Welcome to the first *Epwords* of the new year, as we bid farewell to summer and head into cooler months that will bring many significant developments for Epworth. Since the last issue in December, we enjoyed a lovely Christmas break but January saw us continue full steam ahead in preparation for the opening of the new Lee Wing at Epworth Richmond.

On 1 February, we commissioned the first phase of the wing. The new emergency department, expanded ICU, cardiac unit and coronary care unit, and six new theatres are now operational. Staff, doctors and patients have all expressed extremely positive feedback and praise for the new spaces, and I am exceptionally proud of all the hard work and dedication from all staff involved in the development, commissioning and opening. We now ready ourselves for the remaining floors to open shortly, on 4 April.

There have been a number of new service offerings across Epworth, enhancing our level of patient care. Epworth Eastern launched a new neurosciences unit; the new aged psychiatry service has commenced at Epworth Clinic; a new pet therapy program is running for mental health and rehabilitation patients at Epworth Camberwell; and we have just launched a new concussion clinic at Epworth Hawthorn.

We recently welcomed to Epworth Professor Miles Prince, who joins us as Professor/Director of Molecular Oncology and Cancer Immunology. Miles will be based at our Epworth Freemasons Clarendon Street site and will provide research, clinical and teaching leadership in this new area of our Cancer Services Clinical Institute.

In addition to leasing new consulting space at Clarendon Street to house Miles and our other new tenants, Epworth Freemasons has recently celebrated the completion of its level three upgrade project, enjoying new theatres, day of surgery admissions (DOSA), male and female change rooms and a significant amount of service improvements. Epworth Eastern opened a new theatre in March and is on target for a May handover of its new day oncology unit.

July will be a big month with Epworth Geelong opening to the public and South West Regional Cancer Centre (SWRCC) at Warrnambool following shortly thereafter. Both projects are making great progress; the SWRCC car park is now open, and on 15 April we receive handover of Epworth Geelong.

A few congratulations are in order: in January, three Epworth associates received honours in the Australia Day Awards — Professor Mari Botti, Professor Mark Frydenberg and Mr John Cunningham. Also in January, Epworth HealthCheck’s Bridie O’Donnell broke the women’s cycling world hour distance record. And lastly, a big congrats to our nursing graduates and leadership program graduates. Well done to all on their success.

I’d like to conclude this message highlighting the outstanding results of our Staff Engagement Survey, conducted late last year. An incredible number of staff completed the survey, and I’m thrilled to report that 73 per cent of respondents feel that Epworth is a truly great place to work, and 75 per cent say they would recommend Epworth to friends and family as the best choice of healthcare. Thank you for your valuable feedback.

Alan R Kinkade
Group Chief Executive
Epworth staff speak up in engagement survey

In November 2015 Epworth staff were invited to have their say in the Staff Engagement Survey. An incredible 76% of staff responded and provided feedback, which was overwhelmingly positive.

• 73% of respondents say that, on balance, Epworth is a ‘truly great place to work’.
• 75% of respondents say that they would recommend Epworth to their family and friends as the best choice if they required the healthcare we provide.

As an organisation we are sitting in a high-end culture of ambition bordering on success, which is an exceptional result. This means that 59.3% of staff are engaged and this benchmarks higher than the industry norm at 44%.

Enabling our staff to be their best and give their best sits at the heart of our strategy. Providing a positive workplace culture and a safe work environment is fundamental to our vision of consistently delivering excellent patient-centred care with compassion and dignity.

We are grateful to our staff for their ongoing dedication and commitment to our patients and team members. They make a difference in people’s lives every day.

In recognition and to thank staff, Group Chief Executive Alan Kinkade invited staff and their families to celebrate at an event at the Melbourne Zoo on 19 March. See photos on page 13.

Australia Day 2016 honours list

Epworth HealthCare is proud to be associated with three distinguished Australians who received an Honour in the Australia Day Awards, announced in late January.

Epworth Deakin Chair of Nursing Professor Mari Botti received an AM (Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia) for her significant service to nursing and to medical education, as an academic and author, as well as for her contribution and leadership in pain management research.

Epworth urology specialist and Chair of the Department of Urology, Monash Medical Centre, Professor Mark Frydenberg received an AM (Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia) for his significant service to medicine as a clinician, educator and author in the specialty of urology and to professional medical organisations.

Epworth orthopaedic surgeon Mr John Cunningham received an OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division) for service to medicine, and to the promotion of immunisation.
Chair appointed to new cancer department

Epworth is delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Miles Prince as Professor/Director of Molecular Oncology and Cancer Immunology.

Professor Prince’s five-year appointment launches a new area within the cancer services clinical institute and represents an important and innovative development in cancer care and personalised medicine at Epworth.

The new position, based at Epworth Freemasons, will allow Epworth to bring the latest innovation in cancer treatment — individualised mapping of cancer cells to create targeted treatments — to Epworth patients.

“Our vision is that patients will be able to walk through the door here at Epworth to have their tumour barcoded, to give them the ultimate cancer diagnosis. The diagnosis they deserve in 2016,” says Professor Prince.

“Epworth’s appointment of a chair focusing on this new personalised approach to cancer allows us to translate the latest in science and technology into Epworth’s patient-centred clinical setting,” says Stephen Vaughan, Chairman, Epworth Cancer Clinical Institute.

“We’re not going to forget about patients and concentrate on the molecular biology of their tumour. We are going to treat them holistically.”

In 2014, Prof Prince was awarded Membership of the Order of Australia (General Division) for significant services to blood cancer research, patient care and philanthropy leadership. His new role at Epworth will be held in conjunction with the School of Medicine, University of Melbourne and in partnership with the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

Professor Prince holds major Australian, American and European research grants and has published more than 350 journal articles. His clinical research in the last 15 years has involved the development of new targeted treatments for blood cancers including monoclonal antibodies, cell-based therapy, gene therapy and new epigenetic agents.

Epworth Freemasons’ Grey St Centre recently entered town planning phase. The proposed ten-storey complex will house four additional theatres and procedure rooms, additional private rooms, a new day oncology unit adjacent to the oncology ward, new education and training facilities and multiple levels of consulting suites.

For more information on the project’s progress see page 18.

Urologists’ generous travelling show

Teaching student doctors often finds Epworth Freemasons urologist David Webb at the University of Melbourne or Austin Health, alongside colleague Yee Chan who performs laparoscopic nephrology at the Austin and also treats many patients at Epworth Freemasons.

Last year the two surgeons spent time performing live surgical procedures at a workshop in Myanmar, where the medical profession there faces a rising incidence of kidney disease, but nowhere near the facilities or trained surgeons available to treat it.

The Second Myanmar Nephro-Urology Conference helped local doctors and surgeons to benefit from the generosity of their peers from Australia, the UK and Scotland. The program’s goal is to restructure the current surgical training system in Myanmar — where for example, there are only 16 urology specialists and around 30 students in a population of approximately 50 million.

“There aren’t nearly enough urology surgeons in Myanmar to cope with the burgeoning problems of kidney stones or kidney disease. Dialysis is rare to non-existent, lithotripsy does not exist and unfortunately kidney stones or kidney disease is usually diagnosed late, so there is a long transplant list,” says David.

This was David’s sixth pro bono trip to Asia (including Vietnam and Sri Lanka) and his second to Myanmar with a focus on training local urologists in the removal of painful kidney stones.

After the establishment of Urology Victoria at The Freemasons almost two decades ago, David and Fellows at the practice instituted a pro bono service in Asia to share their expertise in nephro-urological conditions.

Yee, who demonstrated a laparoscopic donor nephrectomy, acknowledges that kidney transplants from compatible live donors would be one way to decrease the death rate from kidney disease, but this would require a great deal of education.

David performed the first keyhole surgery to remove kidney stones from a patient at Royal Melbourne Hospital in the 1980s, and performed the first mini-perc stone removal on a six-month old baby in 1990 at the Royal Children’s Hospital. The second edition of David’s clinical handbook, Percutaneous Renal Surgery, has just been published by Springer.

A/Prof David Webb, Dr Yee Chan and associates at the conference
A dedicated care space just for kids

Being able to care for our youngest patients in a dedicated, tailored environment will shortly be a reality as Epworth Richmond opens its brand-new paediatric ward in the Thomas Wing on 4 April.

Epworth currently treats paediatric patients — those between the ages of 12 months and 16 years — across several of our sites for elective surgery including orthopaedics; ear, nose and throat (ENT); maxillofacial and dental surgeries. As well, Epworth Richmond provides care to children and adolescents through the onsite allergy clinic.

In the near future, Epworth Richmond will also have a dedicated emergency department for children and adolescents.

Having a new paediatric ward means that children and adolescents will get their own space. Leading the development of the ward is Meredith Elliott, newly appointed paediatric nurse unit manager, who is thrilled to be involved with the project.

“IT’s exciting but it’s challenging,” says Meredith. “Being able to design a new ward and create something really special for our younger patients is a fantastic process to be part of.”

Meredith, who’s been with Epworth since she completed her grad year in 2003, has been involved with the project team since last September, “working with marketing, assisting the architects with infrastructure, and overseeing recruitment”, she says.

A huge amount of planning and careful consideration has gone into opening the space, keeping in mind the particular needs of a younger patient base.

“In designing the unit we needed to create an environment that caters for younger children as well as adolescents,” explains Meredith. In addition to bright colours and creative decor, the new space will offer fun distractions including a playroom, Xbox, and other children-friendly activities.

The design was also completed with consideration of the needs of parents and other family members, through the provision of kitchen and sleeping facilities. These facilities are particularly helpful for longer patient stays. Ensuring a safe environment was another important consideration, and as such, the unit is secured with swipe access only.

“In designing and selecting the equipment for the unit, we have made use of a range of best practice guidelines,” says Meredith. As for medical equipment, starting from the ground up means brand-new facilities and technology to match.

“The equipment we’re going to have is going to be quite impressive and state of the art, for which there’s been a huge amount of support from the Epworth Medical Foundation. We are so grateful for this support, which has allowed us to create such a wonderful space for our paediatric patients.”

The ward will open with ten beds initially, and a further nine beds will follow soon after. As for the team that will staff the ward, Meredith says she’s excited by the quality team that has been recruited and looks forward to working with them to create a positive culture — something of particular importance when dealing with young patients.

“We have had great interest from experienced and skilled paediatric nursing and medical personnel to our recruitment,” says Meredith. “People have been telling me it’s the most talked about thing in Melbourne.”

Epworth Clinical School opens its doors to first group of students

February saw the arrival of the first cohort of 16 second-year medicine students from the University of Melbourne, who are commencing their clinical studies in the newly created Epworth Clinical School.

These students are the first to call Epworth home and they will see out all of their clinical years (years two, three and four) as Epworth HealthCare students.

Their program starts with a series of 48 lectures delivered by Epworth staff as their foundation term and they will then spend the rest of this year rotating through medicine, surgery, anaesthetics and ambulatory (emergency department and rehabilitation) terms.

Their third year (MD3) comprises general practice, obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry, paediatrics and rural rotations before they commence their final year of medical studies in 2018. We welcome them to Epworth and wish them a richly rewarding experience as the first medical graduates from the Epworth Clinical School.
Epworth Richmond opens the Lee Wing!

After many years in the making, Epworth Richmond celebrated the biggest milestone in the hospital’s redevelopment with the opening of the new Lee Wing, designed to expand treatment spaces and bring critical care departments within easy reach of each other.

The emergency department and 6ES cardiac unit moved to their new Lee Wing locations on 1 February, with Lee Wing theatres commencing the first cases from 8am. ICU followed on Tuesday 2 February.

It involved a mammoth effort by everyone involved with just two weeks to ensure the hospital was ready for opening after receiving handover of the Lee Wing from builder KANE Constructions on 19 January.

The commissioning team, staff from departments moving and many more people from all corners of Epworth Richmond and corporate spent time cleaning, stocking areas, training staff and practising operational processes to prepare for patients to be moved into the new areas.

Move day was branded a success and both patients and staff had great things to say about the new spaces. In particular, the new Point of Care system in the Lee Wing and the larger spaces in the emergency department and ICU were a positive topic of discussion.

Feedback since the move has been overwhelmingly positive with staff, patients and doctors enjoying the fantastic new spaces.

“The ongoing support, commitment and enthusiasm of Epworth Richmond staff as well as many others from corporate services and across Epworth has been pivotal to the successful delivery of the Lee Wing,” says Epworth Executive Director Nicole Waldron.

Stage two of the opening will see three new inpatient units housing neurosciences and orthopaedics opening on the upper floors on 4 April. The official opening event of the Lee Wing will be held on 18 April and attended by guest of honour Sussan Ley, Federal Minister for Health.

See photos from the opening, below and right.
Dream team behind the scenes

What does it take to open a brand-new wing in an already busy, operational hospital? An incredible team effort.

Ensuring a smooth transition from newly built, empty spaces to fully functional patient-ready services required months of planning and preparation, lead by the Lee Wing transition steering committee.

For more than six months the commissioning team worked behind the scenes to develop a clinical move plan, compile orientation resources and coordinate staff and services moving into or supplying the new space.

Led by Maree Pane, Clinical Operations Manager, operational transitioning, the team united staff from multiple departments across Epworth to plan for this massive project.

“One of the highlights over these past few months has been developing relationships with staff across the organisation that have played a pivotal role in the success of the project,” says Maree.

“Personally, it has been a pleasure to watch a group of staff from different departments such as procurement, environmental services, clinical services, OH&S, marketing and communications come together and work collaboratively to achieve this great result. We still managed to have a laugh and enjoy ourselves along the way,” she says.

“When move day finally arrived on 1 February it almost felt surreal that the day was finally here.

“It was a long day, but I remember thinking at the end of the day, after all the patients had been transitioned into their new wards, a sense of relief that it all went according to plan, as well as a sense of accomplishment that we had successfully commissioned the building in two weeks without a hitch!

“At that moment I felt a sense of pride in what we had accomplished and also felt privileged to be involved in a project of this magnitude.”
Major donor Audrey Voss visits the emergency department

One of Epworth’s most generous benefactors, Audrey Voss, toured the new emergency department on 18 January during an official donor visit.

The new department is named the Matthew and Audrey Voss Emergency Department in recognition of the amazing generosity of this wonderful couple. It was opened to the public on 1 February with 35 treatment bays, two isolation rooms and an undercover ambulance bay.

In previous years, Audrey and her late husband both required care in our emergency department. Their support is deeply appreciated and will help ensure all of our patients receive the very best care possible.

Matthew emigrated from the Netherlands in 1949 and Audrey moved from Casterton to Melbourne to seek new opportunities. Audrey and Matthew met in 1949 and married in 1958. Matthew worked as a master baker at the Modern Bakery in St Kilda and Audrey worked in retail at Georges and then as the executive buyer for Young Colony Children’s Wear.

Epworth’s Director of Emergency Medicine, Dr Ron Sultana says, “We are very excited to have opened the new department and know that we will be providing a far greater facility to our community thanks to the generosity of benefactors Matthew and Audrey Voss.”

Audrey was joined at the tour by Group Chief Executive Alan Kinkade, Executive Director of Epworth Richmond Nicole Waldron, Dr Ron Sultana and Executive Director of the Epworth Medical Foundation Scott Bulger.

Point of Care rollout reaches the new Lee Wing

With the opening of the Epworth Richmond Lee Wing on 1 February 2016, 2 Lee Wing became the first department at Epworth Richmond to enjoy the benefits of the Point of Care system.

Lee Wing patients can now use Point of Care to access TV, radio and audio books together with internet access, hospital information and patient education information. Patients have enjoyed having access to the new system, with initial feedback such as, “It’s wonderful to have all these entertainment options available”, and “I like the audio books and listening to the radio, it really helps pass the time”.

Staff from 2 Lee Wing have commenced using Point of Care to record hourly rounding and leader rounding. They are also enjoying quick and easy access to patient results at the bedside.

Elizabeth Lovell, Registered Nurse 2 Lee Wing, says, “I have never worked in a hospital with this kind of system before and it is great to be able to access results at the bedside. You walk into a room and have everything available. It’s also for the patients too, and they love it!”

While 2 Lee Wing staff have had many changes to deal with during the move they have reported that they find the system easy to use and especially like the time it saves them as they no longer have to log in to a PC to access results or update a diet code.

Further implementation of the Point of Care system will take place at Epworth Richmond when the Lee Wing remaining levels open on 4 April.

The Point of Care project team is also working with environmental services on a pilot of the Room Ready functions at Epworth Richmond.

While staff and patients at Epworth Eastern have benefited from the Point of Care System for some time now, a recent software upgrade has provided a number of new features. Epworth Eastern continues to work closely with the project team in the development and testing of further enhancements, such as an effective discharge management module, expected with the next software upgrade scheduled for late March.

Over the coming months, the project team will be working on installing Point of Care terminals in other locations at Epworth Richmond, Epworth Freemasons, Epworth Cliveden, Epworth Camberwell, Epworth Hawthorn and Epworth Brighton. Our new hospital at Epworth Geelong will also open with Point Of Care in July.

Once the terminals have been installed the project team will work with each department to provide training and support for the go-live of the patient entertainment functions together with the clinical and non-clinical modules.

To find out more, visit the Point of Care intranet page.
Beth’s Singapore sojourn through scholarship

Beth Tippet, Associate Nurse Unit Manager at Epworth Richmond’s cath lab, has recently returned from Singapore where she attended the Asia PCR conference, identified as one of the premier cardiovascular conferences worldwide. This opportunity was made possible through funding from the Epworth Medical Foundation via Abbot Australasia. Beth shares her scholarship experience with us.

What motivated you to apply for a scholarship?
My passion about cardiovascular care motivated me to apply for the scholarship. The scholarship program appeared to be a fantastic opportunity to gain insight, knowledge and up-to-date information on a range of cardiac procedures. This would in turn be of great benefit not only to myself and my colleagues, but most importantly to optimise patient care at Epworth.

How have you used your scholarship funding?
I used the scholarship funding to cover the cost of registration, flights and accommodation to attend Asia PCR — a three-day cardiovascular conference in Singapore comprising live debates, case reviews, presentations and the latest information in best practice for cardiovascular procedures and care of patients.

What did you find most valuable in attending the conference?
The most valuable thing in attending the conference was the opportunity to meet and interact with other nurses, medical staff and product representatives from all over the globe, including discussing cardiovascular topics with incredibly experienced cardiologists.

What was the best part of your trip?
Watching live cardiovascular procedures being performed on patients from other hospitals around the world. I loved being part of the live discussions with the other delegates in the arena about similar experiences they have had and how they think the patient should best be treated. Singapore itself is a remarkable place: clean, organised and friendly. The food in Singapore is also delicious!

What’s next?
Since returning from the conference, I plan to present my colleagues with all the valuable information I received on topics discussed at Asia PCR. This will give me the opportunity to share my experience and knowledge gained from the conference and consequently empower them to provide best practice to our patients at Epworth.

What is your advice to other staff considering applying for a scholarship?
My advice is to definitely submit an application! Applying is such a simple process. It is not only a fantastic personal and professional achievement, but most importantly a great chance to be part of the development of better patient care at Epworth.

Epworth Eastern launches rapid response neurosciences unit

Epworth Eastern’s neurosciences unit is now open, providing early intervention, diagnosis and treatment for patients who present to their GPs with a suspected transient ischaemic attack (TIA).

Epworth Eastern launched the unit in February, welcoming GPs to an expert panel discussion on TIA with Unit Director Dr Amanda Gilligan. Epworth is the first private hospital to begin a partnership with the Eastern Primary Health Network to provide GPs and specialists with access to a TIA rapid response service.

TIA is a temporary blockage of blood to the brain, with symptoms often mimicking a stroke. Unlike stroke, however, the symptoms will often disappear or lessen. TIA is a high-risk warning sign for stroke within 90 days, with the highest risk (reported to be up to 50 per cent) occurring in the first two days.

It can be difficult for patients experiencing TIA symptoms to access rapid specialist treatment. Epworth’s new unit, based at Epworth Eastern’s private ward at Box Hill Hospital, offers private hospital admission over the phone within hours of symptoms first appearing. The unit also provides a plan for rapid assessment — avoiding a potential emergency department stay.

With a neurologist on call 24 hours a day, the new unit provides potentially lifesaving intervention before a stroke occurs. Unit staff also provide extensive patient follow ups, at three, six and 12 months as recommended by best care guidelines as well as a follow-up phone call one week post discharge.

The unit is supported by a multidisciplinary team made up of neurologists, medical staff, specialist acute neurosciences clinical nurses and a dedicated allied health team with rapid access to radiology including MRI, pathology, cardiac investigations, vascular surgeons and cardiologists, as required.
Holmium laser offers improved treatment for prostate patients

Patients suffering from enlarged prostates now have access to an advanced new treatment option available at Epworth Freemasons.

The new Lumenis Pulse 120H holmium laser allows a minimally invasive treatment for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), called HoLEP — holmium laser enucleation of the prostate.

Epworth Freemasons was the first private hospital in Australia to purchase the holmium laser and is now one of only two hospitals in Victoria to offer this technology.

Urological surgeon Mr Conrad Bishop used a holmium laser while practicing at Guy's Hospital in London, England, and now expects to treat around five to six cases per month at Epworth Freemasons. Conrad says patients with super-enlarged prostates benefit most from this treatment.

“Patients with prostates weighing more than 100g would previously have required open surgery, which is a much more invasive treatment and requires a longer hospital stay and increased recovery period.

“Using the laser, recovery is drastically reduced. I just operated on a man with a 200g prostate and he was discharged the next day with minimal pain.”

During the HoLEP procedure, the laser is used to enucleate (remove without cutting into) the abnormal prostate gland tissue, which is then pushed into the bladder and ground up and removed using a morcellation device.

HoLEP results in reduced bleeding and a lower complication rate than open surgery and lasts for about ten years before repeated treatment may be required, as the prostate tissue will grow back eventually.

Though an enlarged prostate does not necessarily lead to cancer, aside from the irritation of urination difficulties, it can present with complications including kidney and bladder infection from not being able to empty the bladder, and secondary complications that can be serious, such as bleeding from the kidneys and kidney failure.

“Eighty years ago this would have been something from which patients would commonly die, from secondary complications,” says Conrad.

Now, he says, treatment options are excellent and the laser is providing relief for BHP patients that is safe and minimally disruptive.

The new laser is also extremely efficient in removing large kidney and bladder stones, even those “the size of golf balls”, says Conrad.

The high power settings allow for ‘stone dusting’, in which large stones can be disintegrated rapidly without fracturing.

Epworth Freemasons selected for national blood trial

Epworth Freemasons has been selected to participate in a new trial that could lead to the prevention of blood and blood product wastage.

While larger health facilities tend to have onsite blood laboratories, delivering blood from the point of ordering to the point of use with minimal delay, smaller hospitals using blood fridges currently have no way of tracking how long blood has been out of the fridge, which can lead to wastage.

The National Blood Authority (NBA) is partnering with a company that has developed a new technology using RFID (radio-frequency identification) that will be used in the trial to track blood usage. Epworth Freemasons is one of three sites across Australia participating in the three-month trial, in conjunction with Melbourne Pathology.

The purpose of the trial is to:

• reduce wastage
• introduce an electronic sign in/out register
• improve visibility of blood in the system
• validate use of the technology for consideration nationally
• improve workflows.

From February and running through April, monitoring equipment has been installed by NBA on the blood fridges at the Clarendon Street and Victoria Parade locations. This technology includes a pad reader with touch-sensitive display that shows patients and blood bag information and an RFID swipe reader that reads staff ID and RFID-tagged blood bags.

At the conclusion of the trial a decision will be made as to whether this technology will be suitable for consideration for a national rollout.

Epworth Cliveden Director of Clinical Services and Chair of the Group Transfusion Committee Fran Kelly says it’s an exciting opportunity for Epworth.

“This is a way that NBA can tighten up the process and improve the blood supply system. If the technology is picked up, the implications for the rest of Australia will be significant.”
Heartbeat helps cardiac patients with generous support

Heartbeat Epworth has provided fantastic support to cardiac patients since 1984. This support group for cardiac patients was expanded in July 2015 to include Epworth Eastern, under the name Heartbeat Epworth Eastern. It was formed by and continues to be supported by ex-cardiac patients who felt that they owed a debt of gratitude to the staff and the hospital who gave them a second chance at life.

Heartbeat consists of members who can provide information, support and reassurance to patients and families in an effort to alleviate the doubts and fears that they have before and after treatment. Members are particularly aware of these needs and are available if patients and their families wish to talk to them. Encouragement and reassurance from former patients and their relatives can help enormously.

Another important aspect of Heartbeat is fundraising for specific projects and the purchase of equipment used in the cardiac unit and HeartSmart program. Epworth, being a not-for-profit hospital, does not receive any government assistance and patient fees cover only the daily costs and routine capital expenses. All equipment purchased is aimed at ensuring the best available care and improving patient comfort. The Epworth Medical Foundation also provides valuable support to Heartbeat and match dollar-for-dollar any money raised.

Heartbeat Epworth Eastern, with the Epworth Medical Foundation, raised enough funds to purchase two pieces of equipment in October last year for our cardiac unit, 2 North.

A Welch Allyn Connex vital signs monitor — cost: $4100
This monitor is an advanced, touch-screen monitor with improved workflow and training; it measures pulse oximetry, blood pressure and temperature.

An Etac Turner, a patient turner with standing support — cost: $745
The Etac turner is a patient turner with handles that facilitates transferring patients between seating positions.

Changes over 30 years: a patient’s perspective

For more than 30 years, Judith Moore has trusted Epworth to provide her with the best possible care for everything from lung and heart complications to a hip replacement and rehabilitation. In this time she has seen the many changes Epworth Richmond has gone through.

She also happens to be one of the first patients to experience the new Lee Wing, after being admitted to the new emergency department on opening day, 1 February and transferred to the 2 Lee Wing cardiac unit.

One of the first differences Judith noticed was a direct transfer in a patient-only lift. “It was nice not having to travel down long corridors with lots of other staff and visitors walking by.”

The most notable change, says Judith, is the new ward itself, which she found to be spacious, comfortable and quiet.

The private room is lovely, says Judith, but adds that the company of others in a shared room can be a bonus when confined to a hospital bed. In fact, she recalls a time at Epworth Richmond when she shared a room with another patient who initially was unhappy to have a roommate.

But after regular chats during their time together, the two grew close and still keep in contact to this day. "She needed a grandmother figure to get her through a tough time, and I enjoyed the company," explains Judith. “I have been very lucky in my experiences as an inpatient at Epworth Richmond.”

Judith speaks warmly of Epworth staff and says she has always received the best care and believes the new space will only enhance this.
Epworth Geelong builds a passionate team of healthcare professionals

The Epworth Geelong team has grown significantly over the last few months and the temporary Epworth Geelong office on Ryrie Street is now bursting at the seams, with most of the leadership positions having now been appointed.

It is clear to see the formation of an incredible and passionate group of people who share the same goals for the new site.

“I have an amazing opportunity to work with a team of enthusiastic people who share a vision to create an outstanding healthcare facility of choice for everyone and make a positive change for the community of Geelong.” Trent Batchelor, Perioperative Services Manager.

“I feel very privileged to work at Epworth Geelong in such an amazing facility and with such an excellent team. I have no hesitation in saying Epworth Geelong will be the private hospital of choice in the region in the years to come!”

Susie Thomas, Business Development and Marketing Manager.

“I hope to build a highly functioning team that delivers patient care in a professional and safe manner that ensures patients, families and medical specialists of Epworth Geelong have the best experience possible.” Sally Morison, Associate Director of Clinical Services.

The entire team is eager to take over the reins from the builder and get stuck into preparations for opening in the first week of July 2016. There is a mammoth task that lies ahead of everyone involved but the end result will be spectacular.

Positions continue to be advertised, with more than 7000 people having expressed interest in employment. If you know anyone wanting to work at Epworth Geelong, make sure you tell them to keep an eye on the Epworth Mercury Careers page, epworthhealthcare.mercury.com.au

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Celebrating staff engagement results at the Melbourne Zoo

Epworth staff braved a chilly autumn day to have some family fun at the Melbourne Zoo on Saturday 19 March. Hosted by the Board of Management, Group Chief Executive Alan Kinkade and the Group Executive team, staff enjoyed a fantastic evening of live music, zoo keeper talks and kids’ entertainment, to celebrate the outstanding results from our recent staff engagement survey. A great time was had by all. Thank you to all those who attended!
A passion for helping the heart

Cardiothoracic surgeon Mr Marco Larobina is passionate about the work he does at Epworth Richmond, helping patients young and old enjoy a better quality of life.

A self-proclaimed ‘Melbourne boy’, born, raised and trained in the city, Marco has worked at Epworth Richmond for six years, growing his services and developing new skills in the field of cardiothoracic surgery.

Having learned the Ross Procedure from fellow Epworth Richmond surgeon and mentor Mr Peter Skillington, Marco has performed this unique specialised surgical technique for the past five years with excellent results.

“It’s a fantastic idea where you take the valve from one part of the heart — the pulmonary valve — and move it into the aortic position, replacing the diseased aorta. You then replace the pulmonary valve with a cadaver valve,” Marco explains.

Peter performed this procedure recently on a young Melbourne man, whose story was covered by ABC News, and which has allowed the patient an incredible new lease on life.

“The idea is to give a young patient a valve option that gives them a durable outcome,” says Marco. “It gives them a long time free of another operation, and means they avoid having to take [anti-coagulant] Warfarin. Young women don’t like Warfarin as it makes it hard for them to have children, young blokes don’t like it if they’re active, and a lot of young people just don’t like having to take tablets. So it’s a good alternative to avoid the complications and inconvenience of Warfarin and give a durable, long-term valve result.”

Marco also works with patients who suffer from a disease that presents a significant challenge in terms of treatment.

“There is a group of people who have these really odd cancers,” explains Marco. “The cancers secrete hormones into their blood and the hormones affect the valves of the heart — which is quite a weird concept.

“It’s called carcinoid heart disease and it’s incredibly complicated because the patient has cancer and they have heart disease. These hormones cause all sorts of trouble and I lose a lot of sleep over those patients, as the cases are quite complicated, but they’re also really interesting and challenging to work with.”

Despite the difficulty of dealing with a dual-diagnosis, the prognosis for these patients is often very good, says Marco.

“The thing with heart surgery is often the patients who are not particularly well bounce off the blocks and are so much better after surgery and move on quite quickly, ready to face their next treatment, if required,” Marco says.

“They’ll often come in and say, ‘well I don’t feel too bad, why do

“I really enjoy the follow-up process and hearing about a patient’s progress. That’s definitely the best part of this job”

I need to have this big operation?’ And I say, ‘just humour me, why don’t we fix you and see’. Sure enough they all come back saying how much better they feel.

“One patient came in today and said ‘I feel better than I have for the last five years, literally five years — I didn’t realise how much this was affecting my life’.

“It’s cool,” says Marco, “I really enjoy the follow-up process and hearing about a patient’s progress. That’s definitely the best part of this job.”

New offices for Epworth HealthCheck

Epworth HealthCheck has recently moved from its city premises to be collocated with Epworth Richmond at Suite G4, 173 Lennox Street, Richmond.

This provides a great opportunity to offer a full-day program to regional patients and time-poor professionals. The inclusion of experienced dieticians providing a one-hour consultation and meal plan is also very exciting.

In keeping with HealthCheck’s commitment to helping its patients achieve and maintain good health, a body composition analysis is now on offer as part of the patient’s initial appointment. The analysis provides a snapshot of body fat, muscle mass, visceral fat and a nutritional analysis, which patients are able to access on an ongoing basis to track their progress. Comparing these results gives patients the best opportunity to make the necessary adjustments to diet and exercise.

For more information about HealthCheck phone 03 9426 8888.
HealthCheck’s Bridie puts pedal to the metal

It can be difficult taking health advice sometimes, but when you’ve got a world record-holding cyclist telling you to shed a few kilos, it’s probably best to listen.

Epworth HealthCheck’s Bridie O’Donnell achieved an incredible feat when she took out the women’s cycling world hour distance record on 22 January this year at the Super-Drome in Adelaide. Bridie rode 46.882km in the hour, surpassing the 46.273km record that American Molly Shaffer Van Houweling set last September.

Juggling professional cycling with work in ICU and orthopaedic surgery for a number of years, Bridie raced three world championships for Australia before deciding to head back home in search of more solid employment, settling in Melbourne and joining the Epworth HealthCheck team as a medical practitioner in 2013.

It’s a role that not only allows Bridie flexibility in her schedule so she can keep up with riding, but work that she finds incredibly satisfying.

“What I love most is that it’s about primary healthcare — preventing disease, educating patients, and trying to implement behaviour change strategies,” Bridie explains.

Epworth HealthCheck provides a comprehensive assessment service to patients on both their physical and psychological wellbeing. It’s looked at as a preventative approach to patient care, and as such education plays a major role.

“That’s where the HealthCheck team comes in, giving “annoying exercise and dietary advice”, jokes Bridie. But patients respond well and Bridie says she’s seen many make encouraging changes and reap the health benefits.

And it’s a service that’s appropriate for a diverse range of people.

“When I started working in the role, I was told the demographic was executive men aged 45 and above, but in fact we see a huge variety,” says Bridie.

“I see a lot of women that are high-functioning professionals; some are mothers of young children with a lot of demand on their time and they’re not prioritising their own physical health and wellbeing, so it’s a good opportunity to remind them to move their own health higher up the list.”

Bridie understands well the challenges of combining a healthy work/life balance, but is a passionate advocate for maintaining an active sporting life — particularly for women.

“So many women give up their sport and activity either when they have children or when they start working a lot and that’s a shame, because there are so many women that are great athletes, they just feel like they can’t make the balance work,” she says. On the plus side, “more and more are realising it’s not actually about how many hours you have to train, it’s just about consistency.”

Putting in the hours is something Bridie can’t avoid, however, particularly when it comes to preparing to take on a world record. She trained for around six months for the Adelaide event, and says it was thanks to the support of a great team, the right equipment, and a healthy dose of mindfulness that she was able to achieve her dream.

“I was in a state of flow, or in the zone, the whole time. When I got off the bike I didn’t feel tired, I felt amazing,” Bridie says. “I felt elated and relieved — relieved that I’d implemented the plan and training. It’s a real privilege to be able to break a world record.”
To uphold our reputation for excellence, we must ensure we are equipped to not only meet the needs of today but to anticipate the needs of tomorrow. The major projects we invest in are paramount to this.

**Epworth Richmond celebrates the Lee Wing opening**

The first stage of Epworth Richmond’s new Lee Wing opened on 1 February 2016 to raving reviews from staff, patients and doctors alike.

Staff and patients from the emergency department, intensive care unit, cardiac and coronary care unit and theatres located on the lower floors successfully transitioned into their new spaces. Now, the hospital’s critical care departments are collocated within the same building.

On 18 March 2016 Epworth Richmond received handover of the complete building from KANE Constructions and the neuroscience and orthopaedic inpatient units located on the upper floors are set to open on Monday 4 April 2016.

Inside the Lee Wing, you will find:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Consulting suites</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Orthopaedic inpatient unit — 35 private inpatient rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Orthopaedic inpatient unit — 37 private inpatient rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Neuroscience inpatient unit — 39 private inpatient rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lee Wing theatres — six new theatres including one hybrid biplane</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cardiac inpatient unit — 29 private inpatient rooms and ten coronary care rooms</td>
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<td>Intensive care unit — 26 private inpatient rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>Emergency department — 35 treatment spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>B1-B5</td>
<td>250 car park spaces</td>
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The completion of the Lee Wing does not mark the end of the Epworth Richmond redevelopment, with an announcement to be made later this year on the next stage of works along Erin Street. Read about the first stage of opening and check out some photos on page 6.

**Kitchen upgrade to future proof catering capacity**

Epworth Richmond’s kitchen and bistro is undergoing an expansion to prepare for the room service model of patient meal delivery to be introduced later in 2016. The upgrade and expansion will also ensure the hospital is equipped to cater for the increasing number of staff, visitors and patients, with the hospital to house 770 inpatients on completion of the redevelopment.

The bistro remains open to staff, patients and visitors throughout the works.
Wayfinding updates at Epworth Richmond

Changes continue to improve the staff, patient and visitor experience when navigating through the hospital.

New wayfinding signage is being installed over the coming months as new wing names are rolled out across the hospital. Cato Wing and Danks Wing were introduced to the hospital in February with the Erin Street building next to undergo a renaming in two parts; Thomas Wing is now the new name of the eastern side of the building with the other side to be renamed Gray Wing later in April.

Digital wayfinding kiosks have been installed to five main entry points of the hospital, initially providing directional support using a two-dimensional map, with an upgrade to be launched in early April to offer a three-dimensional map for users. Pocket maps have been developed for staff and patients to help find their way, and the concierge service has expanded to include the new emergency department entrance at 34 Erin Street which has proven a great success.

Paediatrics unit

Part one of refurbishment works to 2 Thomas Wing (formerly 2ES) are now complete to make way for the opening of the new paediatric unit at Epworth Richmond, initially opening as a ten-bed unit. Part two of the refurbishment works will follow in April to expand the unit to 19 beds.

Read more about plans for the new paediatric unit on page 5.

South West Regional Cancer Centre car park opens

Construction Engineering handed over the car park of the South West Regional Cancer Centre in late February 2016. The three-storey car park located on the opposite corner of Ryot Street and Worland Grove provides more than 100 parking spaces and will now be used by South West Health, as well as patients of the South West Regional Cancer Centre when it opens in July 2016.

Construction engineering handed over the car park of the South West Regional Cancer Centre in late February 2016.

Construction continues on the cancer centre with the next milestone to be the installation of the region’s first linear accelerator into the radiotherapy bunker on Friday 8 April 2016. Stay tuned for photos in the next edition of Epwords.

The centre will provide integrated cancer care to the south west community, with Epworth Radiation Oncology operating radiotherapy, South West Oncology operating medical oncology, consulting suites for oncologists and allied health professionals and a support centre for patients and their families.

New theatre and day oncology at Epworth Eastern

The newly built theatre 10 at Epworth Eastern received glowing reviews from the Department of Health on its final inspection and the new theatre opened for its first surgery on 15 March 2016.

Construction of the day oncology unit expansion on level 4 continues and is on track to open in May which will bring the hospital’s total day oncology capacity to 18 chairs.
New Epworth Freemasons medical consulting suites open

Epworth Freemasons has taken the lease on approximately 300m² of premium consulting space at 150 Clarendon Street, directly across the road from the Fitzroy Gardens and adjacent to the hospital.

Works on the interior were completed on 11 March with consulting suites open to our new tenants from Monday 14 March, including Precision Haematology, with Professor H. Miles Prince AM; Dr Annabel Tuckfield; Russ Orthopedics with Mr Matthias Russ and MURAC Health with Dr Justin Chee and Dr Ajay Chauhan.

New theatre suite for Clarendon Street campus

Epworth Freemasons can finally celebrate the completion of the level 3 theatre suite redevelopment at the 166 Clarendon Street campus which, at the same time, included a significant amount of site-wide service improvements to the 87-year-old building.

Epworth Freemasons staff, patients and visitors have persevered during significant construction works for almost two years with amazing outcomes that could not have been achieved without the support of everyone on site.

This project has provided:

- two new theatres
- new level 3 staff areas including kitchen, and male and female change rooms
- a new central sterile services department (CSSD) with increased instrument processing equipment
- a new DOSA area with six full consulting rooms and patient wait areas with city views
- a new plant including levels 4 and 5 plant rooms, future proofing the hospital for further growth and service demands
- a new building management system which is remotely visible for engineering and facilities staff, allowing immediate monitoring and response to any issues that may arise
- five refurbished theatres with increased floor space of 2.3m², new pendants, lights and air handling units to all theatres on level 3
- complete fire services upgrade including fire hoses
- replacement of medical gas systems and medical gas risers, future proofing for further works
- a complete electrical infrastructure upgrade, with switchboards, distribution boards, mains cabling, a generator and new substation
- thermal plant replacement which includes boilers and chillers.

Much of this work has enabled the installation of advanced equipment such as the hospital’s new holmium laser (read more on this on page 10), and has helped provide services to support the work of the medical staff in ensuring the best possible patient experience.

Epworth Freemasons Grey Street Centre goes to town planning

A town planning application has been submitted to the City of Melbourne for a multi-storey complex to be built behind Epworth Freemasons at Clarendon Street.

The proposed ten-storey building will span the length of the block between Albert Street and Grey Street and will house four additional theatres and procedure rooms, additional private inpatient rooms, a new day oncology unit adjacent to the oncology ward, new education and training facilities and multiple levels of consulting suites.

The plans will also include six levels of underground parking to provide 309 car parking spaces.

Linked to the Clarendon Street campus, it is proposed the new building will also provide for an undercover patient drop-off/pick-up area along Albert Street.

Stay tuned for updates on the progress of our town planning application in future editions of Epwords.

Construction wraps up at Epworth Geelong

Construction of Epworth Geelong commenced on 28 April 2014 and, just shy of two years later, Brookfield Multiplex is preparing to give Epworth the keys to the building, with handover on track for Friday 15 April 2016.

At its peak, there were more than 600 workers onsite in a day, with 2780 people inducted over the construction period, 50% of whom were local to the region. Eleven of the 21 Brookfield staff appointed to site lived in the Greater Geelong area.

Twelve local companies were awarded contracts to supply the construction phase:

- Norris Plant Hire Geelong — civil package
- Geelong Fabrications — structural steel
- Geelong Fire — fire services
- FCAM — Blockwork and speedpanel
- Polaris Constructions — carpentry
- Matt Dean Plumbing — hydraulic authority connections and diversions
- Geelong Commercial Waste — construction waste/rubbish removal
- Geelong Roofing — roofing and wall cladding
- Design Stainless Industries — stainless steel works
- R&R Group — alucobond cladding
- Tenon Joinery — joinery supply to Jacaranda
- Westcoast Windows — internal glazed partitions.

On top of this were a number of local subcontractors supplying construction of the hospital. The quality of the build is truly outstanding and both staff and patients alike will no doubt be impressed by the space.

Epworth Geelong will not only be a truly great place to work but an excellent choice in healthcare for patients in Greater Geelong and South West Victoria.
Meet ... Susan McLean, Director of Clinical Services Mental Health

Susan has been with Epworth since January 2015, overseeing the development of services at Epworth Clinic. Susan has worked in the private mental health sector for many years and has held senior roles in large private hospital groups.

Please outline some of the main duties of your role.
My role is very broad and there is no day that is the same as the day preceding. One of our biggest focus areas is to ensure patients of Epworth Clinic have a wonderful experience during their treatment here. Suffering from mental health conditions is a real challenge to our patients and to the family and friends who support them. We want to ensure we meet the expectations of our patients with professionalism, courtesy and kindness. My task is to help this to happen consistently through supporting our staff to give their best and to ensure that we aim high, working well with the consultant psychiatrists who bring their patients to Epworth Clinic.

What are some of your key goals this year?
We have just opened our new aged psychiatry unit; this is very exciting and it will be wonderful to see the hard work of many Epworth staff and our consultant psychiatrists come to fruition.

What changes/improvements in mental health care at Epworth have you seen?
Having joined Epworth Clinic only a year ago, it has been wonderful to see the service grow and I am really proud of the way the staff have developed into a really cohesive team. As a nurse of some experience (I won’t say how many years!) I know the quality of the work we are able to do is determined by the calibre of the team that chooses to work with us. For me it is a real privilege to see how our team has developed and continues to improve.

How will the service continue to evolve, expand and improve?
During 2016, we hope to continue to develop and mature as a business unit. We are keen to ensure our service offerings grow in number and hopefully to add other clinical specialties.

What’s the most satisfying part of the job?
I love what I do — I appreciate our people and the commitment and enthusiasm they bring to work. It is very satisfying to help some of their ideas and suggestions become a reality. It is a great opportunity to be part of establishing a brand new service. It is very pleasing to hear from our patients that we are meeting their needs and that they benefit from our efforts.

Any interests outside of work?
My family and friends are a large part of my life. I also love reading, cooking and I am an excellent theoretical gardener (I know a lot about it but don’t actually do much of it at the moment).

Teaching our staff the skills to lead

On Thursday 10 March, 58 participants in the Epworth Emerging and Operational Leaders Programs graduated with a Swinburne University Diploma of Management.

We are proud to offer a number of development opportunities at Epworth, which focus on enhancing the skills of our leaders to effectively lead and manage their staff to deliver an exceptional patient experience, as well as preparing them for future career opportunities.

Some of the comments and feedback from our graduates about the Emerging and Operational Leadership Programs include:
“Training has brought all emerging leaders together because Epworth is committed to teaching all leaders the same methods for us to work within our roles.”
“I am better prepared for challenging conversations.”
“I now ensure the feedback I give is specific, timely, and more frequent.”

All of the individuals who graduated have worked extremely hard and should be proud of their achievement.

Applications are currently open for our next groups, with applications to be submitted online via the Leadership Development intranet site. For more information, visit the Leadership Development intranet page.
Nursing graduates celebrate success

On Friday 29 January, participants from the Enrolled Nurse, Registered Nurse and Graduate Midwifery Programs of 2015 came together at the Park Hyatt to celebrate the completion of their graduate year across Epworth HealthCare. Graduates representing their respective program provided speeches outlining an overview of their year, the support they received and stories of their experiences.

Especially exciting was the announcement of the divisional nominees and winners of the Enrolled, Registered and Midwife Graduate of the Year. From the divisional winners, an overall Epworth HealthCare winner for each designation was announced. All winners were selected due to their commitment to ongoing professional development, their demonstration of Epworth values and behaviours and their excellence in clinical care.

Prizes were sponsored by First State Super, with each divisional winner receiving a $200 David Jones voucher, while the overall Graduate EN, RN and Midwife of the Year received a $500 David Jones voucher.

2015 Graduate Enrolled Nurse of the Year: Robyn Hartley — Epworth Eastern
2015 Graduate Registered Nurse of the Year: Jessica Boutzos — Epworth Rehabilitation & Mental Health
2015 Graduate Midwife of the Year: Veronica Mullerow — Epworth Freemasons

MEET GRADUATE NURSE OF THE YEAR, JESSICA BOUTZOS

Jessica entered the Epworth Graduate Program as a rehabilitation and mental health nurse in 2015, after graduating from the University of Canberra with a medical science degree and a Bachelor of Nursing.

“Last year I rotated between Epworth Hawthorn, Epworth Camberwell and Epworth Brighton and within those divisions I saw a variety of patients,” says Jess. “I think the most important thing for nurses is you don’t even know what you want to do until you try it and that for me is the biggest thing with rehab and mental health nursing. It’s easy to look at the role and think you know what it is, but until you’ve tried it you have no idea.

Every single field of nursing is explored in the Epworth graduate program, even if you are doing a rehabilitation and mental health strain — you have access to everything else you want to do.

“Epworth’s program really allowed me to gain confidence because I was given responsibility from the get-go. It was the perfect balance between support and trust,” Jess says. “The most terrifying thing for a newly registered nurse is the big transition from being the student to being in a position where they are fully accountable and responsible,” says Clinical Nurse Educator Kim Miles.

As graduate coordinator within Epworth Rehabilitation, Kim provided support to Jessica through coaching, mentoring and emotional support.

“Jess embodies everything we want from a nurse. From day one, it was her engagement and rapport with patients. It meant the patient would divulge that extra bit of crucial information because of the relationship Jess created with them,” Kim says.

“When I was interviewed for the program, [Education Manager] Karen Cole and Kim asked where I saw myself in five years. I said, all I want is to be a competent nurse. I don’t want to be the ‘best’ nurse; I just want to be a competent nurse. I want to look back and say I was valued as a team member, no matter what ward I was in and no matter what capacity I was working.

“The grad program gave me the confidence, the skills, the friendship groups, the connections to be able to put all of the things I learned in nursing into practice,” Jess says.
**MEET ENROLLED NURSE OF THE YEAR, ROBYN HARTLEY**

Robyn Hartley came late to the field of nursing, studying at Box Hill Institute after her three children were grown. Originally from Sydney, Robyn moved to Victoria in 1998 with her husband of 30 years, Stuart.

“I wanted to be a nurse when I was at high school but everyone talked me out of it, so I became a hairdresser instead. I stopped working when my children were young and was a stay-at-home mum.

“After my children finished school, I went back to study nursing and I really enjoyed it. I love the patient contact and that every day is different. You never know how the day will turn out,” Robyn says.

Robyn completed her first rotation in oncology as part of the Epworth Graduate Program at Epworth Eastern and is currently completing her final rotation in orthopaedics.

“Robyn’s life experience has helped her to gain enormous insight into how to make a patient’s admission to hospital a very positive experience.”

“I love that because Epworth Eastern isn’t too big, you get to know people from all over the hospital, in all sorts of jobs. Everyone is so friendly. I’ve found it to be a really supportive environment.”

Robyn’s graduate coordinator, Suzanne Gilmore, says working with Robyn during her graduate year has been a pleasure.

“Robyn’s life experience has helped her to gain enormous insight into how to make a patient’s admission to hospital a very positive experience.

“Robyn not only upholds all of the Epworth core values, but demonstrates them in her everyday nursing care,” Suzanne says.

“One evening Robyn remained for an hour at the conclusion of her shift [in her own time] sitting with one patient who was very anxious about being discharged the next day. Robyn sat with the patient, holding her hand and guiding her through the process of being discharged, reassuring that services had been put in place to assist her on her return home. The patient was happily discharged the next morning without any problems.”

“I was totally surprised when my name was announced as Enrolled Nurse of the Year,” says Robyn. “It certainly wasn’t something I thought would happen or was expecting. I feel like I’ve won an Academy Award! I feel very appreciative of all the help and support that I’ve been given over the past 12 months. It’s really satisfying to feel as if you’re on the right track.

“I hope my experience shows it’s never too late to change careers and to do something you really love. I hope my husband and kids are proud because it’s been quite a journey for our whole family.”

**MEET GRADUATE MIDWIFE OF THE YEAR, VERONICA MULLEROW**

Graduate Midwife of the Year Veronica Mullerow has spent her life working closely with children and their families. After nearly 20 years working in early childhood education, Veronica decided to translate her love of children to a career in midwifery.

“I have always had a passion to work closely with children and their families and decided to change paths and pursue a career in midwifery.

“I studied a Bachelor of Midwifery at Victoria University, alongside my twin sister, and was very excited to begin my new career as a graduate midwife at Epworth in 2015. The graduate year was fun and challenging and I couldn’t have done it without the fantastic education team, staff and other graduates that supported me throughout,” Veronica says.

“I was very surprised and excited about winning Graduate of the Year, especially since my fellow graduates were all so deserving of the award.”

Maternity Educator Suzanne Grounds says, “Veronica consistently delivers a high standard of care to the women and families that come through our busy maternity unit. Her nurse unit manager remarked that she could always be relied upon to keep the in-charge informed regarding the progress of labour.

“More recently on night duty, Veronica’s associate nurse unit manager reported on Veronica’s ability to prioritise during an emergency postpartum haemorrhage; providing excellent care in which she ensured the patient’s safety, whilst keeping the partner and family reassured and updated,” says Suzanne.

“I love working at Epworth because the staff are friendly and supportive and each day allows me to learn new skills,” Veronica says.

“I have found my experience at Epworth to be positive, fun and always educational. I love being a midwife because it’s a rewarding career where I learn as much from families as I do from my colleagues and feel privileged being part of each families’ journey into parenthood. I hope to have a long career in midwifery at Epworth.”
Patient spotlight: Mary Cunningham

Mary has been an Epworth patient since 2013, most recently admitting to Epworth Brighton for rehabilitation following a right foot fusion and bone graft in November 2015. Mary continues to receive care as an outpatient at home, treated by her occupational therapist, Megan Fordyce. She has been so pleased with the level of care she received during her time at Epworth she wanted to share some verbal feedback in appreciation.

“I’ve been to Epworth Brighton three times. I often comment to people that just as we have books that rate hotels, unfortunately with my medical history I could write a book rating all the hospitals! By far, Epworth is outstanding compared to the other hospitals I’ve been to. I don’t think there’s an area — from nursing to cleaning to auxiliary staff — that I could fault.

“The first time I came was in 2013. I’d had surgery on my foot and the surgeon told me I could go to rehab. I was back in 2014 and then again in 2015. I was a nurse many moons ago and, related to that physical work, have endured nine spinal operations, five spinal fusions, and neuropathic pain for years.

“It’s hard to put into words the level of care I’ve received at Epworth but everyone has been outstanding. Megan, my OT, has gone out of her way to make sure I’ve been safe in my home and has continually followed up.”

Megan says Mary has been a motivated patient and has participated well in treatment.

“She’s responded well to therapy as an inpatient despite ongoing pain issues and not being able to weight bear through her right leg,” says Megan. “Mary is a very caring person and despite her own health issues is a strong advocate for the elderly people who live in her retirement village.”

There’s one area Mary insists receive her highest praise — and that’s the kitchen.

“A special thank you to Gianni and the food services team,” she says with passion.

“Normally when you’re in hospital the food’s not great but at Epworth Brighton they really endeavor to please everyone. The meals are just outstanding.

“One Sunday, I was having a glass of wine and eating prawns, and I said to the food services attendant, ‘where else in Melbourne can you do this while in hospital?’”

Pancake Day success

Hungry Epworth staff and visitors across Epworth Eastern, Epworth Freemasons and Epworth Richmond enjoyed a pancake treat on Tuesday 9 February (Shrove Tuesday). Pancake Day was held to raise funds for UnitingCare, supporting people in crisis to get back on their feet and have the opportunity for a fresh start in life. A big thank you to all staff and volunteers who prepped, cooked and served pancakes, and thanks to all who partook in the feast. A total of $1408 was raised on the day.
Meet ... Suzanne Hall, Chief Operations Manager, Epworth Freemasons

Suzanne joined Epworth Freemasons in February this year. Originally from Liverpool, England, Suzanne has held a number of senior management roles in Victoria within the private and public healthcare sectors, including posts at Warringal Private, Ramsay Health Care, The Royal Children’s Hospital, and Box Hill Hospital.

What attracted you to working at Epworth, and this position in particular?
I love working in a dynamic hospital environment that is committed to excellence in delivering patient care. Epworth is the lead standout, not-for-profit provider in Victoria and I am delighted to be part of the team at Epworth Freemasons. Operational management and the challenges of managing hospital logistics while providing the best patient experience for our patients continue to excite me.

What do you hope to achieve in this role?
I am looking forward to working with a great team who has the passion and energy for providing best practice and contemporary health services in our growing hospital to our patients, doctors and community.

Please briefly outline the main duties in your role.
My role involves working with our doctors and clinical and support services teams to plan and provide high-quality services to our patients, ensuring we are meeting and surpassing best practice quality measures and patient outcomes.

What are some of your interests outside of work?
I love cycling and try and aim for at least three hours a week in spin classes. I love cycling very fast with my eyes closed and I appreciate it is not conducive to cycling on our roads ... I also love soccer and I am still a committed Liverpool football fan. Please do not ask me anything about AFL, as I really do not have a clue but I am happy to explain the offside rule in soccer to anyone who is keen to listen!
I am a board director for a disability service and I enjoy the strategic governance responsibility of being involved in an organisation that provides services to folk who may be disadvantaged or who struggle to find their voice.

Matt’s thank you to his therapy team

Epworth patient Matt sustained a severe head injury when he was struck by a car while changing his tyre roadside in early November, 2015. He attended rehabilitation at Epworth Camberwell and under the care of his dedicated therapy team was discharged in February with great results. Here, Matt’s therapists Celeste Trussell and Fiona Taylor explain his recovery process.

Matt presented with multiple injuries including a traumatic brain injury as a result of the accident. He spent six days at the Royal Melbourne Hospital before being transferred to Epworth Camberwell for brain injury rehabilitation to begin an intensive program of physical, occupational, speech and cognitive therapies. With the support of his family, friends, doctors and multidisciplinary treatment team, Matt worked tirelessly over his time at Epworth to regain and improve his function.

Matt says, “When I first came here I was in PTA [post-traumatic amnesia], was very confused and didn’t know where I was but I have made so much improvement thanks to this hospital and everyone in here.”

Throughout his time at Epworth Camberwell, Matt received regular therapy with multiple disciplines. Speech pathology focused on improving his communication, cognition and swallowing skills. He attended individual sessions as an inpatient but also had the opportunity to participate in weekly social communication group therapy sessions run by Epworth speech pathologists. These allowed him the opportunity to socialise with other patients and work on his own individual communication goals in a realistic social setting.

Matt has high praise for the Epworth staff that cared for him during his stay. “They have been so helpful and I can’t thank them enough;” he says.

Due to his success and progress on the acquired brain injury unit, Matt was discharged home in February. Upon leaving, Matt said he was looking forward to spending time with his family and friends. Matt will have continued therapy with a community team on his return home to support his goal of returning to work.
CHALLENGE YOURSELF to the adventure of a lifetime

The Epworth Medical Foundation has launched its challenges for 2017. Every Epworth Medical Foundation Charity Challenge is an adventure in travel, friendship, taste, exploration, discovery, fitness and kindness.

Where do you want to go today?

We invite you to take part in an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime challenge to raise funds for patients at Epworth HealthCare.

Discover extraordinary cultural wonders in off-the-beaten-path destinations. Explore bustling markets and remote villages, and savour delicious traditional meals. Forge new friendships, and push yourself beyond your everyday limits.

HEARTSMART RAJASTHAN AND VARANASI CYCLE

Dates: 3–14 February 2017
Cost: $6670 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Cardiac patients at Epworth HealthCare

From the delights of Jaipur, we adjust to the pace of the buffalo cart, savouring a way of life that is still in harmony with the seasons. The roads are flat, the days not unduly strenuous and we provide a backup vehicle for your convenience. There will be ample opportunity to witness the spectacular Taj Mahal at sunrise and explore Fatehpur Sikri before experiencing the holy city of Varanasi on the banks of the River Ganges where the rituals of life and death are carried out on the steps of the ghats. An expert local guide will accompany you through the maze of winding streets to sights including the Bharat Mata Temple and the monkey temple of Durga.

HEARTSMART MYANMAR CYCLE

Dates: 10–21 February 2017
Cost: $6690 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Cardiac patients at Epworth HealthCare

We explore at handlebar level this friendly land, where exceptional hospitality is guaranteed. After flying to Mandalay, our cycling adventure starts in earnest in with a ride on the outskirts before returning by boat on the Irrawaddy River. Our cycling continues through timeless villages where we observe traditional lifestyles en route to Bagan, home to one of the finest collection of temples in Southeast Asia. Exploring at a gentle pace, this magnificent region uncovers ancient pagodas and temples of a bygone era with intricate carvings, murals and astonishing architecture. At sacred Mount Popa, the abode of ‘Nats’, known as ‘Spirits of Ancient Ancestors’, we leave our bikes and climb the 700 steps for stunning panoramic views from the golden temple at its summit.

SOUTHERN THAILAND CYCLE

Dates: 24 February–5 March 2017
Cost: $6590 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Breast cancer patients at Epworth HealthCare

For a cultural immersion into the friendly rural landscapes of Thailand, cycling is the way to travel. Taking the quiet roads on scenic routes, past pineapple plantations, through national parks with limestone hills and alongside sublime coastal beaches, the itinerary offers plenty of opportunity to stop and chat with friendly locals. From the capital Bangkok we begin cycling along canal ways and past temples and traditional houses. From here we head south to explore the beautiful coastal provinces on the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, visiting quaint fishing villages. We ride through the stunning mountain scenery, and take a speedboat to the island of Koh Samui, where snorkelling in the crystal-clear water is possible right from the beach.
HOW IT WORKS

Each Epworth Charity Challenge is hosted by Epworth Medical Foundation, and all funds raised are used to support patients at Epworth HealthCare, by funding important services, new equipment and facility upgrades.

There is a minimum fundraising target to participate in an Epworth Charity Challenge, which will cover the cost of your adventure and ensure that funds are raised for our patients. However, you are always welcome to contribute more than the minimum, and can rest assured that all funds will directly help patients.

If you decide to go down the fundraising or sponsorship paths, Epworth Medical Foundation will help you with a number of resources and ideas to make sure that this is easy and stress-free.

To get involved or for more information, simply visit www.emf.org.au, email emfevents@epworth.org.au or call our friendly staff on 03 9426 6359.

DHARAMSALA TRIUND HIMALAYA TREK

Dates: 24 March–2 April 2017
Cost: $5950 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Breast cancer patients at Epworth

Triund Peak is the closest 3000m peak to the Indian Plains and a worthy objective for a first-time trek to the Indian Himalaya. We combine this trek with time out in the historic hill station of McLeod Ganj, home of the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in exile. With the amazing peaks of Dhauladhar that stretch to the Indian Plains, we trek to Triund which ascends through farming settlements and magnificent oak, conifer and rhododendron forests to an alpine glade that affords easy access to McLeod Ganj.

NEPAL POON HILL TREK

Dates: 13–26 October 2017
Cost: $6440 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Cancer patients at Epworth HealthCare

This trek encompasses all the highlights you would expect from a trek in the Annapurna range. Beginning in the foothills we trek through delightful villages and rural landscapes where we take in the local way of life. Making our way to Poon Hill we are rewarded with the stunning panorama of the Annapurna mountain range at sunrise. From here we depart the main trail to complete a more remote traverse above the Annapurna Circuit, all the while accompanied by stunning mountain views as we make our way to Nayapul and the end of a very memorable trek in the Himalayas.
Streamlining the discharge medication process for patients

In December 2015, a pilot focusing on streamlining the patient discharge medication process was conducted to improve patient satisfaction.

Based on the Press Ganey questions regarding whether staff explain what new medications are for and whether staff describe the medication’s side effects, a blue patient discharge medication information sheet was developed. The information sheet outlines discharge medication (including trade and generic names), what the medication is for, how often to take the medication and common side effects.

The sheet was developed by Orthopaedic Surgeon Mr William Edwards in conjunction with Slade Pharmacy and given to 40 of William’s patients to trial. Patients were admitted to wards 2 Cato, 3 Cato, 3NS and 4NC at Epworth Richmond, and, after verbal consent was gained, were provided with the new discharge medication information sheet. The project team contacted patients 24 hours post discharge with a follow-up phone call.

Results showed:
- 86% of patients were able to be contacted 24 hours post discharge from hospital
- 89% of patients stated they received enough information on discharge
- 86% of patients that received the blue discharge medication information sheet found it useful
- 91% of patients had no concerns 24 hours post discharge from hospital
- 66% of patients had a pain score less than two out of ten, which indicated the patient understood how to take their analgesia once home.

Patients were delivered the same information from nursing staff, Slade Pharmacy and the project team. Patient calls to William’s rooms decreased by 98% during the pilot.

Press Ganey results during the trial:
“Staff tell me what my new medication is for”: 46% always; 17% usually, 23% sometimes, 14% never
“Staff describe the medication side effects”: 14% always, 3% usually, 31% sometimes, 51% never.

The pilot allowed us to give consistent messaging to patients that they were able to understand. An evaluation workshop took place with representation from nursing staff on the wards, Slade Pharmacy, the project team and a consumer.

Results showed:
- 89% of patients that received the blue discharge medication information sheet found it useful
- 66% of patients had a pain score less than two out of ten, which indicated the patient understood how to take their analgesia once home.

Evaluation was overwhelmingly positive. Some small changes will be made to the original blue discharge medication information sheet and staff were keen to keep the process going. The next step will be to develop a similar process for a larger cohort of patients in the orthopaedic group.

Some of the feedback we received from patients during the trial:
“Nurses did a fantastic job ... they have to deal with lots of people, you guys are awesome!”
“Staff were great, I did not want to go home from hospital”

Jacinta Opie, Project Manager Lead — Performance Improvement
Melanie Gordon, Project Manager — Quality

New Dimensions, bariatric rehabilitation program at Epworth Camberwell

A new bariatric rehabilitation program, New Dimensions, is now on offer at Epworth Camberwell.

Launched in early March, this program is designed for patients following bariatric surgery or procedure, where the size of the stomach is reduced either through gastric banding or removal of part of the stomach. The rehabilitation program focuses on facilitating patients’ recovery and the best possible outcome for the future.

The New Dimensions program is based on the principles of physical and psychological reconditioning post surgery. The program assists the patient in re-establishing control over the choices that they make in relation to the ongoing management of their obesity. The program encourages patients to build knowledge about their condition, understand themselves and acquire necessary skills and confidence to instigate and sustain long-term lifestyle changes.

New Dimensions is a 12-week outpatient program and incorporates:
- exercise including strengthening, stretching and a walking program
- hydrotherapy
- psychological and emotional support
- self-management strategies
- nutritional advice and input.

The program is under the care of rehabilitation physician Dr Fran Wise with Abi Oliver as the program coordinator. Sessions run once weekly for two hours. New Dimensions is now accepting referrals. Referrals can be faxed to 03 9982 6696 or scanned to rehab@epworth.org.au.

For all enquiries, please contact 1300 46 REHAB.
IN THE MEDIA

We make headlines across the media for advancements in technology, medical firsts and our ability to change patients’ lives. See our media coverage on the staff intranet homepage and the Epworth website under ‘latest news’.

Geelong Advertiser, 5 March
The Geelong Advertiser proudly shows the first media photos of Epworth Geelong — the region’s newest asset which expects to employ 400 people when it opens in July.

PH News, 2 March
New trials at Epworth are allowing doctors to detect tiny cancers left behind after the removal of the prostate. The procedure uses a breakthrough screening technique to highlight residual prostate cancers no bigger than two millimetres in size. The cancers can then be cured with highly targeted radiation.

ABC, 2 February
Starting Monday 8 February and running till Thursday 11 February at 5.30pm, Raf Epstein presented ‘Hamish’s Heart’, a four-part radio series that follows the story of Hamish Pownall, a young Melbourne man who underwent heart surgery at Epworth with surgeon Mr Peter Skillington.

HealthTimes, 15 January
Epworth neurological physiotherapist Dr Gavin Williams discusses an Australian-first trial that will study the impact of ballistic training on TBI patients. This new training could improve outcomes by adjusting the speed of strength training exercises.

Targeting mental health in an ageing population

Epworth Clinic’s new aged psychiatry service is dedicated to the care of people aged 65 and over with mental health issues. The aim of the service is to provide patients with comprehensive and compassionate care in the management of their mental illness, and to optimise functioning and quality of life.

“Epworth Clinic has launched its inaugural aged psychiatry service, timed with the opening of the second inpatient unit,” says director of the service Dr Lyn-May Lim.

“This brings excitement and the opportunity to provide a specialised multidisciplinary service to cater to the mental health needs of older people in our ageing population.

“The team of psychiatrists is strongly supported by nursing and allied health staff as well as having the capacity for geriatric input to holistically address issues of both mind and body. The unit welcomes referrals for both inpatient and outpatient care.”

The mental health team comprises nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and psychiatrists specialising in the mental health conditions of old age. The team can draw from a range of other disciplines as clinically required, including neuropsychologists, geriatricians and other specialists.

The newly refurbished aged psychiatry 17-bed inpatient unit comprises single rooms with private en-suite facilities in a safe and caring environment for acutely unwell older people. Patients are regularly reviewed by the treating team in conjunction with discussion at multidisciplinary team meetings. From this, an individualised treatment plan is developed for each person. Diagnostic tests and other relevant assessments are conducted at Epworth Camberwell, and treatment options such as electroconvulsive therapy and transcranial magnetic stimulation are available on site should they be recommended.

Referrals can directly faxed to 03 9805 4233 or emailed to ERC.intakeclinician@epworth.org.au.

Atrial clip offers relief to heart patients

In November 2015, Epworth Eastern’s Dr Andrei Catanchin and Dr Michael Yii performed an Australian-first procedure using a special titanium clip on an atrial fibrillation patient.

Patient Barry White, 69, had suffered from tightness of the chest, sweating and occasional nausea related to his irregular heartbeat. Atrial fibrillation can increase the risk of blood clots forming that in turn can lead to stroke. During a procedure at Epworth Eastern, surgeons attached a titanium clip to the upper region of Barry’s heart, sealing off an area in which blood clots typically form.

Though new to Australia, the procedure has been performed overseas with a success rate of around 85%.

“What we are trying to do in this operation is remove or eliminate part of the heart,” says Michael.

“When you scan the patient three months after the operation, you virtually don’t see the appendage, it just disappears, because the clip removes it all,” he says.

Since the operation, Barry has halved his medication and no longer experiences any fluttering or fibrillation in his heart. As reported on Channel 9 News.
Mandy makes the rounds at Epworth Camberwell

A new service at Epworth Camberwell is bringing smiles to the faces of patients and staff alike.

As Mandy makes her way through the wards at the hospital, followed closely by her dedicated carer Fiona Smith, people can’t help but stop what they are doing and reach down for a pat of her glossy black coat. And Mandy, a friendly Labrador X golden retriever, is only too happy to oblige.

Mandy and Fiona — who work with the Delta Society, a not-for-profit organisation that promotes positive interaction between people and companion animals — visit patients at Epworth Camberwell as part of the pet therapy program established in February. They come by on Wednesdays for one hour, alternating between rehabilitation patients and mental health patients each week.

Fiona has had Mandy for four-and-a-half years, and decided she’d make an excellent pet therapy dog, as she’d already been through training as a guide dog.

“Mandy had completed half her training through Guide Dogs Australia but was removed from the program due to needing cruciate ligament surgery. After her surgery and three-month recovery she was put back into training but then removed for a second time, this time needing surgery on her other leg. That was when I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to purchase her,” explains Fiona.

Mandy’s time in the program prepared her perfectly for therapy, with much of the manners training required already in place. Indeed, as Mandy interacts with patients it’s clear to see she displays the perfect balance of playfulness and calm, knowing when to reach out and when to sit back.

Patient Noel Carroll, who’s been at Epworth Camberwell for about three weeks, is excited to catch up with Mandy after meeting her for the first time two weeks prior. Noel misses his own dog, Lily, a playful Bichon Frise who’s been his constant companion for years, so time with Mandy provides some much-appreciated contact with an animal friend.

Registered nurse Loren Crook accompanies Mandy, Noel and Fiona out to a small courtyard at Epworth Camberwell where everyone can enjoy Mandy’s visit in the sunshine. The scent of basil and tomatoes fills the air, from the small garden patch that Noel tends to, as part of his therapy at the hospital.

Loren says Noel loves his time with Mandy, as do many the other patients who have had the chance to meet her.

“We mostly arrange for TAC [Transport Accident Commission] and acquired brain injury patients to visit with Mandy,” says Loren. “It’s particularly beneficial for those patients who don’t often get a lot of visitors.”

Maya Zerman, Program Manager of Mental Health at Epworth Camberwell, says pet therapy promises a different kind of treatment for patients outside of their usual programs.

“The opportunity for therapy dogs to visit patients who are away from their usual surroundings is a great way to reconnect people back to their home life. For patients who spend long periods away from their loved ones — both humans and animals — this type of playful interaction offers an added dimension of care.”

My Roster: latest update

The ‘whole of hospital’ implementation of My Roster is now well underway at Epworth Eastern and is on schedule to go live during late May. Staff from Epworth Eastern have taken on the role of key users and played a vital part in the change management and training aspect of the project by supporting newly trained staff when using the new system.

Along with the introduction of finger vein scanning on and off shifts, this implementation impacts the rostering, labour database and timesheet processes, providing 24/7, real-time access to rosters for staff using the new system.

A few of the many benefits of this initiative are:

- electronic rostering and timesheet system (eliminating the need for manual timesheets)
- enhanced employee self-service
- automation of the labour database data entry.

My Roster will enable employees to:

- record shift preferences and availability
- submit online leave applications for approval
- view and print rosters.

The My Roster intranet page is now available for staff to access information about the project as well as an FAQ sheet and quick reference guide.

Regular updates will be provided throughout the course of the project. For more info, please email the project team at MyRoster@epworth.org.au.
Patient feedback

I just wanted to send a quick little note to say thank you for looking after me while I was staying at Epworth Freemasons January 15, 2016. I have never been to hospital before and was absolutely terrified, although every single person I spoke to from Lidia in admissions, to Doug who explained how everything would work, to the lovely nurses who looked after me in my room was amazing and made me feel very comfortable. I very much appreciate it, thank you so much.

Poppy

To whom it may concern, my name is Bryanna and I was admitted to Epworth Eastern to have surgery on December 22, 2015. I just wanted to express how impressed I was with the nursing staff that looked after me for my stay at your hospital. I would personally like to acknowledge Lou Geri, Helen Roberts, Natalie Perez-Reigosa, and Deen. These nurses went above and beyond for the simplest reasons; from helping go to the toilet, changing into my PJs, tying my hair in a ponytail, from making a not-so-nice situation of taking out drain tubes a better experience and of course the most helpful — helping with pain medication. These ladies were such kind, caring, cheerful nurses and really made my stay more enjoyable. When it comes to good feedback we rarely hear it these days and people only tend to point out the negatives, which is a shame because when we have people like these ladies in our world who go that one step further by just a simple check-up and smile, it makes an experience so much more. So thank you again to the nurses mentioned but also to all your staff!

Kind Regards,
Bryanna

The staff at the day oncology unit have been terrific — from reception, through to nursing, cleaners and food service. Nurses in particular are professional, focused on treatment, friendly and take time to answer questions. The area is bright and pleasant and there is no sense of doom and gloom.

The concierge who greeted me last Friday morning lifted my day — he was pleasant, helpful and made me feel special — not sure how long he has been there but he is a great for the job!

I don’t want to leave, I’ve had some amazing nurses who made me calm leading up to my surgery: Holly even holding my hand, Virginia who was my 1-1 nurse in recovery, and Eliza, who have all shown me their dedication to their patients. The staff on level 7 have been amazing — MJ, Vicky and Margaret. I appreciate all the care and attention and support you have all given me. Keep up the great work. If I ever have to have surgery again, I will be choosing Epworth Richmond.

Dr Jennifer Mines and the three nurses who looked after me were amazing to say the least. Excellent care with a smile. We are lucky to have such professionals working at Epworth Richmond. Keep up the great work.

Mr Rod Fitzroy,
President,
Board of Management,
Epworth Hospital
89 Bridge Road,
Richmond, 3121.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to congratulate Epworth Hospital Staff for the excellent standard of treatment I recently received. I was admitted to Epworth Richmond on October 7th and tests were undertaken prior to an operation on the 9th for throat cancer.

Leading up to this, and during the subsequent recovery time, I was treated with professional care and good humour. This made the whole experience much easier to handle.

Dr Rowan Doig, the Medical Oncologist dealt with me initially and he was excellent in all respects. He saw me numerous times and made sure I understood the procedures and purpose of the sequence of tests he undertook.

The Surgeon, Dr Gregory Malham discussed the tumour with me, and he and his team did an excellent job of removing it, and replacing the fourth vertebrae in my throat with a metal support.

After leaving Richmond I attended Epworth Freemasons East Melbourne for radiation treatment. The Radiation Oncologist Dr Andrew See was very through in organising my treatment. The two young women, radiation-nursing staff, Sobel and Stephanie, made my mask and helped me each day with the doses. These girls were fantastic and deserve to be acknowledged for their care and compassion.

I now have only a few follow up tests next year to ensure that all has gone well. However the point of this letter is to make sure that you, as administrators are aware of how efficient and professional your staff is. I am able to continue with my life as normal due to their skill, depth of experience and medical knowledge.

Yours Sincerely,

Christopher R Taylor.
To Radiation Oncology on the 4th floor. I just wanted to both thank your wonderful staff and to let you know just how brilliant they are. I have been battling cancer for six years and have been treated at four hospitals but believe me no one comes close to Epworth. Everyone from Meika at reception, to Monique, Margie, Ros at the nurses’ station and then Rob, Fiona, Preeya, Samira in the radiation unit, were just amazing. Supportive, delightful, lovely people who make such a personal crisis so much easier to deal with. These staff really do make a big difference and put Epworth Richmond in a league of its own. Congratulations on hiring total professionals — you should be very proud of these people.

Thank you so much,
Keith

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18 January 2016

Mr Alan Kincaid
C.E.O.
Epworth Hospital
89 Bridge Road
RICHMOND  VIC  3121

Dear Mr Kincaid

On Saturday 16 January, I underwent a Multiple Lumbar Facet Joint injection procedure, carried out by Mr David de la Harpe.

Commencing from the time we arrived at reception, then to the waiting area followed by many sessions with administration and nursing staff, the level of professionalism and caring was outstanding. I was well cared for in a very friendly environment.

Thank you to Angela, Judy, Nicole, Liza and Vanessa, Dr Nola and of course Mr de la Harpe.

Yours sincerely

Hugo Cavalli

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I would like to commend the service provided to my mother on Tuesday February 2, when she attended for a day procedure with Dr Tim Wagner. Being unfamiliar with the layout of the hospital we presented at the incorrect desk. When expressing concern that mum may not be able to walk to the required area, Josephine (from the business desk I believe?) quickly jumped up, secured a wheelchair and took us to the appropriate lifts. Once we arrived at Dr Wagner’s rooms on the 7th floor, she then phoned Dr Wagner’s rooms shortly after to check that we had arrived okay. Such cheerful assistance and concern was very much appreciated and demonstrated a genuine commitment to my mother’s wellbeing. Nurse Amanda and administrative clerk Desley in Dr Wagner’s room were also very respectful and attentive to my mother and made her feel comfortable and supported throughout her visit. These behaviours were very much valued by both my mother and I and we commend them on their professional and compassionate support.

Kind regards,
Gail

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Thank you for the excellent information day/morning that you organised for the patients having hip replacement. I was very impressed with the content, organisation and overall helpfulness of all staff and volunteers. I found the time very helpful and extremely reassuring.

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Many of my questions were answered and I now feel less apprehensive about my surgery later this week. Thank you personally for answering my phone calls with further queries. Be assured how appreciated these sessions are for those of us who are concerned or worried about details of happenings in relation to our hospital stay.

Thanks again,
Ruth

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My father Gordon went to Epworth for a check-up and due to health concerns by his doctor was admitted on February 2, 2016. My mother, due to her own ill-health, and the fact she lives in Kilmore, was unable to get back in to see him and I was overseas at the time. I actually contacted a friend of a friend, Ms Tracy Brennan, and asked her if she could arrange to get my father a few toiletries, to make his stay a little more comfortable. He really needed toothpaste/toothbrush comb, etc to feel a little more human. Ms Brennan went out of her way to purchase the articles for him. She refused to take any money for them as she said that the patient comfort was paramount. What I am trying to say is that you should be congratulated for having such caring staff to take care of the needs of virtual strangers. She then kept popping in to see if he needed anything else! Please let her
known my family and I were so grateful to her and how the staff helped make a scary experience for my dad as comfortable as possible. Thank you again.

I am still currently an inpatient at the hospital but wanted to praise the beautiful staff I have had looking after me on the DMU ward where the day oncology unit is. They had to open more beds up as the wards were full. Well didn’t it strike it lucky! I’ve been admitted five-plus times to your hospital as a patient of Mr De La Harpe and nurse Cindy Carlson was the first to care for me at midnight on Monday after waiting in emergency for nine hours. Carrying a constant spinal injury, you can appreciate the pain I was in regardless of my current condition after lying on the trolleys in ED for so long. She kindly got me hot packs and extra pillows for under my legs. She again nursed me through the night last night. She is ever so professional, kind, patient focused and nothing is too much of a bother. I have found in the past on some of the ortho wards the staff have not managed the patient flow and as a result forgotten my medication, not answered buzzers for ten-plus minutes and been rude and snappy. I’ve so far had Maree and Elaine during the day as well as Jolly, who actually have all cared for me in the past and again have all been ever so lovely, they even remembered me which shows such good social awareness. I just wanted to highlight this as I know nursing is a hard and thankless job and when you have good care, it’s important to reward it. Please let the ladies know they are doing a tremendous job.

Kind regards,
Lisa

Having recently undergone a knee replacement by Andrew Shimmin at The Avenue I subsequently spent a week in rehab at your Epworth Brighton venue. My rehab experience was far beyond expectation and I just wanted to pass on my appreciation for all the

Dear Sir/Madam,

On Sunday 14th February I entered the Epworth for open-heart surgery. I wish to express my sincerest thanks to all involved in my care.

Until the 8th January I thought that I was fighting fit for a man of my age. There had been no warning signs until that day. Fortunately I took notice of the short, sharp pain in my chest and sought medical help. Tests revealed that there was severe stenosis of the aortic valve. I was very grateful that I only had to wait for a month for admission for surgery.

When I entered the Epworth I was cared for by Lina on the fifth floor, who helped me settle in and complete the preliminary processes such as showering twice with antiseptic. The medication which I was given helped me to sleep. I have no memories from soon after my morning shower on Monday until I awoke in ICU late in the afternoon. I was not even aware of moving to theatre. This is testament to the skill of Dr Elii Tutungi and his team of anaesthetists. Clearly Mr Adam Zimmet and his surgical team skilfully repaired the damage to my heart, but I know nothing of that part of the process.

When I awoke in the excellent new ICU, I found myself with a tube down my throat. Its removal was, though brief, the only unpleasant procedure which I undertook. During my time spent in ICU I was cared for by four nurses, as far as I can remember. I hope that I have remembered their names correctly and apologize for any that I have named incorrectly. Catherine saw me through the first night. I have vivid memories of her constant presence and gentle care. Tim replaced her for the day shift. The shifts are long, but the idea of individual nursing at each shift is good, as it provides a sense of continuity. As I became more aware of the world, Tim engaged me in conversation and happily allowed as I rambled on. I was more uncomfortable on the second night, not because of pain, but from the arthritis in my shoulders. Andrea worked tirelessly to find a position in which I was comfortable and to prop me there with pillows. On Wednesday morning Beto had the difficult task of disconnecting me from various tubes and catheters. Such was his skill and gentleness that I was hardly aware that they were being removed. He then delivered me to Room 2051.

I cannot praise enough the way in which the new ICU is set up and the quality of care provided. During my stay I was conscious of the frequent visits of Jonathan and the registrars, who gathered round my case notes and the machine which showed my vital signs. They discussed very quietly how my treatment was progressing and what else might be done. I much appreciated Jonathan’s quiet, reassuring manner when he spoke directly to me.

The new rooms on the second floor are very comfortable. I was very fortunate to have a view to the north over Erin Street. During the six days I spent recovering I was cared for by a succession of nurses during the day, some for several shifts, like Elly, others for shorter periods. They were Elly, Jess, Gemma, Jo, Li, Steph and Penny. I was conscious of how busy they all were caring for their various patients, but I never felt that my needs were neglected. During the nights I was in the care of Eva, Lauren and Kham, gentle angels who kept watch over me as I slept. All these nurses displayed professional skill, gentleness and loving care. Some of the tasks which they have to perform involve needles. The fact that I came through these procedures without discomfort is a testimony to their skill. I appreciated the fact they involved me in the process by explaining what they were going to do, such as Elly explaining why she was raising my feet as she removed the line from my throat, and Lauren why I should breathe in as she removed the monitoring wires.

There were regular visits from my cardiologist, Dr Jeremy Pereira, to monitor my progress and to advise on changes. Matt, Mr Zimmet’s associate, was also a constant visitor. He is a fine young doctor with an excellent bedside manner. His cheerfulness was infectious and I much appreciated the way in which he made me feel part of the process. I shall never forget his obvious delight that my haemoglobin had changed from 71 to 84 overnight.

There are many others who are necessary for the hospital to work, such as cleaners and those who delivered and removed food. The overall impression is of a cheerful workforce. I had problems with nausea for a while and could not eat food. I am very grateful to those who took the orders for food who were so patient and searched hard for something which might appeal. In the end fresh fruit proved to be the one thing which I could eat. The menu offered during my stay was very good in choice and quality. Unfortunately I could not do justice to it.

I entered hospital with some trepidation. I left to enjoy my second chance in life with pleasant memories of the gentle care provided by so many people.

My thanks and best wishes to them all.

Peter Mountford
wonderful care, encouragement and highly professional guidance I received from all areas of your support staff. The conviviality amongst your entire staff was infectious and played a large part in helping me channel the focus off pain, discomfort and frustration, to be in a more positive frame of mind. At all times, day or night, nothing was too much trouble whenever I needed help. The standard of professionalism in the physiotherapy section was quite outstanding with a mix of encouragement, fun and firmness (Hilary and Laura). The admin staff (in my case Neredith and Leanne) in addition to the formalities of hospital routine, injected some timely humour — again helping make my stay so much more enjoyable. Nurse Brittany was a delight; my day in OT (serving up a French omelette) was a highlight. I was most impressed with the homely OT environment, program and counselling. During a walking session I stopped and read your Epworth Brighton Mission Statement. I think you have nailed it due to excellent rehabilitation programs, resources, professionalism and a quite unique staff team spirit.

Thank you for leading the team I have mentioned above. If there is some way their efforts can be highlighted to others I would be delighted.

I am very much in debt to all involved.

Yours sincerely,
Errol Hutcheson