Epworth successfully passed its Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) organisation wide accreditation on Friday 26 October and achieved a number of exceptional ratings. Epworth Cliveden also achieved its accreditation under ISO on Friday 19 October.

Epworth was required to meet forty-seven criteria set by ACHS to demonstrate how we work together with consistent practices and processes. The accreditation period provided an opportunity for us to showcase the fantastic achievements of our VMOs and staff in providing a high standard of safety and quality of care for our patients.

The surveyors were very impressed by many of the initiatives that Epworth has undertaken and they were particularly impressed by the passion of our people to deliver excellence to our patients.

Epworth achieved a ‘Marked Achievement’ (MA) rating on all criterion and an ‘Exceptional Rating’ on 11 criterion. This is a significant achievement and is a testament to the hard work of all staff at Epworth.

Well done to everyone involved and particularly Executive Director Clinical Services Louise O’Connor and Quality Manager Lisa Edwards who coordinated the process on Epworth’s behalf. All staff should feel very proud of their dedication and commitment to improving the quality and care for all our patients.

Accreditation success – showcasing our fantastic achievements

 Epworth welcomes Professor John Catford

Professor John Catford has recently been appointed as Executive Director Medical Services and will commence at Epworth on 4 February 2013.

John has an extensive wealth of executive, academic, government, clinical and research experience and insights into the delivery of health services both nationally and internationally. He is currently the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice President at Deakin University and was previously the Dean, Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences/Pro Vice-Chancellor Health since 2002.

During this time he led the development of the Deakin Medical School which opened in January 2008. Deakin’s Health Faculty now comprises five schools across four campuses and 12 health service sites, and qualifies 1500 health professionals each year from 19 disciplines.

Under John’s leadership health and medical research has also grown rapidly. Following clinical practice in paediatrics and public health medicine, John has held professional and senior health service management positions in the UK and Australia. He has extensive research expertise and has published widely throughout his career. His broad engagement in a range of professional activities at national and state levels demonstrates his superior leadership and executive management skills in health services and includes several non-executive Board Director, Ministerial and Peak Advisory Committee appointments.

This is a tremendous opportunity for Epworth as John will bring to the role a strong background and breadth of knowledge in medical leadership, education and research which will support the progression of our clinical services and enhancement of Epworth’s teaching hospital agenda.

We congratulate and welcome John to Epworth HealthCare and to the Group Executive Team.

Pursuing growth in reach and services

The acquisition of the land, building and assets of Healthbridge Hawthorn Private Hospital and the subsequent planning for Epworth Hawthorn is proceeding well, with settlement taking place on 14 December. Accreditation of Epworth Hawthorn occurred the following Monday 17 December.

A lot of work has been happening behind the scenes including the relocation of rehabilitation services, way-finding and signage upgrades, and changes to patient information. This has allowed for a smooth transition and ensured that everything was ready for accreditation.

Monash IVF will continue to provide a significant service at the site with IVF procedures still to take place there. It is an important business transaction with positive benefits for patients of both Monash IVF and Epworth Rehabilitation services.

Message from the Group Chief Executive

As Christmas nears and the end of 2012 approaches, we can reflect with pride on the fabulous achievements we have made together this year.

In the final months of 2012 a number of exciting acquisitions, advancements, achievements and changes have taken place.

On Friday 26 October Epworth successfully passed its Australian Council Healthcare Standards (ACHS) organisation wide accreditation. Epworth Cliveden also achieved its accreditation under ISO on Friday 19 October.

The surveys were very impressed by the passion and commitment shown by staff in delivering excellence to our patients. They were also impressed with many of the initiatives we have undertaken.

I am very proud of everyone involved for their continued dedication and commitment in delivering quality care for all of our patients.

The acquisition of the land, building and assets of Healthbridge Hawthorn Private Hospital and the subsequent planning for Epworth Hawthorn is proceeding well, with settlement taking place on 14 December. Accreditation of Epworth Hawthorn will occur on Monday 17 December.

A lot of work has been happening behind the scenes including the relocation of rehabilitation services, way-finding and signage upgrades, and changes to patient information. This will allow for a smooth transition and ensure that everything is ready for accreditation.

We have been incredibly fortunate to secure two important senior positions, with the appointment of Professor John Catford as Executive Director Medical Services and Ms Karen Kinnon as Chief Information Officer (CIO), John is currently the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice President at Deakin University and will commence at Epworth on 4 February 2013.

His appointment is a tremendous opportunity for Epworth as John will bring to the role a strong background and breadth of knowledge in medical leadership, education and research which will support the progression of our clinical services and enhancement of Epworth’s teaching hospital agenda.

In her role of CIO Karen will be responsible for all IT and Telecommunications services and will commence with Epworth on 14 January 2013.

I am sure that you will join me in welcoming both John and Karen to Epworth.

At the November Board meeting the 2012 Epworth HealthCare Annual Report and 2012 Research Report were presented. The Annual Report focuses on the many advances that we have made over the last 12 months.

The 2012 Research Report highlights how we are advancing health care through clinical research.

Both reports are available as electronic flipbooks, which can be accessed via the Epworth website.

I am so proud of what we have achieved together in 2012 and appreciate the tremendous support, hard work and focus that Epworth HealthCare and its people have delivered this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Stay safe over the summer holidays and I look forward to everyone’s return in 2013, which is sure to be another very successful year for Epworth.

Alan R Kinkade
Group Chief Executive

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Education centre boosts health

On Tuesday 30 October, Epworth formally opened the new Epworth Eastern Education Centre, located in the Elgar Hill Medical Suites in Box Hill. The Centre is an Australian Government Initiative made possible by funding made available through Health Workforce Australia (HWA). It was designed in consultation with Monash University to support the training of undergraduate health science students and consists of a three-bed simulation space – including an area for an operating table and scrub sink; a control viewing office area and two tutorial rooms with interactive video-conferencing ability.

Epworth has long been committed to becoming a nationally recognised, academic, private not-for-profit teaching organisation. The new Epworth Eastern Education Centre is one of several successful initiatives, in partnership with Victoria’s Universities that supports the expansion of clinical education at Epworth.

1. Epworth Eastern Education Manager Andrea Kattula assists students in the simulation environment
2. The manikins assist students with their learning at the Education Centre

Success story at Epworth Rehabilitation Brighton

Neurological Physiotherapist Nataliya Shkuratova and her team at Epworth Rehabilitation Brighton, were finalists in the 2012 Press Ganey Success Story Competition for their C.A.R.E. Multidisciplinary Falls Prevention Intervention Program for a Rehabilitation Setting.

The challenge for the team at Epworth Rehabilitation Brighton was to develop and sustain a program for ambulatory patients that would significantly decrease the number of falls. It also needed to involve all members of the multidisciplinary team in accurately identifying admission, those patients at risk of a fall.

Outcomes of the program have been significant for Epworth Rehabilitation. Over the period of the trial, patient falls were reduced by more than 50 per cent and this reduction has been sustained over a period of eight months. Patient falls overnight were reduced by 90 per cent and falls in bathrooms and toilets were reduced by 60 per cent.

The improvement in patient falls at Epworth since the C.A.R.E program was implemented has been significantly large; this is a testament to the staff executing the program successfully.

We are very proud of their achievement once again in this highly contested arena and they are to be congratulated whole heartedly – well done!

Ensuring capable, engaged and committed teams at Epworth

The launch of Epworth’s new PDP framework is around the corner. The new framework is designed to underpin the alignment and delivery of Epworth’s Strategic Plan and Epworth Excellence. A key focus area is also the ongoing development of Epworth employees, ensuring a capable, engaged and committed team.

The initial pilot period between now and the end of December will focus on people managers. The implementation will then extend to all Epworth employees from February 2013.

Training commenced in October and will be provided by each division’s Human Resource Manager and/or Advisor. If you have any questions about the rollout in your division please speak to a member of your HR team.

International recognition for Epworth Eastern

Epworth Eastern is the recipient of the world renowned Studer Group’s first ‘International Healthcare Organisation of the Month’ award.

It is great to see Epworth Eastern recognised at an international level—not only for the outcomes delivered to our patients, staff and the community—but as winners of this award, recognition as a leader in the Australian health care setting. Congratulations and well done!

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Finalisation of design development at Geelong

At the September Board meeting, funding for design development, tender and procurement phases were approved for Epworth Geelong. Since then, the project team has worked towards the finalisation of design development.

User group meetings have been held over the last couple of months and will continue into the new year. Input has been provided into the design by Epworth staff from across our existing facilities and Deakin staff with regards to the education and training spaces.

As plans progress into the new year we will commence quarterly newsletters. An ‘expressions of interest’ page is now provided on our website for those seeking more information on Epworth Geelong.

Building a healthier future

The redevelopment project at Epworth Richmond, that will see it become the largest private hospital in Australia, has continued to progress according to schedule over the latter half of 2012 with the current package of works due for handover in mid February 2013.

A number of significant milestones have been achieved with the development of the new Day Medical Unit on level 4 of the Bridge Road Tower (BRT). Joinery works commenced and bathrooms and new flooring have both been installed. The nurse call system has been updated to allow for the two Prototype Rooms to come online in February 2013.

The Clinical Education and Simulation Centre on level 5 of the Leong Place building is really starting to take shape with the external façade and glazing now complete. The removal of the scaffolding will commence shortly with the final unveiling to take place in late January 2013.

Stage 1 and 2 works of the level 3 Theatres are underway. One new theatre will be commissioned in mid March 2013 and the remaining stage 1 and 2 works will be finished in May 2013. Kane Construction is the successful contractor for the Normanky Car Park and works are in progress for the 49 car spaces which is scheduled for completion at the end of February 2013.

VCAT application success

We have been successful with our VCAT application for the Epworth Richmond Redevelopment Project. Epworth applied to VCAT earlier this year for approval for minor alterations to the previous design and to relocate the medical oxygen tank to the rear of the Elm Building. Both applications were held concurrently and we received a positive outcome to each.

This decision has allowed us to maintain the majority of our preferred options, in particular the functionality of the clinical areas within the Erin Street development. It has been an intensive process with the involvement of a number of the team at Richmond and the Project Consultants and is a great achievement.

We are presently working with the City of Yarra to agree the deal within the VCAT decision to allow us to proceed with this Redevelopment early in the new year.

Major works continue at Epworth Rehabilitation Camberwell

The major redevelopment project at Epworth Rehabilitation Camberwell has continued to progress well and further advancements will continue to take place in the new year.

During the period, you may have noticed a change to the skyline with completion of the structure and façade, as well as removal of the tower crane, signifying a major milestone in the project.

Works for the fit out to the lower ground and ground floors has commenced which includes plasterboard sheeting, ceiling installation and fit-out of services. CE is well advanced in the completion of the new kitchen within the existing building, this is on track for completion in April 2013. Commencing in January will be painting, tiling and plumbing works—which will see the lower ground floor space start to take shape.

The handover of the basement car park and part of the lower ground level—including main reception, retail tenancies, consulting and administration space—is on schedule for early March 2013. This will allow CE to access the internal spaces for refurbishment works.

Epworth’s internal team is working in the background on a number of activities including procurement of furniture, fixtures and equipment, with installation to coincide with the various stages of handover. It is anticipated some staff will be shifting in early March 2013. Epworth has reached terms with a Café tenancy operator, with fit out of their tenancy anticipated to commence in March 2013.

1. THE BURKE ROAD FAÇADE OF THE BUILDING STARTS TO TAKE SHAPE

2. EXTERNAL GLAZING IS ERECTED

Richmond redevelopment to benefit from $2 million Manders bequest

Recently a plaque and storyboard has been installed in the Erin Street foyer in memory of Richard and Marietta Manders who have been generous supporters of the Epworth Medical Foundation for more than 20 years.

Richard Manders immigrated to Australia from Poland and Marietta from Romania after World War II. They were introduced by a mutual friend, married and established a home in Melbourne. Richard studied law and Marietta accountancy. They worked tirelessly in their professions, travelled extensively and enjoyed a wide circle of friends.

Grateful for the good fortune they found in Australia, Richard and Marietta became generous philanthropists supporting several not-for-profit organisations including Jewish Care and the Epworth Medical Foundation.

Starting with a small gift in 1992, Richard and Marietta’s respect for Epworth grew to the point where they left the largest bequest known to the Foundation to improve the hospital facilities and in turn be remembered by generations to come.

The Mander’s extremely generous $2 million gift will be fully recognised by naming rights to the new Erin Street foyer at the completion of the Richmond redevelopment.

Epworth HealthCare was built on the thoughtful generosity of individuals such as the Manders in our community. They are men and women who have made donations, large and small, to help ensure that our patients receive access to the best possible care.

Epworth was in fact made possible by a philanthropic gift from manufacturer Sir Aaron Banks, who donated the deeds to his property in Hawthorn to the hospital planning committee. Sir Aaron’s gift was used to purchase the first property on Richmond Hill which opened as Epworth Hospital in 1920.

Any enquiries relating to bequests should be directed to our Donor Relations Manager Vanessa Dannock on 9426 6572.
The Innova IGS 530 (Image Guided System) is the latest cardiovascular and vascular x-ray system to be installed at Epworth Richmond’s Cath Lab. It is a fully integrated imaging system with the latest in 3D applications, incorporating endovascular aneurysm repair and valve planning software. The IGS 530 has unique radiation dose reduction features, as well as dose reporting functionality. It also has the ability to incorporate ultrasound, CT and MRI images. This installation also includes the latest MacLab Haemodynamic monitoring system with an ability for wireless fractional flow reserve and intravascular ultrasound.

The Innova IGS 530 is the first installation in the Asia Pacific region and Epworth Richmond is proud to have received the very latest in medical equipment.

Thanks to the generous donation from a patient, Epworth has become the only hospital in Victoria to purchase an ARMEO®SPRING – innovative equipment to help patients with restricted hand or arm movement. The ARMEO®SPRING supports functional therapy for patients who have experienced stroke, traumatic brain injury (TBI) or other neurological disorders.

The family who donated the money through the Epworth Medical Foundation, had researched equipment available for movement therapy and decided that many Epworth patients could benefit from it. They wish to remain anonymous.

Other advantages include:
- Patients benefit from highly intensive, repetitive, self-initiated movement therapy
- Patients are more engaged with computer-directed tasks than many of the traditional options
- Immediate performance feedback is provided, even when improvements are subtle.

Epworth supports breast cancer awareness

More than a hundred Pink Lady silhouettes were on display on the lawn in Erin Street on Tuesday 30 October. Epworth invited the community to take part in the event as a way of showing their support for women and families affected by breast cancer.

Epworth Breast Surgeon Miss Jane O’Brien addressed the guests on the day, along with a breast cancer survivor who spoke of her own journey of survival. Around 300 Mini-Field of Women events were held in local communities, right across Australia. These events are a great way to link those people affected by breast cancer with their local community.

Epworth first to buy Armeo Spring for rehabilitation patients

Epworth HealthCare is pleased to announce that a project team has commenced the development and implementation of an Employee and Manager Self Service. This is a new module of our Human Resources and Payroll system – Chris21, that will allow all staff the ability to access their payslips on line, view and change personal details (such as address and next of kin), view leave balances, including future balances, apply for and have leave approved on line. This is an exciting initiative that will not only reduce our environmental footprint, but streamline our processes and give staff 24/7 access to their pay and leave details. Regular bulletins, together with information sessions, demonstrations and full training will be provided to all employees, with phased ‘go live’ scheduled for February/March 2013.

Improving employee services
EMF launches first fundraising report

As Epworth’s fundraising arm, the Epworth Medical Foundation (EMF) has enabled the funding of life-saving equipment, patient services and research for more than 30 years. The EMF has developed its first Philanthropy Report which showcases how Epworth donors have positively contributed to the delivery of patient care.

The EMF warmly welcomes all Epworth staff to come and meet the team and discuss how it can help fund activities/equipment in your department. Please don’t hesitate to phone the Foundation on 03 9426 6132.

You can download a copy of the report at www.emf.org.au (under the About Us-News and Publications section) or, alternatively call the Foundation and ask for a copy to be mailed to you.

EMF would like to thank all those staff again for sharing the information needed to make this report happen. Your time is much appreciated.

Many advances but only one goal: to improve patients’ lives

The 2011–2012 Epworth HealthCare Annual Report has been published and was presented at the November 2012 Board of Management meeting.

The report highlights the many achievements of 2011/12 across all areas of Epworth, illustrating the many different ways in which Epworth is advancing for the future. The report also features the key progressions made over the last financial year, highlighting us as a provider of consistent, high quality patient care and clinical excellence.

The Epworth Research Institute Report has also been published which profiles the research activity of Epworth in the last financial year. The report particularly highlights Epworth’s commitment to research and the expanding activities in this area.

All staff are encouraged to read what we have achieved together. Additional copies of both the Annual Report and the Research Report are available through the Marketing Department by contacting Catherine Dohrmann on 9426 6441 or catherine.dohrmann@epworth.org.au

Working with Wesley Mission at Christmas

Christmas and the holiday season mean many things to many people but for most it’s a chance to spend time with loved ones – a time for celebration, sharing and joy.

This year at Christmas, Epworth HealthCare has decided to once again give back to the community, focusing on people in need, especially around the festive season.

Staff are being asked to consider donating non-perishable food items, toiletries and toys/games for children that will be passed on to the Wesley Mission Melbourne to be distributed to those in need. Wesley Mission Melbourne works alongside those who are most disadvantaged and inspires them to live their lives to the fullest as valued members of the community. The Wesley Food for Families appeal has been running for 19 years. Its aim is to collect non-perishable food and toiletries for families in crisis in the lead up to Christmas. Epworth Eastern will continue to donate to the charities they have supported over the years.

Suggested items to be donated include tinned foods, pasta and pasta sauces, baby food and nappies, soap and deodorant, breakfast cereals, muesli bars etc. This list is not limited. To ensure ease of distribution, Wesley Mission has requested that no items be wrapped.

Approval of 2012–2016 Nurse Enterprise Agreement

The Epworth HealthCare Nurses Enterprise Agreement 2012–2016 was approved by Fair Work Australia on 8 October 2012.

In accordance with the terms of the Enterprise Agreement, wage increases will be applied from 12 November 2012; that is the first full pay period on or after 10 days following approval by Fair Work Australia.

Additionally, over the coming weeks Enrolled Nurses will receive personal correspondence outlining any reclassification information applicable to them. The new Agreement will be available on the Intranet by visiting the Human Resources page and clicking on the “Enterprise Agreements” link.

If you have any questions please speak with your manager or a member of your Divisional Human Resources team.

New advanced training positions at Epworth

As part of Epworth HealthCare’s commitment to teaching we can announce the creation of two new College Accredited Advanced Training Positions in Cardiothoracic Surgery and Paediatric Allergy and Immunology.

The Cardiothoracic Advanced Registrar Training position has recently gained accreditation with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and functions under the supervision of Dr Peter Skilton. This training position has been occupied from January 2012 by Registrar Dr Michael Seitz, who we would like to congratulate on being accepted into the Cardiothoracic SET Training program next year. The Cardiothoracic Advanced Training Position will continue in 2013 supported by Epworth HealthCare.

The Paediatric Allergy and Immunology Advanced Training Position will be based at Epworth Richmond under the supervision of Dr Joanne Smart. This new training position will operate in partnership with The Royal Children’s Hospital and is in the process of being accredited for Paediatric training.

Both positions have been filled with Accredited Trainees for 2013.
Epworth was proud to host Ken Lay, Chief Commissioner Victoria Police, as the seventh speaker in our Twilight Leadership Series on 20 November 2012.

The Twilight Series provide senior leaders within the organisation the opportunity to draw on the experience and knowledge of other leaders.

Ken Lay is the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police. He has worked with Victoria Police since 1974 having experienced a wide variety of roles including periods of service in rural Victoria. Prior to his appointment as Chief Commissioner, Ken held the roles of Deputy Commissioner (Strategy and Organisational Development), Deputy Commissioner (Road Policing).

In addition to his roles associated with Victoria Police, Ken has been heavily involved in the community and currently sits on the Board of the Blue Ribbon Foundation; a past Board member of the Alpine Valley Community Leadership Program and a fellow of the Gippsland Community Leadership Program. There is a strong relationship between the Victoria Police and Epworth. The event provided Epworth leaders the opportunity to hear about Ken’s journey in the Victoria Police and some of the key events shaping his appointment as the Chief Commissioner and those events that shape his current leadership.

Ken spoke passionately about driving peer to peer accountability. Guests were given the opportunity to ask questions at the end of his presentation.

Epworth Rehabilitation staff star in corporate relay

The 2012 Hertz BRW Corporate Relay Run took place on Wednesday 14 November.

There were a number of representatives from Epworth Rehabilitation who took part in the evening run. Congratulations to all the teams who raced. There were some impressive performances all round with many personal bests and individual achievements.

It was great to see the Epworth participants standing out from the mixed competition, stopped to help a fellow competitor who had fallen and was in a bit of trouble. In true Epworth spirit, Adrian waited with the competitor until the ambulance arrived.

Well done and congratulations to all those involved!

Epworth Rehabilitation corporate relay run competitors

Impressive upgrades to the Maternity Unit

As part of ongoing improvements to the Epworth Freemasons Maternity Unit, the post natal rooms are currently undergoing a transformation and upgrade.

With their modern décor, double electric beds, tea and coffee making facilities, microwaves, flat screen TVs and upgraded en-suites, they’ll be sure to make a lasting and positive impression!

Feedback to date from current patients has been overwhelmingly positive!

On Monday 19 November the first pilot of the new Epworth Orientation Program was held at Epworth Eastern, with great success. The new program is a four hour interactive workshop designed to build the skills to apply Epworth Excellence – in particular AIDET and Rounding.

Feedback from participants has been very positive:

– ‘It’s the end of the session and I am still bright eyed and interested’
– ‘So much talking and interaction for an orientation session’
– ‘I feel like I’ve come into a great environment’
– ‘It’s the first time I’ve stayed awake in an orientation!!’

Furthermore, this feedback was coupled with positive feedback from the Epworth Eastern Executive team who facilitated the session; they noted the high level of engagement and interaction from the group.

The new orientation program is due to be rolled out at Epworth Freemasons in December and Epworth Richmond, Epworth Rehabilitation and the Corporate division in the new year.

Building on Epworth Excellence – launch of new orientation program
**A Parisian affair**

Epworth Freemasons hosted a “Night in Paris” for the quarterly CEO Dinner on Friday 19 October. There were close to 70 guests who attended the night which had a Parisian theme.

The night was a tribute to the efforts of a special group of employees who have consistently performed above expectations in their respective jobs.

Freeo’s Café was transformed into a Parisian restaurant with a selection of gourmet French food on the menu. Some humorous entertainment involving ‘Tossers’ and ‘Swatters’ lightened the mood after the formalities of the evening. Freeo’s Café was transformed into a Parisian restaurant with a selection of gourmet French food on the menu. Some humorous entertainment involving ‘Tossers’ and ‘Swatters’ lightened the mood after the formalities of the evening.

**Global Corporate Challenge – results are in!**

The Global Corporate Challenge (GCC) is the world’s largest corporate health program. This year 175 Epworth employees across 25 teams participated and achieved some remarkable results.

Epworth teams covered a total distance of 142,322kms which equates to walking around the world 4 times with a daily step average of 14,050.

It was a close competition with the final top 4 rankings as follows:

1. ElimPT Rehabilitation 11,089kms
2. The Footlings Freemasons 10,414kms
3. Elim PT Rehabilitation 9,325kms
4. No Pain No Gain Rehabilitation 7,624kms

Well done to Bernadette Dornom who is Epworth’s overall top performer! Congratulations to all involved in achieving these fabulous results.

Occupational Therapy Week is a national initiative that seeks to promote the important role of occupational therapy in the community. The theme for this year was ‘Occupation: It’s what we do’. It does not refer solely to the work that Occupational Therapists undertake but to the meaningful and purposeful activities in all aspects of life: particularly how they assist and improve the lives of others.

Epworth Rehabilitation was proud to host a number of events and activities throughout the week that illustrated the benefits of occupational therapy to the communities in which Epworth operates. Celebrating the week provided an opportunity to acknowledging the wonderful contributions that our Occupational Therapists make to improving patient’s lives.

Occupational Therapists play a vital role in improving the lives of others.

The Breast Care Nurses on ward 1 East and the Patient Liaison Nurse in Day Oncology had a vision to help a special patient group who have been facing the challenge of breast cancer. They pooled their formidable initiative and drive, approached the Epworth Foundation for financial support, went to a range of experts, including our own committed breast surgeons and planned a day of fun and information – and what a day it was!

Approximately 150 breast cancer survivors attended Fenix on the Yarra in Richmond to celebrate their mutual bond and gather information on topics like health and nutrition, exercise, menopause, bone health, emotional and psychological well being and sexuality, intimacy and looking after yourself. There were also a range of stands with supportive groups and organisations such as Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA), Cancer Council Victoria, BreaCan, Think Pink Living Centre and Amoena.

Everyone rated the day as very good or excellent with comments such as, “a great day – some really positive, practical things I will try; excellent speakers”. The positive feedback made all the hard work and time commitment worthwhile.

Helping country patients access life-saving cancer treatment

Sixteen walkers have returned after the inaugural Walk for Wellness – a three-day trek along Victoria’s stunning Great Ocean Road to raise funds for radiation oncology patients.

Among the group were many Epworth participants including Board Member, Tony Browne, EMF Executive Director, Scott Bulger (and his wife Naomi and six month old baby Madeleine), Marian Anderson (Reception, Epworth Richmond), and Jade Brownie and Margaret Hjorth from Epworth Radiology, Epworth Cardiologists, Dr Graeme Storman and Dr Brian Buxton also joined the walk.

Former oncology patient Rachael Calvert and her partner Daniel Benda who have both overcome cancer were also part of the team. Rachael was diagnosed with Stage 3 Breast Cancer in December 2011 and has been a patient at Epworth Freemasons since January 2012.

“The care I received at Epworth was flawless. The compassion of the Doctors and Nurses was second to none. They never got tired of reassuring my mother and I, and helping us relax in what was a really emotional and stressful time for both of us. I was so happy to be healthy enough to take part in this event and give something back to Epworth.”

“All I kept thinking was ‘How lucky am I?’ to have access to such wonderful facilities and care all within walking distance of my home. This is why I wanted to help those who had to travel from the country. I saw the Walk for Wellness brochure and thought what better cause to show my thanks to Epworth, and help others going through the same thing as me?’”

Thanks to the Walk for Wellness team, close to $30,000 was raised which will be used to fund accommodation support grants for country patients needing radiation therapy. This is a fantastic result.

So far, $60,000 raised by EMF has been used to provide funding for 30 patients from rural communities to be able to stay in the city and access life-saving treatment.

EMF would like to thank everyone who was involved and donated to this event. Stay tuned for more information about the next trip!
Saying thanks and bringing our values and behaviours to life

Below is a patient letter, which highlights the positive impact staff at Epworth Richmond, Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Radiation Oncology, have had on one patient’s battle with breast cancer. It is a wonderful example of the Epworth Values and Behaviours truly coming to life.

“I am not a typical charity case. I was diagnosed with early breast cancer in June, at the age of 34. My husband and I were all ready to start a family and had increased our level of private health cover to suit.

In the year before diagnosis, I had noticed a tiny, occasional dimple quite high up on my chest. There was no lump or pain so I didn’t think anything of it. But because I first noticed it before upgrading my insurance, my health fund decided my cancer was pre-existing and not to be covered.

Up until March I was the editor of 11 newspapers for a large media company. I had quit to de-stress and take some time off. Now I was underemployed and uninsured.

My breast surgeon referred me to radiation oncologist Andrew See, who mentioned the benevolent fund. This has been such a gift. As a first-time radiotherapy patient, I cannot compare my experience to elsewhere. But I can describe what this experience has been like for me.

The staff at both Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Richmond have been exemplary. What a wonderful bunch of lovely, smart, funny, warm, caring people. I have been treated like a valued person and never felt like a patient. (In fact, I was mistaken for staff twice while on hospital grounds.)

Dr See, Nola Bailey and Emma Fitzgerald were incredibly accommodating and helpful. My treatment schedule changed when my husband and I decided to pursue IVF and later, genetic testing. I was able to e-mail them with updates, which was so convenient. Cancer patients quickly accumulate more doctors than they ever thought possible, so to not have to make an appointment every time you need advice or to change plans is wonderful.

When I got a part-time job that I couldn’t pass up, Nola e-mailed to suggest I be treated at Richmond – where there are fewer patients – so I could have access to earlier treatment times before starting work. That’s customer service!

The Epworth Centre in Richmond is full of natural light, and there is a view of the city from the radiation oncology department. The waiting room is spacious, not drab or depressing, and the coffee machine is a nice touch. The staff at the front desk - Josie, Leisa and Laxshmi - always chatted to me as though they were excited to see me and interested in me as a person, not a cancer patient.

Radiation therapists Rob, Mel, Sarah, Chloe and Bianca were all lovely and funny. A delight, in fact. They never made me feel uncomfortable and always remembered details about my interests, my weekend activities, etc.

Nurses Mary, Kylie, Margie, Roz and Nahid deserve a medal for what they do. They have to patch up physical and emotional scars, but I never once found them to be anything but cheerful and supportive. (In fact, Margie told me she enjoys this role more than other types of nursing because she gets to be a “cheerleader” for her patients. How gorgeous.) Nothing was too much trouble for them.

Circumstances aside, it’s been a great experience. Truly it’s a privilege to have met such wonderful individuals and to be so well cared for.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

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