could be a valuable tool for Epworth clinicians and our patients experiencing visual field, eye movement and visual behaviour challenges resulting from stroke, brain tumour, traumatic brain injury or concussion."

More than 50 per cent of people with an acquired brain injury experience some form of vision impairment. Vision Coach allows clinicians to assess and retrain the eyes to potentially improve vision performance including field of view, reaction time, binocular vision, eye-hand-body coordination and endurance and cognition. Improving visual performance leads to greater independence and confidence when undertaking normal activities at home or in the workplace.

"This device enhances our already comprehensive rehabilitation services and broadens the therapist's clinical toolbox to help improve patient outcomes in activities of daily living, such as reading, writing, computer use, self-care tasks, driving and getting around in the home and community," Kylie said.

While technology-based visual-motor rehabilitation training is an innovative and emerging area of clinical rehabilitation practice in Australia, there are no other known Vision Coach devices in rehabilitation centres in Melbourne or Australia.

New robot for orthopaedics

Cutting-edge robotic technology was purchased in July 2018 to assist with a growing number of joint replacement surgeries at Epworth Eastern.

The \$1.7 million MAKO robot complements the hospital's two da Vinci robots, which are used for urology, cardiac and more recently, for head and neck specialties. Epworth is a leading provider of orthopaedic surgery, specifically joint replacement surgery.

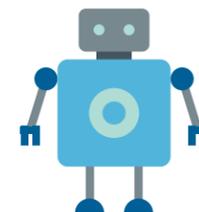


Surgeons are using the new MAKO robot for joint replacement surgeries at Epworth Eastern.

"We're able to get our patients back to their normal lives pretty quickly."

Since July 2018, the MAKO robot has been used to assist in 112 operations:

- **79 total knee replacements**
- **seven partial knee replacements**
- **26 total hip replacements.**



There has been a considerable growth in hip and knee surgery over the last two years, with our ageing population more commonly needing joint replacements. Robotically assisted surgery continues to evolve. Three years ago technology was limited to partial knee replacements, but now the MAKO system can also assist with total knee and total hip replacements.

The MAKO robot allows for greater accuracy of cutting and a better fit of the prosthesis. Early clinical studies are showing that the technology improves accuracy of alignment for knee replacements and reduces chances of possible dislocations and leg length discrepancy with hip replacements. There is no evidence as yet on long-term benefits of robot-assisted versus traditional techniques as the technology is so new.

Epworth Eastern Chief Operations Manager Kerry May says patients with no other issues are able to leave hospital four days after hip replacement surgery.

"There have been so many improvements in orthopaedics over the years. We're able to get our patients back to their normal lives pretty quickly. Back in the 70s, patients were in hospital for about six weeks after a hip replacement," Kerry said.

Orthopaedics represents 12 per cent of all surgery undertaken at Epworth Eastern, with hip and knee surgery comprising the majority of the work.

At Epworth Eastern:

- 30 per cent of orthopaedic workload is for joint replacements (over 640 operations)
- five out of our 10 operating theatres are dedicated to orthopaedics
- 25 surgeons are dedicated to orthopaedic care
- 2,200 patients visit for orthopaedic care
- hip and knee joint replacement activity has increased 2.5 per cent.

A randomised clinical trial of the MAKO robotically assisted versus traditional cup placement for total hip replacement has begun. Redevelopment plans for Epworth Eastern include provision of additional theatres and inpatient beds so we can continue to address the growing demand for orthopaedic surgery in the east.

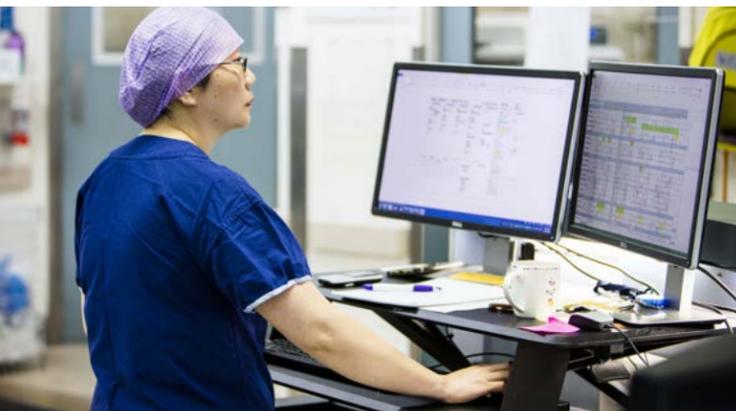
Technology updates

New digital strategy

Our Digital Vision and Strategy for 2019-22 is underpinned by a conviction that our patients remain at the centre of all that we do. The strategy is designed to respond to the changing patient, clinician, workforce and partner expectations that are generating a greater use of mobile devices and exchange of information in electronic form.

In developing and leveraging digital capabilities, Epworth has been conscious of:

- future patients who will be actively involved in managing their health and wellbeing through a network of connected personal devices that capture and share personal health data
- improving clinicians' experience with patients and hospital by improving communications, ensuring they have as much digital clinical information as possible for their decision-making when treating their patients
- clinician-led electronic health systems, that involve end-users, such as doctors, nurses and patients early in the treatment process
- establishing the digital capabilities for our people to be productively engaged in the care and support of our patients and staff
- having modern and integrated Human Resources systems to productively manage our large and diverse workforce
- planning for advanced capabilities to analyse and understand vast quantities of health data
- opportunities to build our partnering capability.



Technology and healthcare are becoming more intertwined.

Website redevelopment

We are redeveloping our website to make it more functional, representative of One Epworth and mobile-enabled. This major project has involved collaborative research and involvement by an array of stakeholders within Epworth and key audiences from our wider community.

Key benefits of the new design and information architecture (IA) are:

- intuitive and simplified audience-based IA (for patients, for family and visitors, for staff, for specialists, for GPs)
- easier search that drives users quickly to our services and specialists
- flexible and modular design
- a move away from siloed templated pages to intuitive content that enables quick pathways to access information
- a pervasive search capability
- mobile-responsive design.

This new website will make a real difference in the way we engage with our patients, our staff, GPs and our community.

OUR VISION

Enabling interaction with people and information anytime and anywhere.

OUR PURPOSE

To improve the quality and safety of care and create a remarkable customer experience by seeking and applying innovative technologies and building group-wide digital capabilities.

Point of Care system

At the bedside, our patients across Epworth have access to a touchpoint screen where they can access a range of information, entertainment and education. Our staff also use the system to enter clinical information, including electronic prescribing and accessing patient results.

The last 12 months has been a period of consolidation for Point of Care (POC). Recent additions to patient education content include MyStay at Richmond and the maternity education videos (Mobile Midwife) for our maternity departments.

Epworth Freemasons began using the Room Ready feature from July 2019. This service enables staff to submit requests for cleaning and maintenance without leaving the patient bedside. This function is now in use across Epworth.

Following feedback, we have implemented some POC improvements, including:

- implementation of a maternity bedside handover. This was developed in collaboration with our Epworth Freemasons Maternity team to further improve care, pain management and patient safety
- software upgrade to Leader Rounding. This helps our Nursing Leaders ensure that they visit every patient every day
- a project to allow rehabilitation patients to view their upcoming therapy appointments on the Point of Care screen.



Our Point of Care system informs, educates and entertains our patients.

Last 12 months POC adoption includes:

- over 8,000 staff enrolled in the system
- clinical staff logging in 22,000 times a day to perform on average 15,500 nurse rounds and 750 leader rounds per day
- 800 Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs) enrolled, with an average 11,450 logins monthly (375 per day).



Sustainability

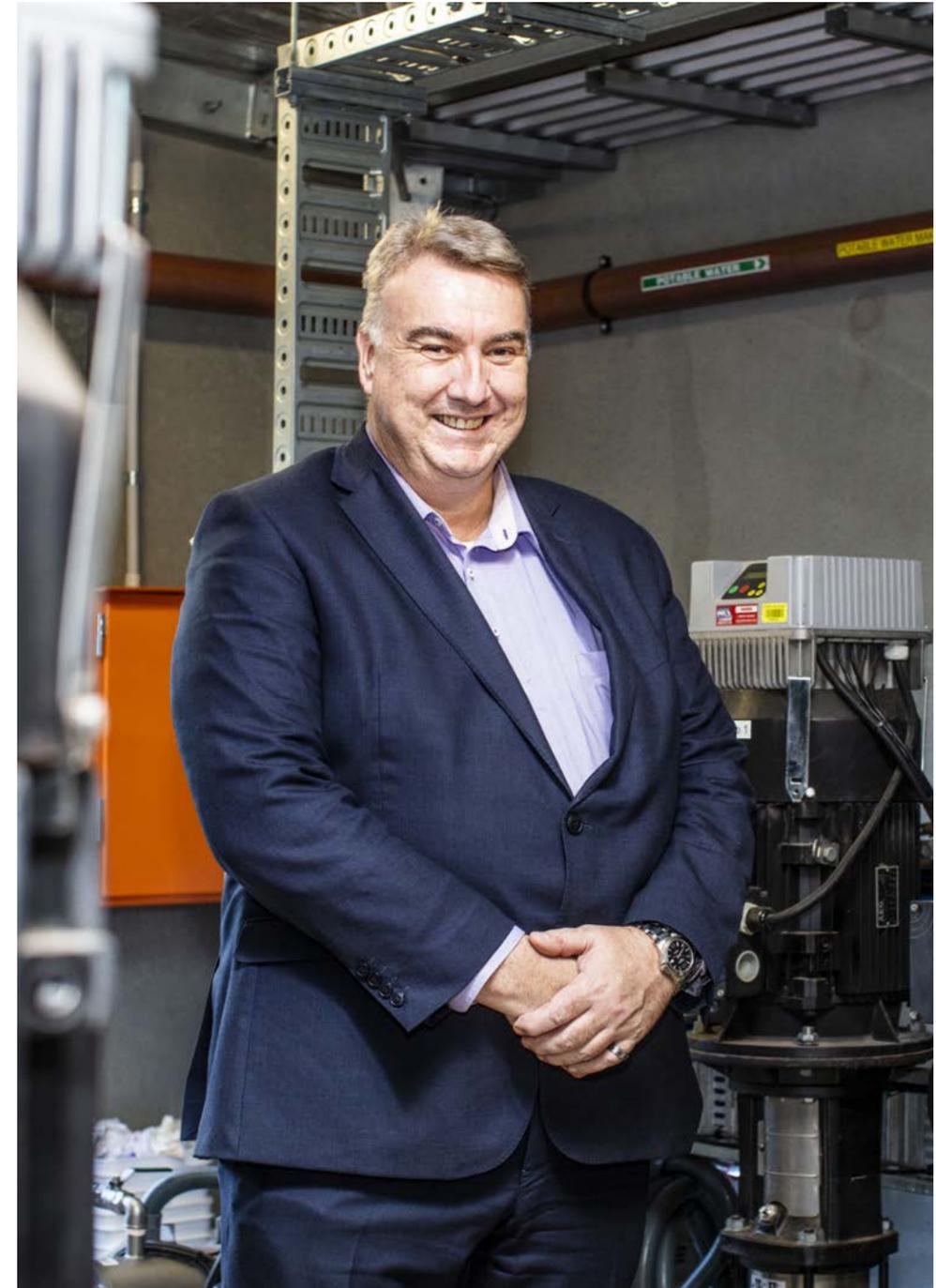
Our future success depends on the sustainability of our operations and the environment in which we operate. We are systematic and committed in our approach to environmental sustainability.

Using our resources wisely

One of our key priorities is to be environmentally and financially sustainable. We are exploring ways to lessen our impact on the environment, in terms of waste, water, electricity and gas usage. It's also important to be financially aware to ensure all available funds are directed towards patient care.

We are also focusing on being financially sustainable. As a not-for-profit, we invest back into our organisation.

Being sustainable is about working smarter—using the technology available and partnering with other organisations to achieve our aims.



Making inroads in saving water at Epworth Geelong—Facilities Manager Steve Ball.

More facilities, better care

As a not-for-profit healthcare organisation, we invest back into our hospitals and services. We know that by providing more facilities, state-of-the-art equipment and highly experienced and caring professionals, we can improve care for our patients.

This year, we have been redeveloping Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Eastern to meet demand in the respective regions.

Epworth Freemasons

The redevelopment of Epworth Freemasons redevelopment historic Clarendon Street site will result in a number of new facilities and state-of-the-art equipment housed within the new Grey Street building. This construction will see increased services, expanded and improved facilities, plus fulfil our vision of a fully integrated campus in East Melbourne. The new centre will provide:

- a purpose-built day oncology unit linking to our existing inpatient oncology ward
- four extra operating theatres and endoscopy suites
- consulting suites with exclusive Melbourne views
- 12 additional inpatient beds
- education, research and training facilities, integrated within clinical spaces to encourage collaboration.

Following completion of the redevelopment, we will have a new ground floor main entrance along Albert Street, an undercover drop off and pick up zone and parking for more than 300 vehicles. Refurbishment of wards and bedrooms within the current Clarendon Street building is also underway.



Epworth Freemasons undergoing redevelopment.

Epworth Eastern redevelopment

The excellent reputation held by Epworth Eastern means we continue to reach patient bed capacity, with a wait list for doctors looking to operate at the site. To meet the growing health needs across Melbourne's east, we've been preparing to expand. This will result in construction of a 14-storey East Wing Tower, in partnership with Northwest Healthcare Properties Management.

East Wing Tower will provide:

- a world-class emergency department
- three new clinical floors
- additional operating theatres
- additional consulting suites
- a dedicated Traditional Chinese Medicine floor
- additional parking spaces.

Vacant flats next to the hospital were demolished to allow the tower to be constructed and connect to the existing hospital. We have taken out a lease at a former hospital in Kew (now known as Epworth Eastern Kew) and surgical cases will be transferred there. This decant strategy will ensure minimal disruption to patients and medical staff and maintain excellent patient experience during the redevelopment.

Epworth Eastern's redevelopment is expected to be completed by 2021.



Executive Director, Epworth Eastern Louise O'Connor preparing to redevelop the Box Hill site.

“Patients at a hospital of this size and breadth of services should not have to choose between paying full fees or travelling offsite for essential diagnostic services.”

Top scanner a lifesaver for Geelong

Patients visiting Epworth Geelong now have greater access to Medicare-subsidised radiology services following the hospital's successful application to the Federal Government for an MRI licence. Approval was given in February and the licence took effect in March. Since then, thousands of patients have benefited from Victoria's most advanced MRI technology at Epworth Medical Imaging and operating hours were extended to meet demand.

Epworth Medical Imaging Clinical Director Dr Paul Smith said the facility's state-of-the-art SIGNATM Architect scanner was the most intuitive in the state, providing lifesaving scans for patients suffering from trauma, brain disorders, heart conditions, cancer and stroke, among other conditions. A bulk-billing policy means that local residents can access world-class diagnostic services with no out-of-pocket expenses for rebatable MRI scans.

Epworth Geelong mounted a campaign for a full MRI licence last October, calling on the local community to support its application to the Federal Health Minister. The hospital's CEO Damian Armour said the licence meant patients would no longer compromise on health outcomes based on affordability.

“Patients at a hospital of this size and breadth of services should not have to choose between paying full fees or travelling offsite for essential diagnostic services,” he said.

The Medicare-eligible MRI licence at Epworth Geelong was one of 50 awarded across the country as part of a \$375 million Federal Government investment.



Former Federal Member for Corangamite Sarah Henderson, patient Simone Kellett, neurosurgeon Mr Nick Hall, Epworth Geelong CEO Damian Armour and Epworth Medical Imaging Clinical Director Dr Paul Smith in front of the state-of-the-art MRI scanner.



Our donors help us provide extraordinary care.

Epworth Medical Foundation

Epworth was built on the thoughtful generosity of individuals in our community and that tradition lives on today.

This year, thousands of people have made donations, both large and small, to Epworth Medical Foundation, ensuring our patients have access to the best possible care.

Their donations ensure our patients have access to leading treatments by top specialists and medical staff, use of state-of-the-art medical technology, in the comfort of world-class facilities, and with early access to ground-breaking research trials.

Donations have improved medical care:

- new microscope restores sight—see page 61
- new procedure to treat difficult to reach tumours—see page 18

Vital maternity equipment upgrade

In hospital, every moment counts, and within the Special Care Nursery this is particularly true. With thanks to the generosity of The Susan Harris Foundation, Epworth Freemasons welcomed new lifesaving equipment in the Special Care Nursery to help care for our tiniest patients. We purchased:

- Neopuff infant resuscitators—the gold standard of choice for the resuscitation of babies. In critical moments, this highly sensitive piece of equipment enables our midwives to provide continuous airway pressure to infants requiring resuscitation
- portable IV trolleys, enabling our midwives to respond to urgent situations not only in the Special Care Nursery, but throughout the postnatal ward.



Extra equipment has been purchased for our tiniest patients at Epworth Freemasons.

“New equipment in the Special Care Nursery helps us provide the best care we can for babies who are very sick and at their time of greatest need. The equipment helps us be faster in those situations where it is really time critical.”

Midwife, Special Care Nursery, Epworth Freemasons

“Thank you so much Sue, for your incredibly generous donations. It just makes the world of difference.”

Elyse Kelly, Associate Nurse Unit Manager, Postnatal, Epworth Freemasons





Epworth Centenary Fund

Epworth Centenary Fund

Epworth will be 100 years old in 2020 and to celebrate our century of caring for Victorians, Epworth Medical Foundation has launched one of the biggest fundraising campaigns in our history—the Epworth Centenary Fund.

Our goal is to raise \$25 million, an endowment that will be used to foster ground-breaking innovation, grow talented leadership and further care of patients for the next 100 years and beyond.

The Epworth Centenary Fund will support:

1. Ground-breaking innovation

In 2020, Epworth will launch the Epworth Innovation Centre (EPIC), a dedicated centre that will encourage and provide competitive funding grants for truly innovative projects, including new surgical techniques, new equipment and technologies and new treatment trials, pioneering medical care of the future.

2. Fostering of talented leadership

Epworth will establish a program to encourage excellence in medical leadership and care. Through this fund, we will award 24 grants biannually to outstanding doctors to enable them to undertake research, pursue advanced training or gain international exposure to new techniques and treatments that will benefit their patients at Epworth.

3. Compassionate care

We will ensure the holistic care of our patients, understanding that a return to health often means much more than physical recovery alone. Through this fund, grants will be used to establish tailored support programs that help care for patients' entire wellbeing, factoring in their physical, emotional, social and financial circumstances.

Environmental sustainability

Our future success depends on the sustainability of our operations and the environment in which we operate. We are being systematic and committed in our approach to environmental sustainability. Acknowledging that our operations impact the environment, our group executive endorsed an Epworth Environment Policy.

This policy outlines a framework to manage our direct and indirect environmental impacts and commits to the wise stewardship of resources. We are committed to complying with, or exceeding, the requirements of relevant environmental legislation and to grasp opportunities to protect and enhance the environment.

Our environmental management plan ensures we:

- monitor, manage and reduce our energy consumption, our greenhouse gas emissions and our water and paper consumption
- monitor and reduce single-use plastics, packaging and medical equipment
- develop a sustainable sourcing management plan
- ensure future developments consider energy efficiency and green space.



Laura Jackson, EA, EMI, Helen Bell, Volunteer and Peter Nuttman, Chief Operations Manager, Epworth Medical Imaging, put the uniform recycling bin to good use.

Electricity consumption

With an increase in bed numbers of four per cent, it would be normal to expect an equivalent increase in electricity consumption. However, we made significant efforts in 2018-19 to measure, monitor and address energy consumption. We also made modifications to air conditioning systems, LED lighting and temperature set-points. These efforts have resulted in every division recording an overall decrease in electricity consumption. Our total consumption for 2018-19 was lower in 11 out of 12 months than 2017-18 and the final year total measured a reduction of 2.2 per cent.

Water savings

A simple but innovative project, that was already in place at Epworth Richmond, was introduced at Epworth Geelong to divert reject water produced in dialysis. This resulted in a saving of one million litres of water between February and May 2019.

While tap water is safe to drink because it goes through a treatment process, much more cleaning is required to make water safe for dialysis. Water for dialysis needs to be ultra-pure, which means that for every litre produced, five litres is wasted. Instead of being wasted down the drain, this water is now being used to fill onsite tanks previously supplemented by millions of litres of potable water for ongoing use in gardens and toilet flushing across Epworth Geelong.

Epworth Geelong Facilities Manager Steve Ball said the site will be able to save four million litres across the year as a result of the initiative.

“We had the water tested and it came out as class two drinking water, which means it was good for our gardens and flushes. So this inexpensive project allows us to make a few easy adjustments to redirect that water into our rainwater tanks. We now don't need to take as much water from the main supply which is where the saving has come from.”

Recycling

Epworth Theatre Nurse Rebecca Pascoe introduced Australia's first aluminium recycling program at Epworth Richmond. Rebecca co-ordinated a staff-led initiative to introduce the ground-breaking program, after noticing the quantity of aluminium canisters being sent to landfill.

"We use a lot of consumables in theatres and I see a lot of waste created which should be recycled. I have always been passionate about sustainability and conservation of the environment, so it seemed natural to step up and improve our performance," Rebecca said.

The program, which seeks to recycle more than 3,000 canisters annually at Epworth alone, will be rolled out nationally and Rebecca has been chosen to lead the awareness campaign. We have also increased our efforts in recycling of Kimguard, PVC, paper, cardboard and commingled recycling.

Multinational health products company, Baxter Healthcare, is partnering with Epworth Richmond to launch this new recycling program, recognising it as a safe and sustainable healthcare solution.

Reducing waste

A single-day waste audit conducted in late 2018 at Epworth Richmond saw up to six tonnes of waste being sorted and measured. As a result, we introduced biodegradable packaging, an e-waste management plan and public waste bins. Implementation of room service has also resulted in a large reduction of food waste. A designated recycling bin has been placed at the uniform shop for staff to deposit old, unused or outdated uniforms.

Food waste trial

Planning for a unique food waste trial commenced at Epworth Richmond, following a grant provided by the City of Yarra and Sustainability Victoria.

We installed a cutting-edge food dehydrator machine called GreenEco which will convert 400 kilograms of food waste daily into a soil conditioner. This can then be used at iconic sites such as the Collingwood Children's Farm, as well as feed the new Yarra Valley Water Waste to Energy facility in Wollert, which produces electricity from the waste to power the local area.

Cup conscious

Staff have embraced a new initiative aimed at reducing paper coffee cup waste—approximately 2.7 million paper cups are thrown out in Australia daily. Epworth is committed to addressing this problem and we're starting with our onsite cafés. Staff who bring their own reusable cup receive a discount.

New environmental projects

Other achievements include:

- formation of a Group Sustainability Committee, comprising more than 20 staff from across Epworth
- development of a dashboard, in partnership with our Business Analytics team, to show electricity, gas, energy intensity, paper, waste and medical gas usage
- 'Two for Trees' initiative, which focuses on reducing paper towel use
- becoming a member of Global Green and Healthy Hospitals, an international network of health organisations dedicated to reducing their environmental footprint and promoting environmental health.



Everyone has a role to play in sustainability.

We continue to offer quality healthcare to our community.

Epworth

Total patient bed days

514,727 patient bed days (2017-18)

529,381 patient bed days (Forecast 2018-19)

Electricity consumption	Natural gas consumption	Greenhouse gas emissions
2017-18: 45,138 MWh	2017-18: 155,873 GJ	2017-18: 57,280 TONNES (CO2e)
Our Target 2018-19: 42,881 MWh	Our Target 2018-19: 148,079 GJ	Our Target 2018-19: 54,415 TONNES (CO2e)

Energy intensity: 0.61GJ / Patient day

Waste production (general)	Paper consumption
Waste (tonnes): 2,078 (2017-18), 2,000 (Our Target 2018-19)	Total paper volume (kilograms): 84,000 kgs (2017-18)
Waste recycling rate (percentage): 20% (2017-18), 30% (Our Target 2018-19)	Equivalent to 1,020 trees (2017-18)

What can we do better?



Partnerships

Working with our community

A three-way partnership, with a commitment to create a fully developed health, community and education precinct, has led to a new alliance.

Epworth Eastern will expand its site onto a Salvation Army site. In return for the land, we will build a church to serve as a place of worship and as Salvation Army Box Hill headquarters. The deal is part of the Box Hill Health and Education landmark agreement, which also includes Box Hill Institute, and will enable a nurse training facility to be built to service the TAFE facility and the hospital.

Executive Director, Epworth Eastern Louise O'Connor said the exciting arrangements had been nearly four years in the making.

"It's probably the first time in the eastern region we've had local groups such as The Salvation Army, Box Hill Institute and Epworth coming together and all agreeing on the same mission, which is to improve health and education within this region," Louise said.

"These partnerships are about so much more than grant funding; they are here to deliver better health through research and to maximise impact."



Epworth Eastern is partnering with other organisations to create a comprehensive health, community and education precinct.

Assisting the public system

With a heavy demand for healthcare services around the state, the government asked for our assistance this year in caring for patients in the public system. We took on a three-month contract with Alfred Health to carry out elective surgery, while essential and urgent repair works were undertaken at The Alfred Centre. Throughout the partnership, Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Richmond provided outstanding care for more than 2,800 patients across the two sites.

Executive Director of both sites Nicole Waldron described it as a unique partnership.

"Epworth hadn't undertaken a partnership of this magnitude before," she said.

In addition, Epworth Geelong continues to work with Barwon Health in an ongoing public-private healthcare partnership. In the third year of the 10-year formal partnership, Epworth Geelong supported Barwon Health in managing public patient wait lists by providing over 6,000 patient services for same-day surgery, renal dialysis and day oncology.

Monash Partners Academic Health Science Centre

Epworth is a founding member of Monash Partners Academic Health Science Centre, a partnership between 10 healthcare, research and teaching organisations serving a community of 2.5 million Victorians. The purpose of Monash Partners is to "connect researchers, clinicians and the community to innovate for better health".

The Federal Government committed \$20 million to Monash Partners to integrate research and evidence into practice, to support enabling platforms to deliver better health through research and to support high-impact research projects that deliver direct clinical benefit.

Professor Helena Teede, Executive Director of Monash Partners, says the group provides a community of practice where all health disciplines, our community and our researchers can genuinely collaborate for better health outcomes.

"We transcend the traditional silos across sectors and organisations and help ensure research addresses real health and community need and has real world impact," Prof Teede said.

"These partnerships are about so much more than grant funding; they are here to deliver better health through research and to maximise impact."

Achievements during the year included:

- securing \$6.1 million from the Medical Research Future Fund for 2019-21 platforms, support and projects
- improving clinical research processes, with establishment of a centralised shared ethics model for ethics review, with Epworth a key driving force and collaborator
- co-leading development of a national systems level clinical research accelerator platform
- delivering a free, large-scale clinical research training program to thousands of staff
- progressing development of an innovative learning health system data hub
- developing our consumer and community engagement platform
- strengthening our Indigenous health and capacity building program.

Graduate Research Industry Partnership

Epworth has formed a Monash University Graduate Research Industry Partnership to support women achieve their career goals and advance women in healthcare leadership. A co-funded PhD program will develop an evidence-based, data-driven and digitally mediated platform that enables Epworth to effectively measure, report on and then action evidence-based initiatives to improve equity in healthcare leadership.

This collaborative, multidisciplinary work forms an integral component of a larger initiative that involves partnerships between leading academics, health professionals, government, national and international professional societies and institutions and health services.

PhD candidate Mariam Mousa from Monash University will be embedded with Epworth while undertaking this work.

Improving the health of Samoan patients

Hundreds of patients in Samoa will be able to be correctly treated and diagnosed, after specialists from Epworth Geelong and Epworth Medical Foundation contributed funding for medical equipment that will help doctors accurately diagnose and treat stomach and digestive tract issues. The newly donated equipment, a generous \$12,000 donation from 10 local Geelong specialists and Epworth Medical Foundation, includes 300 test kits for bacterial infections, a gastro scope used to detect stomach lesions and a colon scope to detect any abnormalities and lesions in the colonic area.

An illness called helicobacter pylori, a bacterium found in the stomach which can cause ulcers and gastric issues, was identified as an issue for people in Samoa and the Pacific Islands. The donated test kits will mean an additional 300 patients can be tested for this illness. The package of equipment was sent to the Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital in Apia, Samoa's largest hospital. Specialists will now be able to identify the incidence and correct treatment option for patients by doing a gastroscopy or using a simple test kit to diagnose the condition accurately.

Epworth Geelong Chief Executive Officer Damian Armour said four local surgeons and six gastroenterologists supported the delivery of goods direct to Samoa.

"This is an example of local medical experts banding together to create solutions to health problems that are impacting on people's wellbeing," Damian said. "Everyone should have access to the medical care and equipment they need, no matter where they live—that's why we're supporting this initiative to improve health outcomes for the people of Samoa."

Epworth Geelong gastroenterologist Dr Chris Hair said the donation would enable specialists to open an additional list of patients, meaning they can treat another 400 patients each year.

Epworth continues to support and donate medical and operating equipment, paediatric cots and other materials to equip and aid hospitals, health services and communities in those developing countries that need the equipment most.

"I cannot express how much this means to Samoa and particularly the doctors and nurses," Dr Hair said.

"The donated test kits will also allow doctors to test the response to antibiotic treatment accurately, which may help develop guidelines for treatment of the condition in the country."



Improving health outcomes for the people of Samoa with new equipment.

Partnership to improve health technologies

A new research partnership with Swinburne University of Technology has been formed to look at better leveraging digital health technologies to address critical health issues and provide patients with value-added patient information.

The three-year partnership, our first formal health research collaboration with Swinburne, will focus on health informatics management, with an emphasis on digital health research.

This partnership will benefit patients across the country, using the strengths of both organisations in health research, technology and teaching.

Epworth Chair in Health Information Management, Nilmini Wickramasinghe, who is also Swinburne's Professor of Digital Health, will chair the partnership.

"This collaboration enables us to move digital health forward so that we can look at research to develop superior patient-centred solutions that support high-quality care," Professor Wickramasinghe said.

Key activities will include analysing health data and evaluating tech solutions, with particular attention being placed on:

- unplanned hospital readmissions—how to reduce and effectively manage these through analytics and artificial intelligence
- health data—looking at better analysis with a focus on providing better outcomes for patients
- current health technology systems—evaluation and assessment of systems in hospitals and other health contexts
- critical aspects of robotic surgery at Epworth and how these assets can be used in other forms of surgery.

Epworth Eastern Executive Director Louise O'Connor says the agreement is an example of Epworth's commitment to developing partnerships that can improve the quality of care provided to patients.

"It is through research and technological innovation that we will improve the way we can deliver modern healthcare, so that we can achieve a more positive, meaningful and sustainable impact on the health and wellbeing of our community," Louise said.

Swinburne students have also benefitted from Swinburne's relationship with Epworth.

In 2018, more than 160 Swinburne students from nursing, psychology, occupational therapy and applied statistics took part in formal placements and research projects at Epworth.





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