

# ST VINCENT'S *Cares*

FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2020

## DAME QUENTIN BRYCE ADVOCATES FOR ST VINCENT'S PALLIATIVE CARE

It is with delight that we announce Dame Quentin Bryce as the Advocate for the St Vincent's Centre for Palliative Care. Ms Bryce, former Governor-General of Australia, is an admired, esteemed and much loved leader in the community. Her support of indigenous people, women, children and carers is legendary.

The St Vincent's Centre for Palliative Care is renowned nationally and internationally for its provision of palliative care, research and training. The demand for palliative care services is increasing exponentially as the population ages and people are living longer with serious, complex diseases.

Ms Bryce is passionate about the importance of the provision of good palliative care services across the country and about the need to properly support carers in the community.

Palliative care is a specialised area of medicine that provides holistic healthcare to improve quality of life for patients and also for their families and care givers. It includes coordinated access to physical, physiological, social, spiritual and cultural needs.

"Access to inclusive, accessible, high-quality palliative care across our nation has long been of importance to me. I have seen firsthand the way it gives gentle support with personal and professional skill to each and every patient during a very vulnerable time as well as kindness to their families and dear ones around them – an inspiration to our community," Ms Bryce said.

For more information and to view Ms Bryce's exclusive video, visit [www.stvfoundation.org.au/blog/dame-quentin-bryce-advocates-for-palliative-care](http://www.stvfoundation.org.au/blog/dame-quentin-bryce-advocates-for-palliative-care)



*St Vincent's Centre for Palliative Care Advocate,  
Dame Quentin Bryce*

The construction of the new St Vincent's Caritas Christi Hospice in Kew, will commence in March. We look forward to updating you on the official 'turning of the sod' and building progress.

If you would like to make a donation to support the St Vincent's Caritas Christi Hospice redevelopment, please visit <http://bit.ly/DonateCaritas>

# AIKENHEAD CENTRE FOR MEDICAL DISCOVERY (ACMD) WORLD FIRST EPILEPSY IMPLANT



*Trial patient Cathryn McNaught with her implant*

A world first ACMD research project is changing the way we record and potentially treat epilepsy. Chair of Medicine at St Vincent's Hospital, Professor Mark Cook and his team have implanted a radical device that records the electrical activity of both sides of the brain to monitor epileptic seizures.

The first two patients on the trial received the Epi-Minder implant in November and will wear the device for six months. During this period they will undergo intensive monitoring at the hospital over two separate week-long stays.

Research Fellow, Dr Alan Lai explained that many people who have seizures struggle to accurately record their frequency because they are often unaware they have had an episode.

"During the patient's stay we collect all three sets of data: the implant, in patient monitoring and a seizure diary. This comprehensive data will better inform how we treat seizures because we'll have the 'whole picture'," Alan said.

Cathryn McNaught was really keen to be a part of the trial because none of the drugs she has tried over the last 15 years have been successful at controlling her 'phasing out' seizures.

"Epilepsy has placed restrictions on my life. I was boiling water recently, I had a seizure and burnt my

hand and foot very badly. It's frustrating that I can't even do simple tasks without putting myself at risk.

"I'm so excited to be a part of this trial. Having an accurate record of my seizures means I may be able to take part in other trials, giving me the best chance to stop my seizures," Cathryn said.

Rob Bechaz has experienced massive grand mal seizures since he was 18. He saw many different doctors who were unable to control his condition. Then he met Professor Cook 16 years ago, who has been able to provide Rob with exceptional care.

In 2015, Rob had brain resection surgery at St Vincent's Private Hospital. Unfortunately, only 95% of the matter could be removed so Rob still has 'phasing out' seizures.

"This device will help me to understand what my body is doing but most importantly, it will help other people. It's also my way of giving back to Prof Cook who has never given up!"

The ultimate goal is for the implant to eventually become a clinical device to help identify far more accurate treatment methods for people with epilepsy.

*This trial was supported by the Victorian Government's Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund.*



*Trial patient Rob Bechaz with his implant*

## St Vincent's cares. Always has. Always will.

Yes, I want to support our brilliant and compassionate medical staff.

### I want to give

Single gift:

\$25  \$50  \$250  \$500

My choice \$ \_\_\_\_\_

A regular gift of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Deducted\*

Monthly

\*Your gift will be processed after the 15th of each month, and will continue unless you notify us to stop it.

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Please debit my:

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Your date of birth helps us identify you should you need to contact us in the future.

**Please return this completed form to:  
Reply Paid 65162, Fitzroy Vic. 3065**

### Other ways to donate

 [www.stvfoundation.org.au/donate](http://www.stvfoundation.org.au/donate)

 (03) 9231 3365

 Cashiers or to the  
St Vincent's Foundation Office  
Ground Floor, Rear, 55 Victoria Parade  
(next to Courtyard 55 Café)

 Text the word **'DONATE'** to **0400 807 807**

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. ABN: 22 052 110 755

**Please contact me as:**

- I would like to include St Vincent's in my Will
- Keep me updated on future news and events
- Do not send me future St Vincent's Foundation communications

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## ST VINCENT'S IS AT THE CENTRE OF THE EMERGENCY BUSHFIRE SUPPORT

The recent bushfires across Victoria have had an utterly devastating impact on entire communities, not to mention the toll they have taken on our wildlife.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne played a strategic role in the support provided to bushfire victims. The Hospital manages the Victorian Government's Department of Health and Human Services' Field Emergency Medical Officer Program. This means in the event of any disaster, St Vincent's staff provide assistance in coordinating health resources, and support and advice to any in-field health personnel or other agencies.

Dr Guy Sansom is a St Vincent's Emergency Physician who also works in the Field Emergency Medical Officer Program. Dr Sansom was deployed in the bushfire affected areas.

"We did our best to assist the communities affected. Many rural healthcare workers have been working tirelessly for their communities. It's been very rewarding to assist local communities deal with the devastating effects of these early summer bushfires," Dr Sansom said.

Nationally, staff across the organisation have been incredibly generous with their financial support. We are proud of and grateful for the contribution our staff have been able to make to the relief effort both 'on the ground' and financially.

**Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have been affected by this catastrophic event.**



*Athol Atkins enjoys the comfort of one of the new treatment chairs*

Athol is now feeling fantastic. He and Sue still come to St Vincent's Cancer Centre once a month for what he calls a "grease and oil change to keep it asleep."

It's during these visits that he spends five hours at a time sitting in one of the new chairs in the Cancer Centre. Athol said, "the chair is extremely comfortable, easy to operate and particularly good for a nap."

After learning of his diagnosis, Athol's son James took part in Dry July to support his dad. Two years later he's still alcohol free!

Will you join us in the challenge to give up alcohol this July? With your support, you can help us smash the 2019 total and raise much-needed funds to support patients during their cancer treatment.

Register your interest to participate and receive updates and fresh stories by visiting [www.stvfoundation.org.au/event/dry-july-2020](http://www.stvfoundation.org.au/event/dry-july-2020)

## Patients sit in comfort thanks to Dry July

Dry July is a fundraiser that encourages participants to go alcohol-free in July to raise funds for people affected by cancer.

Funds go towards helping to provide invaluable services for cancer patients, their families and carers. Thank you to all the participants of the 2019 Dry July campaign who raised over \$40,000. This fantastic result has enabled us to purchase four new treatment chairs for the Cancer Centre.

One patient who has benefitted is Athol Atkins. Three years ago Athol started to feel unwell. A blood test showed his kidneys were functioning at just 10%. Athol was rushed to Warrnambool Hospital where he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma cancer.

After six months of chemotherapy, Athol was accepted into a placebo-based worldwide trial through St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, which proved to be very effective. After 14 months, Athol had to be placed onto a new treatment, shortly followed by being included on a new trial.

This new treatment was so successful that Athol and his wife Sue received the best possible news they could have hoped for. As of October 2019, he was told he was in remission.

# Include a Gift

Gifts in Wills are a way of providing vital support without affecting your current financial circumstances.

By including St Vincent's Hospital in your Will, you play an important part in contributing to the Hospital's future. A future where medical research, specialised equipment and state-of-the-art facilities provide the highest level of care to people in need.

We would love to hear from you.

Please send me:

- Information on how I can include St Vincent's Hospital in my Will
- I have already included a gift in my Will to St Vincent's Hospital

**For more information, please contact Sue Worland, Donor Relations Officer, on (03) 9231 3363 or email [sue.worland@svha.org.au](mailto:sue.worland@svha.org.au)**



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## AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS ST VINCENT'S DOCTORS

We would like to congratulate Dr John Santamaria and Associate Professor Ian Hewson, who were recognised in the Australia Day Honours List.

Dr John Santamaria, Director of Intensive Care, has been made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his contributions to intensive care medicine. Head and Neck Surgeon Associate Professor Ian Hewson was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to dentistry.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne CEO Angela Nolan said, "I am immensely proud of their achievements and of the incredible level of commitment, dedication and care they show every day to our patients and their families."



*Award recipient Dr John Santamaria*

## Run Melbourne for St Vincent's Hospital – 26th July 2020.

St Vincent's Hospitals have extraordinary medical professionals who provide the best possible care to people in Victoria.

Join the St Vincent's Foundation Run Melbourne Team and be a part of something life-saving. Early bird registrations are now open!

There is an event for everyone – a 5 km walk/run, or a 10 km run, or a half-marathon run.

Register, run and raise funds for St Vincent's.

Head to [www.stvfoundation.org.au/event/run-melbourne-2020](http://www.stvfoundation.org.au/event/run-melbourne-2020) for information on how to register.



*Team members from Run Melbourne 2019*

### CHECK OUT OUR FOUNDATION WEBSITE

To donate easily, start your own fundraising event and keep up-to-date with the latest hospital news and events, visit: [www.stvfoundation.org.au](http://www.stvfoundation.org.au)



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