



St Vincent's Cares

Message from the Executive Director

I am thrilled to share inspiring stories and updates with you that speak to the heart and soul of our St Vincent's community.

One of the highlights of this edition is the remarkable journey of Kirsten Sandstrom, a Cardiac Clinical Nurse Specialist who exemplifies the essence of dedication. Balancing a demanding role and a young family, Kirsten's pursuit of a postgraduate qualification, supported by our Nursing Scholarship Fund, has been nothing short of extraordinary. Her story is a testament to the transformative power of education and the profound impact that your support is having. Her deep commitment to her patients and peers inspires us all.

We have been in awe over the rapid transformation of our Fitzroy Campus over the past months, with the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery now standing 11 levels proud and the new Private Hospital Tower having been completed.

These significant investments into our Fitzroy Campus would not have been possible without your support. They will elevate patient care to new heights, reflecting our ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation.

I hope you will enjoy reading more about the global reach of your support to St Vincent's. Our innovative training program for surgeons in Kenya leverages cutting-edge technology to make a lasting impact on healthcare in under-resourced regions.

Thank you for your care and support and for being part of our St Vincent's community. Together, we are shaping a future where excellence in care and compassion go hand in hand. Thank you again for your unwavering dedication and generosity.

Warm regards,

Melina Talanis
Executive Director (acting)
St Vincent's Foundation
Victoria



Melina Talanis

We have a new home!

The St Vincent's Foundation Victoria office is now located on Level 3, 100 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne.

**To arrange a visit,
please call 03 9231 3365.**

Striving for greatness

St Vincent's nurses have one very special quality in common: deep compassion. It's in their DNA! And it is this deep compassion that drives nurses like Cardiac Clinical Nurse Specialist Kirsten Sandstrom to be the best they can be.

Despite juggling work and a young family, Kirsten has remained dedicated to her studies, keeping up with the fast-paced learning to earn her postgraduate qualification.

Kirsten's commitment to her patients and her team and thirst for knowledge didn't go unnoticed. Last year, she was awarded a nursing scholarship and recognised as the 2023 Postgraduate Nurse of the Year. "It was such a surprise and honour to receive the scholarship."

After her father passed away, Kirsten was inspired to continue her studies. "Losing my father reinforced my passion for education. That's why I'm now doing my Masters. I want to learn to become a Nurse Practitioner because I love sharing the gift of knowledge with my peers and developing my skills further to benefit my patients."

Thirteen years as a nurse at St Vincent's has taught Kirsten many things, but her enduring love of nursing comes down to the 'little things'. "It's always been the small wins that give me joy. Ensuring a male patient was clean-shaven after weeks of being unable to do it himself, advocating for a palliative patient to die at home, encouraging a patient to participate in physical rehabilitation after major heart surgery... the list goes on."

Kirsten said she is very grateful to the generous people who give to the St Vincent's Hospital Nursing Excellence Scholarship Fund. "Thank you, your support has literally changed my career course. I can't wait to see what the future holds."

To support compassionate nurses like Kirsten and give a life-changing gift, head to:
stvfoundation.org.au/nursing-scholarships/scholarship-svhm



A snapshot of St Vincent's Nurses

Scholarships offer our nurses the support and security they need to keep honing their skills while often juggling personal and professional responsibilities.

OVER 3,800

Over 3,800 nurses care for our patients across St Vincent's Hospitals in Victoria.

OVER 50%

Over 50% of nurses say a scholarship to support further study would be a major factor in them staying in nursing and undertaking further study.

Left: Kirsten Sandstrom - Postgraduate Nurse of the year 2023

Opening a **World of Opportunities**

Hear from our nurses about just how much your contribution to the St Vincent's Hospital Nursing Excellence Scholarship Fund means to them.

"Receiving a scholarship is such a privilege. Financially, it's a huge weight off my shoulders. Your support is beyond anything I could even imagine – it's a very, very kind and selfless thing to do. From the bottom of my heart, thank you!"

Jemimah Chisholm, Registered Nurse,
St Vincent's Private Hospital Werribee.

"The soaring costs of higher education presented a significant barrier. Thanks to the support of a Scholarship, I was able to complete a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The scholarship showed me that St Vincent's and the generous have faith in my individual potential."

Jacqueline Rambridge, Infection Control Manager,
St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne

"I want to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported the Fund. It means so much to all of us that you can see the value of investing in nurses. I quite literally couldn't have done my post grad without the support of the Fund."

Elisah Raymer, Theatre Services Education
Consultant for St Vincent's Private Hospitals

The impact you have made

Since establishing the scholarship fund in 2022, you have opened up a world of opportunities for St Vincent's nurses.

"This Fund has been a game-changer. Private Hospital Nurses cannot access government support. We are thrilled to be able to support staff to do essential study."

Ilona Ryan,
St Vincent's Private Hospital Education Manager.

"My wife and I recognise the value of education. Nurses are always there for us when we need them. We feel it's our responsibility to be there for them to equip them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to provide the best care possible to their patients."

Robert and Mary,
St Vincent's Scholarship Fund donors.

\$3,000 to \$5,000

Provides a part scholarship for a nurse to undertake Graduate Certificate level studies.

\$30,000

Can support a nurse to study a Master's Degree with full scholarship.

Your gift to nursing education and training is a gift to our community. To support the Nursing Scholarship Fund:

stvfoundation.org.au/nursing-scholarships/scholarship-svhm



The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery rises to its full height

The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD) building has reached the lofty heights of its full 11 storeys marking the official structural completion of the building. This milestone means we are now more than halfway through construction!

Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll, who attended the official ceremony to mark the structural completion said, "The ACMD is a game-changer and I can't wait to see the collaborations that will deliver world-leading discoveries and breakthroughs to save lives and improve health outcomes in Victoria and abroad."

The ACMD is set to open its doors in March 2025.



Photo from left, Stephen Theisz (Director, Kane Constructions), Nicole Tweddle (Chief Executive, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne), the Hon. Ben Carroll (Victorian Deputy Premier and Minister for Medical Research), Brenda Shanahan (Chair, The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery (ACMD)), Chris Blake (Group CEO, St Vincent's Health Australia). Pictured on the newly poured roof of the ACMD building.

A tribute to a lifetime of **medical excellence**

World-renowned paediatric surgeon Justin Henry Kelly OAM's legacy and long connection to St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne will live on, with the establishment of the Justin Henry Kelly Prize for Excellence.

Justin Kelly dedicated his life to clinical excellence, medical education, and mentoring. His illustrious career spanned six decades, beginning with his training at the St Vincent's Clinical School.

His incredible contributions to medicine culminated in the development of a world-first surgical procedure for bladder exstrophy, a rare and complex condition. Justin Kelly's son Eamonn explained, "The 'Kelly procedure' corrects a rare birth defect in which the bladder develops outside the foetus. The exposed bladder can't store urine or function normally, resulting in incontinence. The procedure is now performed worldwide and impacts approximately 1 in 1,000,000 live births every year."

Four generations of the Kelly family, dating back to the 1920s, did their training at St Vincent's. Justin Kelly's daughter Emma said, "When dad developed Parkinson's Disease, St Vincent's was his hospital of choice. He always felt valued as a patient and as a person."

The Justin Henry Kelly Prize for Excellence will be awarded annually to a final-year student demonstrating outstanding clinical skills, academic distinction, and embodying qualities of humility, compassion, integrity, and service.

Justin Kelly with his granddaughter, Isabella at her Medical training graduation.



SPRING 2024

The new **Private Hospital Tower** to open this spring

The new St Vincent's Tower in Fitzroy will open its doors to patients this spring.

The superb new facilities will benefit an additional 20,000 Victorian patients, offering gold-standard medical care in an ultra-modern environment. The new building will feature state-of-the-art cancer, maternity, day surgery, and intensive care unit (ICU) facilities.

Both patients and staff are excited about this next phase in healthcare. Our patients can't wait to enjoy the plush new facilities designed to provide comfort and privacy. They are delighted to have access to a broad range of treatments and services all in one location. Plus, by offering the most advanced IT systems, patients look forward to reduced wait times and a seamless healthcare experience.

New parents are particularly excited about the stunning new maternity suites and facilities that will be on offer.

Our specialists are thrilled because the new Tower will feature some of the latest robotic and surgical technology, enabling them to provide the best care for their patients.

All our Centres of Excellence promise to deliver high-quality, accessible care for both private and public patients. We aim to equip our talented teams with the most cutting-edge medical technologies.

None of these advancements can happen without the generosity and support of the community. There are opportunities for your family to make your mark on this landmark project by naming a space within the new Tower.

To make a meaningful difference in healthcare for the Victorian community please contact: Capital Campaign Director, Cameron Smith on cameron.smith@svha.org.au



"Discovering I had a spinal tumour was one of the darkest times of my life, but the incredible staff at St Vincent's provided unwavering support. As the President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce (ICCI), I found a way to express my gratitude to my Neurosurgeon, Dr Paul Smith, Orthopaedic Surgeon Professor Peter Choong and their dedicated team. It fills me with pride that the ICCI can support and contribute to the expansion of St Vincent's Private Hospital."

Adrian LoGiudice,
Patient and President of the ICCI



Leaving a **Gift in Your WILL**: A Legacy of Compassion and Care

Advancing a cause we deeply care for through a gift is a reflection of our values and who we are. A gift in your Will extends this commitment and your impact beyond your lifetime.



St Vincent's has been unwavering in its commitment to better and fairer care, always. Donors who leave a gift in their will to St Vincent's become part of our ongoing pursuit of excellence, innovation, equity and compassion in healthcare.

In 1995, Steve Butcher faced a critical health challenge—bladder cancer—requiring a pioneering surgery to create a “Neo bladder”, an innovative surgical procedure to construct a new bladder. Despite the severity of his condition, Steve's care was nothing short of transformative.

“Dr Jeremy Gode and his team saved my life,” Steve said.

Now, nearly 30 years later, Steve reflects on the exceptional care and support that has continued through regular check-ups and follow-ups.

Steve's life-changing experience with St Vincent's led him and his wife, Jacqui to make a deeply personal choice: to leave a gift in his will to support the hospital. His decision is a testament to his gratitude.

Steve said that deciding to leave a gift in his Will was a tremendous comfort to both him and Jacqui. “My wife and I have committed to the hospital to leave a gift in my Will for all the care and support over the many years I've been a patient at St Vincent's. I particularly want to thank the nurses who have cared for me over the years. They have been treasures over the long journey.”

Gifts in Wills enable St Vincent's to plan for the future, investing in new treatments, research, and state-of-the-art equipment. They also support essential programs like scholarships for aspiring medical professionals.

For Steve, making this commitment is a way to ensure that others benefit from the same level of care he received. “It makes me feel good to be able to give back, and hopefully, it does some good for others down the track.”

To enable a better and fairer care for our future through St Vincent's, please contact, contact Kristy Lawler at kristy.lawler@svha.org.au

Steve has a tradition of making his way past the statue of St Vincent de Paul and paying his respects each time he visits St Vincent's, for good luck.

Harnessing the power of virtual reality to save lives

An international training program led by St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne is taking the next step in supporting doctors from rural Kenya by using a device similar to Google Glasses to supervise complicated cardiac surgeries remotely.

Established in 2022, the initial program saw Dr Keith Dindi, a cardiac and general surgeon at Tenwek—a 400-bed hospital in Kenya—spend 18 months training at St Vincent's. Dr Dindi's training focused on minimally invasive thoracic and vascular surgical techniques and the management of ischaemic heart disease. Since completing the program, Dr Dindi has performed more lifesaving surgeries in six months than in the previous ten years!

Oesophageal cancer and heart failure brought on by rheumatic heart disease affect thousands of people across the African continent.

"While we might see 50 cases of oesophageal cancer a year, they see close to 700 and even in children as young as 11," explained Dr Matthew Read, an Upper Gastrointestinal surgeon at St Vincent's who has played a key role in establishing this unique training program.



Tenwek Hospital previously had no surgeons trained to perform these surgeries, which meant the operations could only be conducted every few months when a skilled surgeon visited Kenya.

Using technology to bridge the gap

The program is set to expand with the introduction of technology to provide real-time guidance to surgeons during complex operations.

Dr Read said, "The first step was to create a secure internet connection at Tenwek Hospital. This has been achieved thanks to Australian company Netlinkz, who generously donated two satellite dishes. From there, we need to source the best 'smart glass' technology."

"By bringing this technology to one of the most under-resourced countries in the world, we can have the biggest impact. I'm proud that St Vincent's is one of the pioneers of this program which will be relatively low-risk and high-reward. The main risk is making it sustainable to ensure it can continue."

To find out more how you can become involved, email **Melina Talanis, Executive Director (acting) St Vincent's Foundation at** melina.talanis@svha.org.au



From left, Dr Keith Dindi and Dr Matthew Read.

SPRING 2024

Support St Vincent's Better and fairer Care. Always.



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

I want to give

Single gift:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500

☐ My choice: _____

A regular gift of:

\$ _____ deducted monthly*

My donation details

Please debit my:

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

____ / ____ / ____

Expiry: ____ / ____

Cardholder's name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Date of birth: ____ / ____ / ____

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

Other ways to donate

www.stvfoundation.org.au/donate

(03) 9231 3365

Cashier, next to the reception desk in the main hospital foyer, Building A, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne

Scan the QR code



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

The Foundation is compliant with the Australian Privacy Principles. Please visit svhm.org.au/privacy-policy to view the Foundation's Privacy Policy.

☐ Please do not send me further St Vincent's Foundation appeal requests.

stvfoundation.org.au

A gift in your Will for St Vincent's will be lifesaving and life-changing!

Your gift will allow us to continue making ground-breaking advancements into medical research, provide scholarship opportunities for our nurses and medical staff and purchase state-of-the-art medical equipment, allowing us to provide the best possible care for our patients and their families.

Your kind and generous support will be an investment into the future medical needs of our communities!

To learn more about the incredible impact a gift in your Will can have, please contact Kristy Lawler at kristy.lawler@svha.org.au or call 03 9231 3365.

- ☐ Yes! 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.

How generosity is **changing** cancer treatment

At St Vincent's Private Hospital Werribee, we believe in providing our patients with the best possible care, not only for their medical needs but also for their emotional well-being.

Thanks to the love and support from guests who attended events held to raise funds for St Vincent's Werribee, we are thrilled to announce the purchase of a state-of-the-art scalp cooling system that will significantly enhance the treatment experience for our cancer patients.

What is scalp cooling?

Scalp cooling is designed to minimise hair loss during chemotherapy (chemo). The system works by cooling the hair follicles to decrease the flow of chemo to the scalp. Patients have said keeping their hair has helped them feel more like themselves during such a challenging time.

Emma Saliba, General Manager and Director of Clinical Services at St Vincent's Private Hospital Werribee said, "Contributions from the Werribee community have made a profound impact. The scalp cooling program empowers patients to face treatment with confidence and dignity.

"I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this initiative. Your kindness and support are truly invaluable."

If you would like to support St Vincent's Hospital Werribee, visit:
stvfoundation.org.au/private/svphw



Thank you for **bringing patients** the joy of music

Thanks to, the incredible support we received for the Dry July Campaign, you have exceeded all our hopes and raised over \$42,500!

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Dry July campaign. You should feel very proud. It's because of you that we will be able to fund a music therapist for patients receiving cancer treatment at St Vincent's.

Music is incredibly powerful. Studies have also shown that music therapy can improve anxiety, depression, and pain, enhance coping, and reduce physical and emotional stress for people with cancer.

Music Therapist Clare Ocallaghan has seen music therapy offer so much to patients, families, and staff. "People react to music in many ways. Sometimes they'll lie back and close their eyes. They might sing, tap along, hold hands with family members, talk about precious memories or even cry."



St Vincent's Foundation Victoria

Level 3, 100 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

Phone: 03 9231 3365 | e: foundation@svha.org.au | w: stvfoundation.org.au

ABN: 22 052 110 755

We acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional custodians, and pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future. We welcome all cultures, nationalities and religions. Being inclusive and providing equitable healthcare is our commitment.

 www.facebook.com/stvincentsfoundationvic
 www.linkedin.com/company/81486196
 www.instagram.com/stvincentsfoundationvic/