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A message from Dr Tracey Batten

A vision for the future

It is hard to believe that April is upon us. The year is proceeding apace and I am pleased to advise that our plans for 2011 are well advanced.

Following the decision last year by the joint venture partners of St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital Melbourne – Mercy Health and Aged Care and St Vincent's Health Australia – St Vincent's Health Australia became the sole owner of the health service on 31 March 2011.

St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital now joins St Vincent's Health Australia as the fourth region within the group together with St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney and St Vincent's Health & Aged Care Queensland.

St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital will continue to benefit from the most capable leadership of Chief Executive Officer Martin Day and his Executive team. I would like to record my gratitude to Martin and the members of the Executive team for their leadership and advice during this time of transition, and commend

and thank them for their efforts.

Last week our Board and several of the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries met with our Regional Chief Executive Officers and Group Executive to continue the development of a strategic plan for St Vincent's Health Australia.

While the plan is still in the development stage, the workshop discussions featured a high degree of collaboration and common hopes among those present as we seek to ensure that the mission of St Vincent's Health Australia continues to guide and shape the direction and development of services.

Consultation with staff in each of our regions continues as part of this process. In May members of the Senior Leadership Teams from each of the regions will come together to review the plan and make their contribution. It is anticipated that the final draft will be presented to the Board and Trustees in July with a launch to follow in each of our services in August.

The development of a group wide strategic plan



*Dr Tracey Batten
Group Chief Executive Officer
St Vincent's Health Australia*

is an important step in helping us to realise our goal of taking St Vincent's mission to more people in need of care.

In reading the stories from the regions featured in this newsletter it is clear that we have much to offer. From leading breakthroughs in surgery, to innovative research, and improvements in patient care and amenity it is clear that the people we serve remain the focus of the efforts of all who work as part of our services.

This commitment to providing excellence in care to our patients and residents remains our greatest strength and provides a solid foundation for us as we look to the future.

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Awards and honours



ACU award a nursing first St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney

ACU health sciences honours student, Asmara Jammali-Blasi, has recently completed research into stroke outcomes for patients as part of her thesis at St Vincent's Hospital - completed through the ACU Faculty of Health Sciences Student Support Scheme.

The scheme enables students to complete their honours research two days per week at the St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney/ACU Nursing Research Institute and work in the hospital wards for the remaining three days per week.

Asmara presented her research findings on 90 day stroke outcomes at the state-wide Smart Strokes conference as well as the national Stroke Society of Australasia conference in 2010.

Asmara was awarded an ACU University Medal for her honours thesis - the first time a nurse has received the honour.

'The program allowed me to combine my research interests with my work as a registered nurse,' said Asmara. 'I felt very lucky to learn from top specialists at the hospital and make use of incredible resources available here.'

Image and story courtesy Australian Catholic University.

A time for celebration: St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital Melbourne

St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital held its annual Graduation Ceremony in early March to celebrate the achievements of numerous employees who had completed further education in certificate, graduate and post-graduate courses. The evening provided a wonderful opportunity for graduands to celebrate with colleagues, family and friends in a formal presentation ceremony followed by a cocktail party.

This year's Graduation Ceremony was one of the largest we have held, with over 100 graduands studying over 16 formal programs offered.

St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital is excited about introducing new and innovative education and development programs and is proud to offer new graduates the best possible start to their careers. The Education & Development team is now a recognised industry leader. In 2010 St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital transitioned to Masters streams for most key clinical specialty programs, attracting external participants from other hospitals into specialty practice units for Intensive Care, Plastics & Reconstruction, Cardiac, and Anaesthetics courses. In line with this the hospital has also seen a 50 percent growth in participants in these programs in the last two years.

In recognition of its graduands' achievements, St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital has embraced a Reward and Recognition Program that celebrates the outstanding achievements of staff. Education Excellence Awards were presented to six staff recognising not only their academic and clinical achievements but also their commitment to incorporating the hospital values of compassion, accountability, respect and excellence into their profession.

—Elissa Bull (St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital, Education Consultant)



New aged care facilities at St Joseph's Village St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney

St Joseph's Village, Auburn opened a new unit for people with dementia in late March. The *Carinya Dementia Unit* will enable St Joseph's to expand its dementia specific beds from 10 to 18, creating a secure haven for members of the community to live in a caring and safe environment.

At the same time, St Joseph's will also open *Bethany* a refurbished section of the hostel on the campus to care for ten residents with high care needs. The new facility has allowed some residents, who would previously have been transferred to nursing homes, to remain at St Joseph's Village for a longer period of time, fulfilling their wishes and those of their families.

St Joseph's Village is a residential aged care facility collocated with St Joseph's Hospital on the Auburn Campus comprising 27 independent living units, 88 low care beds, with ageing in place,

of which 18 provide dementia specific care and 35 community care packages. The Village works collaboratively with St Joseph's Hospital and is part of the residential aged care services provided by St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney.

Carinya is the Aboriginal name for 'home' and evokes a picture of a family dwelling place where love, care and respect for each member prevails. It is a place of bonding and helping, according to each person's needs.

Bethany, a name chosen for its biblical origin, is the name of a village near Jerusalem, now known as the House of Lazarus. It has been described as remarkably beautiful, the perfection of retirement and repose, of seclusion and peace.

'The development of *Carinya* and *Bethany* at St Joseph's is an important milestone in our ability to provide more integrated care to respond to community need.

In relation to our dementia services, *Carinya* is an outstanding facility, not only because of its increased capacity but because it has been carefully designed around the unique needs of our residents with dementia. Similarly, *Bethany* will enable us to respond more effectively as our residents' needs become more complex,' said Jonathan Anderson, Executive Director of St Vincent's Public Health Service.

'When you look at the World Health Organization's definition of the principle of health it tackles physical, mental and social well being – this definition closely aligns with our mission. Therefore in terms of providing an active ageing framework for our residents, it is important that we promote their mental health, social connections as well as improving their physical health status,' said Mr Anderson.

—David Faktor, SV&MHS Communications



Mary Aikenhead Ministries Chair Richard Harpham with the Most Reverend Terry Brady, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney officially opening *Carinya* & *Bethany* at St Joseph's Village.

Faces and places: Daniele Doyle St Vincent's Health & Aged Care Queensland

Ms Daniele Doyle recently commenced as General Manager for Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospital, part of St Vincent's Health & Aged Care Queensland. Daniele formerly held the role of General Manager St Vincent's Hospital Brisbane. We put some questions to Daniele about her role and the future for Holy Spirit Northside.

How do you feel about stepping in to the role?

Holy Spirit Northside is celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2011 and I believe this is an exciting time for the hospital and feel privileged to be at the helm of such a wonderful organisation. It is clearly evident that a solid foundation of Catholic healthcare has been established over the past ten years. This can be attributed to those who preceded me and to the visionary commitment of our two pioneering congregations, the Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit and the Sisters of Charity, the latter now represented by Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

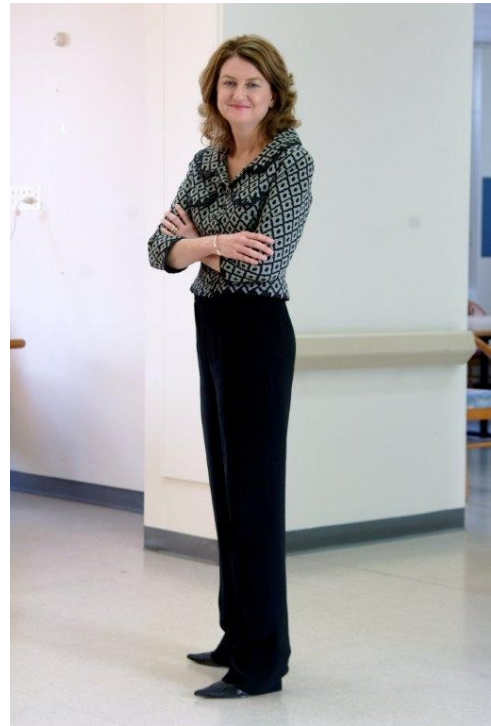
What would you like to bring to the role as General Manager?

Our immediate focus will be to ensure we have robust hospital operational processes to support an already very busy health care facility, to deliver efficient systems with patient access, admissions, discharges and bed management; and to exercise appropriate fiscal management and opportunity so as to support prosperous growth in the future.

Given the world-leading treatment and care that is administered within this relatively small, but clinically complex hospital and the significant partnering of an expert Visiting Medical Officer community, it is critical, as the new General Manager, that I carry forward a vision and strategic plan that is in unison with our clinicians' and also reflective of emerging healthcare trends and service innovation.

In conjunction with this commitment, I must ensure the Sisters' commitment to compassionate care is always at the forefront of our service delivery. This will be evident in a hospital culture where staff imbue our mission and values and carry this forward in their behaviour and professional work.

What are some of the challenges and opportunities for Holy Spirit Northside in the years ahead?



Our focus will be on strengthening our already highly acute tertiary referral platform with supporting services – Intensive Care Unit, CCL, Acute Cardiac Unit, Day Procedure Unit and Day Surgery – and at the same time enhance and develop our medical service which is essential to support a complex surgical case mix within the context of an ageing population, escalation of chronic disease and complex co-morbidity.

Within our service planning, and keeping true to our mission, we will seek to offer more and propose to develop a comprehensive cancer care service, not just focussing on bricks and mortar, but to build an integrated service that provides expert cancer treatments and support for the full continuum of cancer care.

We will be firm in our commitment to share our expertise and resources for community General Practitioner education, medical and nursing training. This year Holy Spirit Northside will embark on a capital infrastructure project, afforded to us by a Commonwealth grant of \$5 million, to build a multidisciplinary school. This will support health care practitioner education in medicine and nursing in meeting Queensland's growing health care demands for both metropolitan and regional areas. This facility will be known as Holy Spirit Northside Multidisciplinary Clinical School.

Teaching the next generation St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital Melbourne

'Born to be a nurse'. I've heard that line many times in my nursing career. I don't think I was. My career in nursing began in Tasmania, when after Year 12, I detested the prospect of university and instead, wanted a job – or to be more precise, a pay packet.

Ironically, I enjoyed the stimulation of learning new things and I liked the contextual learning environment. Importantly though, I was inspired by two passionate nurse educators who took a genuine interest in my career development. Their impact on my professional life will probably never be known to them, but they will not be forgotten. A simple message they passed on was 'it is selfish to learn something without sharing your knowledge with others'. What they insisted we did as nurses was to pass on our skills and to never take more than we gave back.

I was never a great nurse. I always got on well with my patients. I always felt they were in safe hands. However, in the Intensive Care Unit I felt that I knew my stuff and quickly found my niche for several years. In 1998, I moved to Victoria and completed formal ICU Post Graduate studies. It was here that I met another passionate educator – Al Park, who inspired me as I was once inspired before as a student. Al had a knack of making sense of things using analogies that I could relate to. He was also very humble and admitted that everything he knew was plagiarised from others, but that he was selective in his plagiarising and only copied their strengths. He would often remind us all that he didn't know everything, but that he felt what he knew, he understood. He felt this was important if we were to

teach others. I was inspired to teach.

In 2000, I began as an educator in ICU at the Western Hospital and then The Freemasons Hospital. Taking on Al's advice I studied other staff's teaching styles – what seemed to work and what didn't. Some had excellent knowledge of the subject they were teaching but weren't able to convey this information. Some were great teachers but were limited by their own lack of knowledge. There were many examples of great teaching. I made many mistakes, but on reflection, I have learnt more from these mistakes than I have from my successes. To this day, I continue to prepare teaching sessions, feeling confident in my ability to deliver, but knowing that it will not be as good as when I deliver it again next time. Self reflection and acceptance of criticism is an under-rated skill.

Now at Melbourne's St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital, I work as an Education Consultant (ICU) and Resuscitation Coordinator. A few years back, when staff attrition was costing the business, the hospital's CEO invested in staff education. However, it paid

off. During a recent accreditation process the hospital was awarded an Outstanding Achievement for education - a standard quite difficult to acquire.

My role is to coordinate the delivery of education to staff in ICU from undergraduate level through to Masters via a combination of bed-side teaching and university lecturing. This is challenging and rewarding and provides excellent opportunities to utilise all the various teaching methods available. It is the immediate feedback you get from students – those 'light bulb' moments where you know that they actually get it, that makes teaching so worthwhile.

With tremendous pride and satisfaction, I see 'my' students now graduating and remaining in the unit, committed to passing on their knowledge. Their patients are in safe hands, and so too are the next generation of nurses.

—Simon Plapp, ICU Educator and Resuscitation Coordinator, St Vincents & Mercy Private Hospital *Article courtesy of The Australian Nurse Teachers' Society e-Bulletin, March 2011, Vol.2 Issue.*



A blessing and a new Cancer Centre St Vincent's Health Melbourne

In February St Vincent's staff, supporters and friends came together to mark the beginning of the new clinical year and for the official blessing of the Cancer Centre.

Victoria's Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Nick Wakeling joined His Grace Denis Hart Archbishop of Melbourne and guests to celebrate and bless the new centre. St Vincent's CEO Prof Patricia O'Rourke said, 'I was delighted to introduce Mr Wakeling to one of St Vincent's great traditions and to showcase our new Cancer Centre and the clinicians who make it outstanding.'

'The clinical mass is an annual tradition at St Vincent's and a very important one. It is a rare moment at the beginning of each year where we stop and reflect on our core purpose as an organisation – to deliver expert and compassionate care for our patients, clients and residents. It is a chance to welcome new clinical staff joining St Vincent's and, this year, to give thanks to the many staff and supporters whose vision and perseverance made the Cancer Centre a reality.'

The \$10 million centre is the culmination of several years work, but it has been a dream for much longer than that, as members of the cancer services team will readily attest.

'We are truly blessed to have been able to achieve such an amazing result for our patients,' said Prof O'Rourke.

The patient treatment areas that opened to patients at the end of November are Stage 1. The hospital's sights are now set clearly on Stage 2, which will allow clinicians and researchers to work even more closely together to refine and tailor treatments and further increase St Vincent's participation in multinational clinical trials.

'There are so many people who have helped make this project a success,' said Prof O'Rourke. 'The donors and everyone involved in the Cancer Centre Appeal, especially Appeal Chair Greg Hargrave and Foundation Director David Jones; staff right across St Vincent's but especially in our cancer services and engineering teams, with special mentions to Assoc Prof Ray Snyder, Nurse Unit Manager Ann Cook and Chief Engineer Armando Bianco; and most importantly our patients, whose input and insights helped shape this wonderful new facility.'

—Louise Partridge, St Vincent's



Above: Photos of the new Cancer Centre at St Vincent's

Centre: Patricia Hunter, who started treatment at STV for a Ewing's sarcoma in 1979 at the age of 17, with Prof David Penington, who was Professor of Medicine and a haematologist at STV, Ann Cooke NUM Oncology, Archbishop Denis Hart and Director of Medical Oncology Assoc Prof Ray Snyder at the blessing of the centre.

Cancer care and research at the Mater St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney

The Patricia Ritchie Centre for Cancer Care and Research at the Mater was recently opened by NSW Governor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO. This is housed within the historic *Claverton* building bringing together sophisticated patient care facilities in a homelike and supportive environment as well as accommodating research and teaching facilities.

'The Centre brings together the critical ingredients in health care innovation: outstanding clinical care provided by skilled multidisciplinary teams, the infrastructure to conduct clinical research leading to new treatment approaches, and teaching opportunities for the next generation of health care professionals,' said the Centre's Director Assoc Prof Fran Boyle AM.

The Patricia Ritchie Centre for Cancer Care and Research was previously housed for 12 years in the cottage next door to *Claverton*. In that time it has developed a unique 'home away from home' reputation throughout NSW for patients receiving chemotherapy treatment.

The move to the larger facility will preserve the non-clinical homely feel while increasing the Centre's treatment capacity and its ability to conduct more clinical trials such as the 'the penguin cold cap system' trials which preserve the hair follicles of patients receiving chemotherapy treatment. Furthermore the new Centre will accommodate more Sydney University academic positions and medical student training.

Claverton was acquired by the Mater from the Sisters of Mercy. Through the generosity of The Friends of the Mater Foundation, in particular

Mrs Patricia Ritchie AM and her family, a painstakingly sympathetic renovation has taken place that has preserved all the original features of the circa 1910 building which was a private residence until the 1940s.

The ongoing restoration of the grotto at the side of the building where the Sisters would often pray will provide a tranquil place for staff, patients and visitors to rest. Furthermore the surrounding gardens are being landscaped to restore them to their former glory.

The Patricia Ritchie Centre is unique from both an academic and research perspective within the private health care sector. It's success reflects the vision and generosity of its donors, the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy, the support of St Vincents & Mater Health and the University of Sydney. Research carried out at the Centre has over the years been translated directly into patient care including new treatments for breast cancer and improving pain control.

'The new Centre is a proud achievement for the Mater, it is the embodiment of our mission to show hospitality and compassion to all those that we treat by establishing the most extraordinary treatment facilities. At the same time I am proud that we will continue to foster a culture of research and teaching. The Centre is a true testament to the vision of the Ritchie family and The Friends of the Mater and the dedication of our staff,' said Robert Cusack, Executive Director of the Mater.

—David Faktor, SV&MHS Communications



NSW Governor Prof Marie Bashir AC CVO, Mrs Patricia Ritchie AM and Dr Keith Hartman celebrate the opening of the centre.

Landmark transplant surgery an Australian first St Vincent's Health Melbourne

St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne performed Australia's first hand transplant in March, for 65 year old Cobden man Peter Walsh.

Mr Walsh was first treated at St Vincent's in September 2006 after he contracted pneumococcal septicaemia. The devastating bacterial infection meant surgeons had to remove both of Mr Walsh's hands, his left leg below the knee and part of his right foot.

Since then, Mr Walsh (known to everyone including his 16 grandchildren as 'Plumber') has relied on the support of his wife and five adult children to perform most routine daily tasks.

The groundbreaking surgery to give Mr Walsh a new right hand and the hope of greater independence was the culmination of years of planning by St Vincent's clinical and support team. In particular, the service's world-leading plastic surgeons and nephrology and immunology teams, who have extensive experience with kidney transplants.

The 10-hour operation required thousands of stitches to connect the blood vessels, tendons and nerves by a team of eight surgeons supported by a large team of nurses, anaesthetists, registrars and technicians.

'For everyone involved, it's been a privilege to give Peter the chance to reclaim some of his independence,' said lead surgeon, Professor Wayne Morrison.

'The surgery went well but the real test is how much sensation and strength returns to his hand. Nerves grow at around 1 millimetre a day so it will be up to a year before we have a clear sense of how much Peter will be able to use the hand.'

Mr Walsh will remain in Melbourne for the first

three months to have intensive hand therapy and so any signs of rejection can be closely monitored and treated. Nephrologist Dr Karen Dwyer said St Vincent's immunology and nephrology teams will monitor Mr Walsh daily for the first three months to identify any signs of rejection. He will need to take anti-rejection drugs daily and be monitored regularly for the rest of his life.

'St Vincent's has been working with Peter and his whole family for a couple of years to prepare for this transplant. I know how motivated he is and we'll be doing everything we can to give him the best chance of success,' said Dr Dwyer.

The transplant would not have been possible without a grieving family consenting to donate.

'We would like to acknowledge the generosity of the donor and his family. The donor and his family had previously discussed organ donation and the donor was on the Australian Organ Donor Registry. The donor family hopes that this donation will make a difference to peoples' lives,' said Dr Helen Opdam, State Medical Director of DonateLife in Victoria, who has worked closely with St Vincent's to prepare for this pioneering procedure.

—Kylie Preece and Bruce Atherton, St Vincent's Communications



Clockwise from top:
Prof Wayne Morrison speaks with Mr Walsh's family; Mr Walsh is led to the recovery room; surgical team at work during the 10-hour procedure. Images courtesy of the *Herald-Sun*.