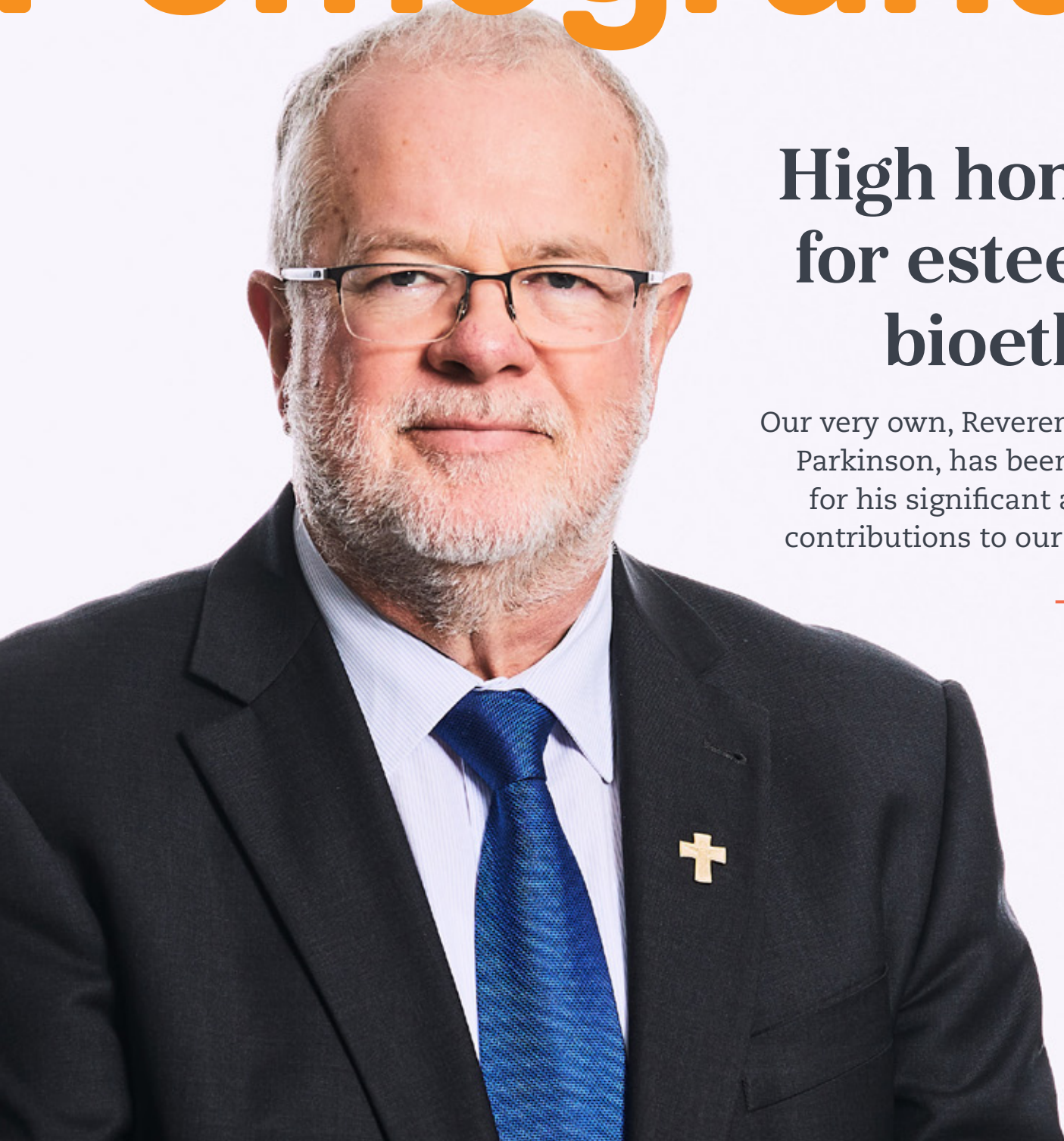


Summer | 2022

Pomegranate

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High honours for esteemed bioethicist

Our very own, Reverend Dr Joseph Parkinson, has been recognised for his significant and ongoing contributions to our community

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On the cover: Reverend Dr Joseph
Parkinson.

St John of God Health Care is one of
the largest Catholic providers of health
care services in Australia. Established
in Western Australia in 1895, we
are a not-for-profit private health
care group, operating 24 facilities
comprising more than 3,400 beds
and employ more than 14,500 staff
across Australia and New Zealand.

GROUP CEO UPDATE

The start of 2022 has been challenging for many of us to say the least. The spread of the Omicron COVID-19 variant in our communities has had a big impact on our health care system, our hospitals and our workforce.

Thankfully, the high vaccination rate means hospitalisations are lower than they would have otherwise been, but the highly infectious nature of this variant has created a significant impact on the availability of frontline workers, many of whom are already feeling considerably stretched.

I thank everyone in our hospitals and our services for continuing to show fortitude, perseverance and flexibility in their commitment to providing important care to our patients, clients and their families at this time.

Against this backdrop, it is important to celebrate the good things that are happening in our organisation too. It has been wonderful to celebrate Father Joe's Lifetime Achievement Award, a well-deserved honour which recognises the significant contributions he has made to our organisation and our communities.

I'm also pleased that we have continued growing our services and care, as well as enhancing the patient experience as you will read about in many articles in this edition of *Pomegranate*.

This year, we welcome our new Chair of Trustees Hon Neville Owen AO KCSG to the position and look forward to working with him closely. We thank Eva Skira AM for her contribution over the past eight years in the role, and I am pleased she is staying on as a Trustee.

Read about these updates and more in this edition of *Pomegranate*. 🍷



Dr Shane Kelly
Group Chief
Executive Officer

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Vale Jack Bendat

Reverend Dr Joseph Parkinson recognised with highest honour

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) has awarded leading Catholic bioethicist Reverend Dr Joseph Parkinson its highest honour for his contribution to health and education.

Dr Parkinson was awarded the CHA 2021 Sr Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award at the organisation's national awards ceremony last year.

The award recognises Dr Parkinson's work over the past 40 years, in particular his contributions to St John of God Health Care, and his impact on the community through a lifetime of bioethics writing, teaching and consultancy across health, aged care and education.

CHA Chief Executive Officer Pat Garcia congratulated Dr Parkinson on the award.

"Dr Parkinson is a well-deserved recipient of this lifetime achievement award. Not only has his contribution to the health, aged care and education sectors been significant, but his expertise and advice is highly valued and has guided so much of what our service providers do every day," he said.

"As a Catholic bioethicist, Dr Parkinson's research and advice has helped Catholic organisations, and our wider community, address a range

of topics that challenge social norms such as voluntary assisted dying, the allocation of resources during a pandemic and the importance of vaccination for the greater good.

"While this is a lifetime achievement award and we know his contributions will continue into the future, this award provides the opportunity to reflect and celebrate Dr Parkinson's impact to date."

Dr Parkinson is the current, and longest-serving Director of the LJ Goody Bioethics Centre (2003-current), which is part of the Archdiocese of Perth providing research, education and consultancy in personal, professional, public and health care ethics.

He is also the Deputy Chair of the Trustees of St John of God Health Care, and an Adjunct Professor in the School of Philosophy and Theology at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

He has held a variety of roles on select committees at WA universities, and within the WA Department of Health focused on ethics in research, reproductive health and privacy of

health information.

Dr Parkinson's contribution to bioethics research has focused on professional ethics in Catholic ministry, pastoral care of same-sex attracted persons, gender dysphoria, and bioethics in public policy debates.

St John of God Health Care Group Chief Executive Officer Dr Shane Kelly said Dr Parkinson, who is known throughout the organisation as Fr Joe, has had a wide-ranging positive impact.

"Over a number of decades, Fr Joe has helped us to respond to everyday ethical issues that occur in hospitals and other health care settings," he said.

"He understands how hospitals work and how people think and operate.

"Everyone at St John of God Health Care, from leaders to clinicians, has benefitted from Fr Joe's advice and expertise as it has meant that we don't have to be alone in thinking about and addressing those really challenging issues."

“The role of Catholic health care providers is to provide care to the vulnerable, in a world in which care and compassion can be rare commodities. As a bioethicist, it is my privilege, sometimes, to help put words and concepts around that so we can talk about why that care is good and that, sometimes, helps to steer future decisions.”

Dr Parkinson said he was humbled to receive the award.

“I am overwhelmed by this honour,” he said.

“The role of Catholic health care providers is to provide care to the vulnerable, in a world in which care and compassion can be rare commodities. As a bioethicist, it is my privilege, sometimes, to help put words and concepts around that so we can talk about why that care is good and that, sometimes, helps to steer future decisions.

“I am very privileged to have played some part in the work of Catholic health, aged and disability care in Australia.”



ABOUT REV DR JOSEPH PARKINSON

Rev Dr Joseph Parkinson was born and educated in Western Australia, and has been a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth for 39 years. He has served roles including assistant priest and parish priest in a number of parishes in the Archdiocese, Director of Catholic Youth Ministry, Director of Catholic Health Australia, and held academic posts including lecturer in ethics and theology at the University of Notre Dame Australia and Dean of Studies at St Charles Seminary in Guildford. His substantive position since 2003 has been Director of the L J Goody Bioethics Centre, an agency of the Archdiocese providing research, education and consultancy in personal, professional, public and health care ethics.

Dr Parkinson holds a Licence in Moral Theology from the Alphonsian Academy in Rome (Italy), and a PhD in Moral Theology from the University of Notre Dame Australia.

He currently sits on the Human Research and Clinical Ethics committees of St John of God Health Care, the Reproductive Technology Council at the Health Department of WA, and the Clinical Ethics Consultancy Service of the Women's and Children's Health Service of WA serving both Perth Children's Hospital and King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. He is also a Trustee of St John of God Health Care, and an honorary fellow of Australian Catholic University, and an Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Philosophy and Theology at the Fremantle Campus of the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Dr Parkinson's current areas of research include professional ethics in Catholic ministry, pastoral care of same-sex attracted persons, and bioethics in public policy debates. 🌐



St John of God Murdoch Hospital wins key award

Pictured: Children ready for their ear surgery with Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Dr George Sim (left) and St John of God Murdoch Hospital CEO Ben Edwards, Murdoch Hospital on St Michael's children's ward.

St John of God Murdoch Hospital recently won the Catholic Health Australia 2021 HESTA Compassion in Action Social Justice Award for a collaborative program that supports young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experiencing hearing loss.

The program is a partnership between the hospital, the Djaalinj Waakinj Aboriginal Ear Health Program, Telethon Kids Institute, Telethon Speech and Hearing, Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation, Cockburn Integrated Health and Paediatric Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Mr George Sim.

The award recognises an individual or team who has shown creativity, commitment, and accomplishment in effecting positive social change.

Djaalinj Waakinj, which means "listening talking" in Noongar language, began as a research project focused on the burden of middle-ear disease and hearing loss in young

urban Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

St John of God Murdoch Hospital Chief Executive Officer Ben Edwards said middle-ear disease was prolific among Aboriginal children, with up to 50 per cent affected by eight months of age.

"At a physical level it can cause chronic pain and dizziness," Mr Edwards said.

"It affects their ability to develop language and communication skills, and this rolls through to education outcomes and their ability to integrate socially.

"Children who can't hear struggle to engage with the world around them and understand it, therefore the

world can become a stressful and overwhelming place."

Mr Edwards said that the collaborative response by many organisations had enabled the hospital to provide free access to services to Aboriginal children under the age of five with middle ear disease.

"The results are instant and profound," he said. "Kids go into theatre and can't hear, they come out and they can, and some are speaking.

"It's bigger than that: they can then learn and play – they can be children again." 🍷

Home comforts for chemotherapy patients

St John of God Healthcare at Home has recently started offering an oncology and infusion service to patients in their own home throughout Perth, and Bunbury.

This means eligible patients can receive medical infusions and chemotherapy in the comfort of their own home.

Six years ago, Doreen Byford was diagnosed with breast cancer and needed to travel weekly to hospital, which was about an 80 kilometre roundtrip.

Unfortunately, Doreen has needed chemotherapy treatment once more, but this time, things are different.

“This time, due to COVID, I have been lucky enough to have home services,” Doreen said.

“It is a whole different ball game. I don’t have the travelling, and the additional expense that comes with that. And I am treated in the comfort of my own home.”

Since St John of God Healthcare at Home’s oncology and infusion services launched in January 2021, the number of patients has significantly grown, now covering the large Perth metropolitan area.

The service has expanded into WA’s south west with the Bunbury service opening in May and in November 2021 delivering its first immunotherapy infusion in the home.

Clinical Nurse Specialist Tanya O’Connor said the ease and comfort of being cared for in your own home could not be underestimated.

“We aim to improve the patient experience and clinical outcomes by offering holistic care and relieving the stress of travelling to appointments,” she said.

“We have even seen patients self-refer themselves to our service, for the convenience, comfort and reduction in stress, leading to a better quality of life.”

St John of God Healthcare at Home has a comprehensive service offering for at home care in Bunbury, including maternity care, as well as the ability to collaborate with external services if or when we are unable to offer the required service.

St John of God Healthcare at Home Chief Executive Officer Robyn Sutherland said the service aimed to provide integrated care for patients.

“We are able to offer continuity of care for our patients, and a holistic option, and we work with local GPs, and other support groups for referrals for additional services if we cannot offer them ourselves,” she said.



Pictured: St John of God Healthcare at Home patient Doreen Byford with Clinical Nurse Specialist Tanya O’Connor.

“Our care is focused on supporting patients so that they can continue their recovery with expert support and advice, enabling them to safely return home at the optimal time from hospital and provide choice on where they receive their care.” 🍷



New adult mental health centre in safe hands

St John of God Social Outreach has been appointed by WA Primary Health Alliance as the lead agency to establish and operate the new Head to Health adult mental health centre in Midland, WA.

Expected to open this year, the centre will offer free advice, support and, if needed, assessment and treatment for people with stress, anxiety and other mental health issues.

The service design has been shaped by strong engagement with people with lived experience such as consumers, family and carers, local health professionals, service providers, local government and the wider community following a comprehensive consultation process undertaken by Social Outreach in 2021.

The centre will be located close to public transport links and St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals' Emergency Department.

“The engagement and support we have received from local service providers, clinicians, advocacy and community groups, consumers and support persons throughout the co-design process has been outstanding and confirmed how much the Midland and surrounding communities will benefit from this new service,” St John of God Social Outreach Chief Executive Officer Susan Cantwell said.

“As a proud provider of health care services in the Midland area, we are looking forward to opening this important new service.”

Managing Midland Head to Health

Ruth Lawrence is the Midland Head to Health Manager, below, she shares some more information on what Midland Head to Health will offer the community and her vision for the service.

What will Midland Head to Health offer the community?

The centre will offer on-the-spot advice and support for people who are experiencing stress, anxiety and other mental health issues. For those that require assessment and treatment, our team will be able to provide that too.

What makes Midland Head to Health different from other mental health service providers?

From the very beginning of this project, there has been a significant focus on, and commitment to, linking in and working with other local service providers so that we can connect people with the most appropriate supports in a way that is as cohesive and seamless as possible. My hope is that by providing a walk-in service that offers on-the-spot advice and support and a direct connection to other providers, we will be able to remove a lot of the stress and frustration that can come with trying to navigate the mental health care system.

When will the service open?

The service is due to open in the first quarter of the 2022 calendar year so we're very much at the pointy end of getting ready to open our doors. I'm looking forward to welcoming people to the centre and seeing all the planning and preparation that has been put in for the past year come to life.

How will people be able to access the service?

People will be able to be referred to Midland Head to Health by their GP but crucially, they'll also be able to self-refer by presenting to the centre, no appointment required, and know that they will be seen, listened to and supported to take whatever the most appropriate next steps are for them as an individual. The fact that we're able to provide both a walk-in and referral service is quite unique and something I'm very excited to play a lead role in delivering. Importantly, the centre will have extended opening hours, including evenings and weekends to help ensure its accessibility.

What can people expect when they arrive at the service?

A big focus of the centre's co-design, which we've worked on closely with consumers, other local service providers and community groups, has been creating a non-clinical environment that's warm, inviting and easy to spend time in. Making sure that the design of the centre celebrates its place in the Midland community has been very important and so has making sure that people from all backgrounds and walks of life feel comfortable and welcomed as soon as they walk through the doors.



Pictured: Ruth Lawrence.

health problems and this stops many people from accessing services that could really help them. Midland Head to Health should help to break down this stigma and encourage people to walk in and have a chat about what is happening for them and for the people they care about. Everyone struggles from time to time, and free, quality services should be available.

Are there any specific traits you're looking to ensure are present within the Midland Head to Health team?

I want to create a team that has the needs of the community at heart, and that treats everyone with genuine compassion and respect. We all enter the care industry because we care about people and their overall health and wellbeing and I want this to be reflected in everything we do. Well trained and qualified clinical staff will provide assessment and ongoing service in a non-judgemental way and with a sense of pride in the service and organisation.

How does Midland Head to Health fit into St John of God Health Care's Mental Health Strategy?

Midland Head to Health is very much aligned with the organisation's Mental Health Strategy to be responsive to the needs of the people we are here to care for and help people to live their best life. As with the Mental Health Strategy, Midland Head to Health will place the consumer at the centre as an active participant and partner in the process. This is consistent with St John of God Health Care's Mission and with the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and the dignity of the human. 🍷

What attracted you to the Midland Head to Health Manager role?

I have a long history with the Midland area both personally and professionally. I was the Service Manager at Swan Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for several years and I have a good understanding of the needs of the local community and good working relationships with many of the other service providers.

Midland and the Eastern Hills region are largely under-served from a mental health perspective and the population is continually growing with areas such as Ellenbrook and Aveyley being further developed. This will put more pressure on existing services and there is a huge need for additional supports. It is exciting to be involved in a service from the very beginning and I am keen to build a team that meets the needs of the community.

What is your vision for the centre?

I want this service to be readily accessible, warm and welcoming and truly reflective of St John of God Health Care's values. Sadly, there is still a stigma attached to experiencing mental

New postnatal model of care to support Midwest families



Pictured: Mum Abbey Suckling with fiance Dave Ruscoe and daughters Marnie (2) and Luna (pictured at 48 hours old) were the first family to access the hospital's dedicated postnatal service.

St John of God Geraldton Hospital is now offering a postnatal-only service, in addition to its limited birth service, for women and families in WA's Midwest region.

The service offers women who have given birth at the local public hospital, Geraldton Health Campus, the option to transfer to St John of God Geraldton Hospital for postnatal care, within four to six hours after birth.

This postnatal care and support includes help with breastfeeding, parent-craft, care for mothers recovering after birth, and newborn wellbeing checks, and is modelled on similar postnatal-only services run internationally.

This service is in addition to the limited maternity service which is available to women who have a low-risk pregnancy and are due to give birth by a planned caesarean or induction the option to deliver at the hospital on specified days.

St John of God Geraldton Hospital Chief Executive Officer Phillip Balmer said these two services, combined, enabled women and families to access private maternity care close to home.

"After temporarily suspending our maternity service in November 2021

due to a shortage of midwives we are really pleased to be able to resume our care in this way," he said.

"We have worked hard to develop a new model of care that offers privately insured women and families some of the benefits of private maternity care while ensuring we deliver a safe and high quality service."

"Key to establishing this service has been the efforts of our caregivers and obstetricians at our hospital, for which we are very grateful, as well as everyone at Geraldton Health Campus. We thank them for their support and ongoing assistance through this period."

Through this model of care, women will give birth at Geraldton Health Campus and can choose to transfer to St John of God Geraldton Hospital for postnatal care with their baby in consultation with their treating team.

St John of God Geraldton Hospital provides transport and clinical support from a midwife or nurse for women and babies who transfer to the hospital.

When at the hospital, women continue to be cared for by their obstetrician, as well as being supported by midwives, nurses, allied health clinicians and paediatricians.

Phillip said the postnatal service offered mums and babies the opportunity to enjoy an extended hospital stay, with partners also able to stay in hospital overnight so they can spend time bonding as a family.

"We know our hospital and maternity care is highly valued in our community so we are really pleased that we can once again offer people living in Geraldton and the surrounding areas some of the benefits of private maternity care close to home," he said.

"We are fortunate within our community to have dedicated doctors, midwives and nurses working closely together across the public and private system, to put women at the centre of the care they provide throughout pregnancy, childbirth and beyond." 🙏

New CEO for Geraldton

Phillip Balmer has been welcomed as the new Chief Executive Officer and Director of Nursing at St John of God Geraldton Hospital.

Phillip hails from New Zealand, and has recently relocated from Auckland to Geraldton to start his new role.

Phillip has had an exceptional career in New Zealand and internationally which has seen him emerge as a respected nursing and executive leader of hospital services. His most recent hospital management position was as the Director of Hospital Services at Counties-Manukau District Health Board, a large service provider in Auckland.

He has a broad range of clinical experience across operating theatres, medical and surgical wards, dialysis and risk and quality. This is complemented by significant experience working in small, remote communities with New Zealand's local indigenous people. 🌱



Pictured: Lucena Unit Design

DEVELOPMENT IN NEW ZEALAND TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO REHABILITATION

St John of God Hauora Trust's Board and the St John of God Health Care Board have approved a multi-million dollar addition to enable more people to access Hauora Trust's rehabilitation and respite services.

The \$8.9 million development will add a new 24-room unit, to be known as the Lucena Unit, at St John of God Halswell in Christchurch, which provides specialist residential and respite support for people living with physical or neurological impairments.

St John of God Hauora Trust Chief Executive Officer Sarah Williams said the expansion would enable more people to access care, with demand for services growing more than 10 per cent since 2017.

"This major investment will increase our ability to provide essential care and support to those who are among the most vulnerable in our community," she said.

"It represents the largest single increase in our capacity to provide health and ability services in over a decade."

Over the last financial year, St John of God Halswell provided more than 15,000 nights of resident care for people aged 16 to 65 living with physical and neurological disability, with a varying range of complexity.

This includes more than 2,000 nights of pressure injury support delivered in collaboration with the Accident Compensation Corporation and consultants at Burwood Spinal Unit.

"We continue to be reminded of the importance of supporting people to live in the community where they have strong connections to family and friends," Sarah said.

"Our service is increasingly focused on transitional rehabilitation, supporting people to reach their community living goals.

"The Lucena Unit will provide flexibility in our services, as well as meet demand from people in need of support."

Did you know?

St John of God Hauora Trust is an operating division of St John of God Health Care, which operates 27 facilities comprising more than 3,300 hospital beds and other services in Australia and New Zealand. 🌱

\$5 million hospice refurbishment complete

A significant refurbishment of St John of God Murdoch's Community Hospice is now complete, creating modern facilities to provide the highest quality of care and experience for local patients.

The refurbishment included updating the 20 individual rooms within St John of God Murdoch Community Hospice, Footprints Day Centre, an outpatient clinic and an array of common areas and family facilities including a serene outdoor garden space.

"The consistently excellent feedback we receive from hospice patients and their families demonstrates that we are providing care which is both clinically excellent and compassionate,"

St John of God Murdoch Hospital Chief Executive Officer Ben Edwards said.

"The updated facilities are modern, bright and create a positive environment for our health care professionals to continue the excellence of care in services we provide now and into the future."

A blessing ceremony marked the completion of the refurbishment which was fully-funded through kind donations and gifts in wills from

patients, community members and families.

"Philanthropy has made, and continues to make, such a difference to the lives of many Western Australians. The original hospice and this refurbishment, was built on an incredible legacy of support from the WA community, which is really special," St John of God Foundation CEO Bianca Pietralla said.

St John of God Murdoch Community Hospice provides comprehensive health care services to patients, carers and family members including symptom management and risk assessment, grief and bereavement counselling and a full range of allied health resources.

The hospice cares for private, public, Department of Veterans' Affairs and self-funded patients.

Did you know?

St John of God Foundation raises funds to support transformational patient care and leading medical research, to directly improve health outcomes for patients and the broader community. Find out more at www.sjogfoundation.org.au 🍷



Pictured: Caregivers enjoy the refurbished facilities at St John of God Murdoch Hospice.



Pictured: Helga and Bluey.



Pictured: Tracy, Ralphie, Ingrid and Susanna.

It's a dog's life

Patients at St John of God Mt Lawley Hospital can now look forward to a regular visit from some furry friends thanks to a new partnership with Delta Therapy Dogs.

Four specially trained volunteers and their therapy dogs visit the hospital fortnightly to improve patients' experience and provide a positive impact on their social, emotional, physical and physiological health.

The hospital welcomed its first therapy dog, a Golden Retriever called Bluey, in mid-2021. This was closely followed by visits from Poppy, Charlie and Tashi.

St John of God Mt Lawley Hospital Chief Executive Officer Paul Dyer said the concept suited the hospital's unique patient cohort.

"We are really pleased to welcome the therapy dogs to our hospital where they will visit our three rehabilitation wards and our older adult mental health ward," he said.

"Patients in these areas often stay with us for a longer time and the dogs provide a break from their treatment which can sometimes be physically and mentally challenging.

"While it is primarily a patient initiative, the caregivers also love seeing the dogs on the ward and they provide a welcome break from their day."

Delta Therapy Dogs visit many St John of God Health Care hospitals, including our facilities in Bendigo, Berwick and more recently Subiaco.

Ralphie the Delta Therapy Dog, an eight-year-old Schmoodle, recently put his St John of God Subiaco Hospital badge on to provide respite to chemotherapy patients.

Ralphie's presence had an immediate impact on patients and St John of God Subiaco Hospital caregivers, including Nurse Service Manager (Medical & Oncology Services) Susanna Murphy.

"Ralphie was able to provide a moment of comfort for patients when they needed it most," Susanna said.

"The introduction of Delta Therapy Dogs' service at the hospital was an important decision. Hospitals can be an overwhelming and uncertain place for anyone, and therapy dogs have the incredible ability to distract patients and relieve anxiety.

"Ralphie will continue to visit St John of God Subiaco Hospital on a fortnightly basis, helping to put smiles on our patient's faces and getting lots of cuddles in the process."

Delta Therapy Dogs Chief Executive Officer, Melinda Farrell, explains that therapy dogs positively impact quality of life and wellbeing.

"The benefits of therapy animals have a strong evidence base. Therapy dogs have a positive impact on social, emotional, physical and physiological health." 🐾

The perfect storm that led to post-partum psychosis

The events leading up to Genevieve Whitlam's experience of postnatal psychosis, which led to her staying at St John of God Burwood Hospital's Mother and Baby Unit after the birth of her second son, read like a movie trailer.

In early 2020, there were wild bushfires causing heavy smoke choking Sydney, and a virus (which soon came to be known as COVID-19) starting to spread across the world causing angst and worry in the community.

While Gen felt some natural anxiety about these issues, she had no other concerns about her smooth pregnancy.

After giving birth, that all changed.

She soon developed mastitis, and despite going on IV antibiotics for 48 hours, and continuing oral antibiotics for several days, the infection became out of control to the point that she was diagnosed with sepsis about six days after giving birth.

"That was when the psychosis started to take hold," she said.

"My mum took me to the emergency department and I was then transferred to the maternity ward and put in an isolation room where I thought I was being monitored by the authorities 24/7, and that scientists had wired me up to control my body.

"Soon afterwards, my delusions shifted. I didn't see my son as a baby but a robot, so was wondering why I needed to change his nappy or feed him when he was with me.

"I never had any thoughts about hurting myself or him but I wasn't coping. I was confused and my mind was racing."

Gen's partner, who is a mental health nurse, asked for a psychiatric review and that is when they diagnosed her with postnatal psychosis.

Postnatal psychosis affects one to two women in every 1,000 after childbirth. Signs and symptoms can vary and can include confusion, disorientation, mania, poor concentration, anxiety, agitation, variable mood, hallucinations and delusions.

Women experiencing psychosis need help as quickly as possible.

Once she had physically recovered, Gen was able to be transferred to an acute public mental health unit but was still apart from her son.

After about two weeks at the public mental health inpatient unit, she was transferred to St John of God Burwood Hospital's Mother and Baby Unit, which at that time was the only specialist inpatient unit of its kind in NSW.

It was there she was able to connect with her son by having him stay with her in hospital and receive continued support from the nursing staff to ensure her baby's needs were safely met. This was important because of some of the side effects of her antipsychotic medication.

"I got on really well with the nurses. I felt like it was a coaching experience, helping me put in place routines so that I could cope when I got home," Gen said.

"I needed that confidence booster after the experience I had gone through."

Gen says while she always felt a strong bond with her son, not being able to spend as much time with him in the early weeks has had an effect.

"Looking back I feel sad that I missed out on time with my son in those early days," she said.

“I had never experienced a mental health issue before. It is really quite scary to think about how quickly your mental health can deteriorate and what impacts it can have.”

Gen said she wanted more people to be aware of postnatal psychosis, in particular the partners and families of pregnant women, so that they could identify the warning signs.

“It is so important for partners and close loved ones to be aware of the signs because for the person experiencing the delusions and paranoia, it is their reality. They will not know they are in it,” she said.

“They need to know to speak up early and that help is available.” 🍷

Pictured: Gen, pictured with her family, experienced postnatal psychosis after the birth of her second son.



**Postnatal psychosis affects
ONE TO TWO WOMEN
IN EVERY 1000**

after childbirth. Signs and symptoms can vary and can include confusion, disorientation, mania, poor concentration, anxiety, agitation, variable mood, hallucinations and delusions.

Reducing the risk of knee injuries in athletes

St John of God Geelong Hospital researchers are leading a new study to understand why AFLW athletes experience a higher incidence of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries than their male counterparts.

The research, which is being led by Dr Stephen Gill, from the hospital and Deakin University's School of Medicine, will also look at ways to reduce the risk of injury.

The entire Geelong AFLW football team will be studied over the course of a year to examine their movement patterns and find any connections to ACL injuries.

Data will also be compared to the way the football club's male player's move.

"There is a lot of interest in injuries to AFLW players at the moment as we are seeing quite a number of women experiencing ACL tears during games," he said.

"So we want to see how we can intervene to reduce the incidence of injuries through changing things like training, or the strength and conditioning of players.

"We want to know what works specifically for women."

Stephen said that the risk of ACL rupture was five to 10 times more likely to occur in elite-level players who are female than in male athletes.

"By studying AFLW players we will be able to get a comprehensive set of data to understand the biomechanical reasons why knee injuries are occurring more often and what we can do to reduce the risk," he said.

"An ACL injury can affect your season and may end your career. It will also affect your participation in other activities throughout your life and we know that the risk of needing a knee replacement doubles after an ACL injury.

"So this research will have far reaching impacts for AFLW players as well as the wider community of female athletes and the community."

The research is the second study into Australian football injuries to be led by Stephen, who is a physiotherapist and has worked at St John of God Geelong Hospital since 2017.



Pictured: Dr Stephen Gill.

His first study looked at the differences in injuries experienced by men and women in community football.

St John of God Geelong Hospital Chief Executive Officer Stephen Roberts said participating in this research project would help the hospital better care for all women, whether or not they were athletes, who experience ACL injury.

"It is really exciting that this involves St John of God Geelong Hospital. Football is a big part of our community and it's great to be part of this research which is the first of its kind to really analyse how AFLW players move and how that translates into opportunities to help them avoid injury," he said.

"It is also likely to help our specialists and physiotherapists better support women after surgery to reduce the risk of re-injuring their knees." 🙏

Our researchers leading the way in colorectal cancer

A ground-breaking research project being conducted by St John of God Subiaco Hospital's Colorectal Cancer Research Group could give specialists new ways of predicting the risk of metastatic disease in colorectal cancer patients and ultimately save lives.

Colorectal cancer is one of the most common cancers worldwide, and is a leading cause of cancer related deaths in Australia. Fortunately, through early detection, the cancer can be successfully treated with surgery and in some cases, without chemotherapy treatment.

However, for about 10 to 20 per cent of patients, the cancer can return later and spread to the liver and/or lungs, leading to a poor prognosis. This spread to different parts of the body is known as metastatic disease.

The research study, 'Biomarkers in colorectal cancer metastasis', is being led by Prof Cameron Platell, who said that to significantly improve health outcomes for patients affected by colorectal cancer, identification of risk factors for developing metastasis was critical.

"Earlier and more accurate identification of patients in this high-risk group will allow earlier intervention and more tailored treatment plans specific to patients' needs. Most importantly, it will ultimately result in fewer people dying from the disease," he said.

"We want to better understand early indicators of colorectal cancer progression, including factors that can

put a patient in a high-risk group for developing metastatic disease, and if developed, where the disease is most likely to occur.

"This will primarily involve analysis of blood samples to identify cancer exosomes (fragments of cancer cells) and DNA from cancer cells that can be detected in blood samples, as well as the body's immune response to the cancer."

The study has been made possible through the philanthropic support and generosity of St John of God Foundation donors, including the Tony Fini Foundation, the Iannello Family and other valued supporters.

Tony Fini Foundation representative Nadia Lefroy said that the Tony Fini Foundation has been a great supporter of the St John of God Foundation for many years now.

"We support medical research and believe in making patients and their families' lives more comfortable when experiencing the hardships of life," she said.

Terry Iannello added that both he and his wife had been affected by cancer, which drove them to support

better health outcomes for others, for generations to come.

"Research is so important because it is the only way we can get closer to finding answers and cures," he said. 🍷

Pictured: Prof Cameron Platell.



Berwick caregiver selflessly flies one COVID-19 coop to help another

In an act of selflessness that many could not imagine, one St John of God Health Care nurse last year took on the challenge of volunteering at Fiji's biggest hospital to care for patients with COVID-19.

Following a request by the Fijian Government, St John of God Berwick Hospital Infection Prevention Control Nurse Priscilla Singh joined four other Australian medical professionals to work alongside the country's Ministry of Health and Medical Services to respond to an urgent call for COVID-19 surge support in September 2021.

Leaving behind her husband and two young children aged 10 and 11, Priscilla assisted with Fiji's COVID recovery by educating caregivers on important methods of infection prevention and control and offering clinical care support to the Colonial War Memorial Hospital's 600-bed facility.

"It was certainly a different scene, especially when you consider how under-resourced the country can be," Priscilla said.

"But in saying that — they certainly did well with what little they had."

Priscilla spent much of her time making recommendations on how to safely open up with the necessary infection prevention and control knowledge.

"There were lots of donning and doffing training sessions, teaching the caregivers about improved infection control measures and just general clinical and collegial support," Priscilla said.

"Many of the Fijian caregivers lost frontline colleagues due to death or quarantine requirements during the outbreak."

With no PPE equipment to begin with, it's not surprising health care workers were an easy target for this disease.

"There wasn't even medical tape to hold cannulas in place," she said.

"It's amazing to see how they've recovered."

Priscilla notes that small wins like now having an oxygen tank onsite and receiving 50 alcohol hand sanitiser holders to attach at entrance points around the hospital were highlights of her deployment.



“It was an eye-opening experience, especially when you compare it to what we have here,” she said.

The prolonged COVID outbreak took its toll on health care workers’ mental health.

“When the number of COVID cases amongst staff started to impact the functional running of the hospital, everyone had to step up—the Director of Nursing had to take over the cooking of the food while the whole kitchen staff were in isolation,” she said.

Priscilla, who is Fijian-born, saw this urgent need for help as an opportunity to give back to the country she emigrated from as a one-year-old.

“I still have family in Fiji. My grandmother still lives there,” Priscilla said, adding that getting to visit her was an added bonus of the trip.

“I was born at Colonial War Memorial Hospital,” she explains. “It was what inspired me to want to go back and help out — well that, and getting to see my grandma was a big plus point,” Priscilla admits.

Praising the support of her husband, parents, co-workers and St John of God Berwick Hospital Director of Nursing Allison Merrigan, Priscilla believes it would never have been possible to give the people of Fiji a much-needed hand without them.

“With the incredible assistance of my husband Kawal, and amazing parents, I was able to go. It was also a combined effort from our Infection Prevention Control Coordinator, Susan Marquez and Director of Nursing, Allison,” Priscilla said.

Pictured: (L-R) Priscilla outside infection control unit; Priscilla proud of hand gel holders; Priscilla teaching infection control protocols.



Pictured: Priscilla with a baby born at Colonial War Memorial Hospital.

“What a fantastic, all-encompassing display of what it means to exhibit St John of God Health Care’s five values of Excellence, Respect, Compassion, Justice and Hospitality.”

– BERWICK HOSPITAL DIRECTOR OF NURSING ALLISON MERRIGAN

“I only gave them two weeks’ notice before I had to fly out and yet both fully supported me.”

“All of us at the hospital were proud of Priscilla’s efforts to improve health care in Fiji,” Allison said.

“What a fantastic, all-encompassing display of what it means to exhibit St John of God Health Care’s five values of Excellence, Respect, Compassion, Justice and Hospitality.

“The act of volunteering to go to Fiji was pretty remarkable in, and of itself, but when you couple that with the fact that Priscilla also had to go through two weeks of government-mandated hotel quarantine... well, you start to understand just how extraordinary Priscilla’s desire to help others truly was.”



Supporting salon success

Early in 2021, Melbourne local Jess reached out to St John of God Accord through NDIS Employment Support Services for assistance in landing her dream job – to work in a dog grooming salon.

St John of God Accord Manager Courtney Hedges said when the team first met Jess they took the time to get to know her so they could find the right salon.

“We set some goals with Jess to improve her communications and presentation skills, focusing on interview preparation and confidence when meeting with potential employers,” Courtney said.

“Jess was prepared and willing, and she was diligent in following up and completing any tasks provided such as researching local businesses to help her achieve her goals.”

While it took a bit time, the St John of God Accord team soon met with Dee the owner of Puppytopia, a local Greensborough dog grooming salon, who was keen to offer Jess work experience.



Pictured: St John of God Accord client Jess.

“It has been great to see Jess improve her skills and Dee has started teaching Jess how to brush and wash the dogs,” Courtney said.

“Our current goal is to build up Jess’s capacity to work longer shifts and improve her technical skills with the hope of gaining paid employment as a grooming assistant.”

To support Jess, Dee has also adjusted her workplace including adding in some visual aids and new routines.

“We are so proud of Jess and what she is achieving,” Dee said. 🍷

DID YOU KNOW?

St John of God Accord is a registered provider for services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Since 1953 St John of God Accord has been providing compassionate support and solutions to help clients and families build the life they deserve. Through long-term planning and guidance at every stage of life, we build personal, lasting relationships.

Our holistic approach covers physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing, giving clients the chance to thrive in safe and supportive environments.

Partnering with TAFE to introduce a companion program

A new training program to help train assistant nurses in acute hospital settings has been launched at St John of God Geelong Hospital.

The program was developed by the hospital in collaboration with Gordon TAFE to provide in-hospital training for students learning to become nurse support workers, with a focus on reducing the incidences of falls.

It will also become a pathway for students to access direct entry into the Diploma of Nursing course.

St John of God Geelong Hospital

Director of Nursing Vanessa Tran said the program was developed to help improve patient experience while ensuring students were given real, hands-on training in an acute setting, not solely aged care where training has traditionally occurred.

“The students are learning valuable skills which they will be able to use throughout their careers, including if they choose to do further study to become enrolled or registered nurses,” she said.

“Their care and support in our hospital, supported by our experienced nurses and clinicians, provides us additional hands and eyes to help deliver targeted care on our acute wards.

“We are really proud to have developed this program with Gordon TAFE from the ground up, starting with finding the best models of practice and tailoring these to fit our needs.”

Students will complete their placement across two days per week and will be allocated to specific patients identified by their nursing team as needing extra support to reduce their risk of falls.

“Falls in hospitals are often a key risk for patients, who may be unsteady on their feet after surgery, are experiencing general decline, or are in an unfamiliar environment and do not have their usual supports,” Vanessa said.

“Reducing the risk for these patients is not a simple fix. This model is just one of the innovative ways we are looking to improve the safety and wellbeing of our patients in hospital.”

Importantly, the program will be evaluated by Deakin University to assess its effectiveness in reducing falls.

The first students will start in the hospital in March 2022. 🍷

SCANNED HEALTH RECORD SYSTEM IMPROVES PATIENT CARE

A new patient record scanning and viewing system is enabling caregivers to have easy and secure access to important patient details.

The new Scanned Health Record System (SHRS), which is being rolled out across St John of God Health Care hospitals, provides caregivers with online access to a patient's medical records from anywhere in the hospital.

Ready access to the most up-to-date patient information enables caregivers to easily make critical medical decisions in a timely manner, which

is improving the patient's experience, safety and care.

“We're pleased to have delivered the scanned health record to our hospitals. It is something that will benefit both our patients and caregivers by reducing clinical risk and manual processes,” St John of God Health Care Project Manager Tracey Hilton said.

“The ability to access the patient record digitally, from anywhere in the hospital is a huge benefit.”

We asked our hospital caregivers what impact the new system was having at their sites:

“The scanned record makes quality auditing extremely efficient and easy. Being readily accessible enables quick record review and reduces the need to request the record as we previously did with the hard copy record.”

– St John of God Warrnambool Hospital.

“The scanned health record system allowed clinical coders to work remotely through COVID lockdowns. Great for the caregiver, and the organisation.”

– St John of God Berwick Hospital.

“Love the ability to enlarge a document so I can decipher handwriting. It's extremely user friendly, far superior to any scanned record system I have used elsewhere.”

– St John of God Geelong Hospital.

“On the whole, users (including the clinical coders) are very impressed with the ease of being able to view the images.”

– St John of God Subiaco Hospital.

“It's great that several users can view the record all at the same time.”

– St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals. 🍷



“Mr Owen has the ideal credentials to ensure that St John of God Health Care remains true to its Catholic Ministry while ensuring strong stewardship through the appointment and oversight of a highly qualified and capable Board,”

– OUTGOING CHAIR MS EVA SKIRA AM

Our new Chair of Trustees

The Trustees of St John of God Australia Limited have announced the appointment of the Hon Neville Owen AO KCSG as the new Chair of Trustees of St John of God Health Care Inc.

Mr Owen, who has been a Trustee since January 2020, replaces Ms Eva Skira AM, who has stepped down as Chair after serving the maximum eight years in the role.

Ms Skira is continuing as a Trustee.

After 20 years of practice as a barrister and solicitor, Mr Owen was a judge of the WA Supreme Court for almost 20 years and was the senior judge of the Court of Appeal.

Mr Owen has excellent credentials and considerable expertise in corporate governance. In April 2003 he completed a two-year Royal Commission into the collapse of the HIH Insurance group, making significant recommendations which have influenced the development of the regulatory framework for corporations and financial institutions and made a contribution to the evolution of corporate governance practices.

In July 2003 he started hearing the three-year case involving the fate of the assets of the Bell group of companies which ultimately became the second longest case in Australian legal history.

He has assisted several not-for-profit organisations with advice on corporate governance systems and board member induction programmes, and he has presented at many forums on corporate governance and professional and business ethics.

He has been an Adjunct Professor of Law and visiting lecturer in law at both UWA and the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA). He has been a member of the Board of Governors of UNDA almost since its inception and has served terms as Chancellor and a Trustee of the University.

Mr Owen has a long held and deep interest in the education system and has been the Chair of the governing body of a number of different primary and secondary schools. At the end of 2021, after around 20 years, he completed his tenure as the Chair of the Board of Iona Presentation College.

Outgoing Chair Ms Skira said that the combination of Mr Owen's deep experience in corporate governance and his knowledge and commitment to the Catholic sector positioned him well to serve as the new Trustee Chair.

"Mr Owen has the ideal credentials to ensure that St John of God Health Care remains true to its Catholic Ministry while ensuring strong stewardship through the appointment and oversight of a highly qualified and capable Board," she said.

"He takes the role with a good understanding of the role of the Trustees after serving a year, and the other Trustees and I look forward to continuing under his leadership."

Ms Skira also thanked Trustees Mary McComish and John (Jack) Moore who were farewelled after their respective eight-year terms. 🍷



Pictured: St John of God Health Care's 2022 medical interns cohort.

Junior doctor program grows

St John of God Health Care's biggest cohort of medical interns commenced in January this year and, for the first time, running across the organisation's three largest Perth hospitals.

Now in its third year, the intern program is based at St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals with interns undertaking rotations at St John of God Subiaco Hospital and, for the first time, St John of God Murdoch Hospital.

St John of God Health Care Group CEO Dr Shane Kelly said the intern program now included 20 medical interns across the three sites.

"This means medical interns now have a greater variety of medical areas and locations to gain experience," he said.

"It is also the first year that graduates

of the Curtin University's new medical school have joined the intern program."

St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals CEO Michael Hogan said he was delighted to welcome our latest cohort of medical interns and wished them all the very best as they officially begin their medical career.

"We place great focus on providing our doctors in training with an outstanding teaching and training experience and supportive environment," he said.

"Our unique four-term internship program has been created to provide

interns with dedicated learning and research opportunities and a supportive environment, including flexible work arrangements."

St John of God Health Care has a long and proud history of providing training for junior doctors at our various hospitals including through partnerships with tertiary public hospitals.

Dr Kelly said the intern program formed part of the organisation's focus on making a substantial contribution to the development of a highly skilled medical workforce. 🍷

Ms Shelly Park appointed to Board



The Trustees of St John of God Health Care have announced the appointment of Ms Shelly Park to its Board.

A former Victorian Business Woman of the Year (2011), Ms Park, who has a background in nursing, has extensive experience in health care leadership and has worked across a diverse range of not for profit, public and private health care organisations including as CEO Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, CEO Monash Health, and a leader in a number of NZ-based roles. She also has experience as a non-executive director in health-related organisations.

St John of God Health Care Chair of Trustees Ms Eva Skira AM, said, at the time of Ms Park's appointment, that Ms Park had outstanding credentials in safety, risk management and stewardship within health care settings, all key areas of focus for the organisation.

"Shelly's appointment will contribute to the overall strength of the St John of God Health Board and we are delighted to welcome her," she said.

St John of God Health Care Board Chair Hon Kerry Sanderson AC CVO welcomed her appointment.

"Shelly brings a passion for the voice of the patient and clinical leadership, which is very important for St John of God Health Care as a Mission-led person-centred organisation with a strong focus on values, patient experience and clinical excellence," she said.

Ms Skira and Mrs Sanderson also thanked outgoing Victorian-based Board member Julie Caldecott, who served on the St John of God Health Care Board for seven years, for her significant contribution to the organisation. 🍷

"Ms Park brings a passion for the voice of the patient and clinical leadership, which is very important for St John of God Health Care as a Mission-led person-centred organisation with a strong focus on values, patient experience and clinical excellence,"

– BOARD CHAIR HON KERRY SANDERSON AC CVO



New scholarship to support women in our workforce

Last year, St John of God Health Care announced a new scholarship to support women in our workforce to undertake study in a number of clinical fields.

The Sister Bridget Clancy Scholarship for the Empowerment of Women through Education Scholarship is open to any female caregivers looking to undertake an undergraduate degree or postnatal qualification.

Sponsored by the Sisters of St John of God, the scholarship supports career development and professional growth, and continues the legacy and vision of the courageous women who founded St John of God Health Care.

In its inaugural year, the scholarship has been awarded to 36 women who work in various hospitals across all states we operate.

St John of God Health Care Group Chief Executive Officer Dr Shane Kelly said he was delighted that the Sisters of St John of God had provided this new opportunity.

“Our clinical caregivers are on the frontline providing consistently high quality care to our patients and clients,” he said.

“The scholarship aims to reward and recognise performance excellence and support skills development”.

The scholarship is targeted at caregivers working in clinical fields such as midwifery, allied health, palliative care, mental health, international health and a range of nursing specialties.

It is a part of St John of God Health Care’s focus on providing education and career support, through its extensive learning and development programs for caregivers.

The scholarship is named after Sister Bridget Clancy to recognise her critical role as one of the founding Sisters.

Sister Bridget Clancy made her vows as a Sister of St John of God in April 1874. When she joined the Sisters she cared for women in St Bridget’s Home, a home for women within Wexford Jail. She was the primary mentor for women who aspired to become a Sister of St John of God, and was responsible for overseeing their religious and spiritual development. 🍷

“Our clinical caregivers are on the frontline providing consistently high quality care to our patients and clients. The scholarship aims to reward and recognise performance excellence and support skills development”.

**– CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DR SHANE KELLY**

Pictured: Some of the winners of the Sister Bridget Clancy Scholarship.

Australia Day Honours for one of our own

St John of God Health Care Board Member James McMahon DSC DSM has been recognised for his service to veterans and their families, and to the community with an appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day 2022 Honours.

Mr McMahon, who has been a member of the St John of God Health Care Board since July 2017, said he was pleased and honoured to receive the recognition.

“I’m fortunate to be in a position to be able to advocate and work for the benefit of those Australians who choose to serve their country through military service and to raise awareness of some of the issues, including mental health issues, which returning service men and women may face,” he said.

Mr McMahon has previously been recognised with Western Australia’s highest honour, Western Australian of the Year, which he received in 2019.

Mr McMahon spent 24 years’ in the Australian Defence Force, including holding roles as Commanding Officer of the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) and SAS Squadron Commander, during which time he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal.

He has worked in both the public and private sectors, including as the Commissioner for the Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia and advising organisations on strategy, operations, risk, governance and management.

He is currently an ambassador for The Fathering Project, which provides research and education programs that support and inspire fathers.

St John of God Health Care Board Chair Mrs Kerry Sanderson AC CVO congratulated Mr McMahon on behalf of St John of God Health Care.

“We are very fortunate to have James as a Board member. He epitomises the values of courage, compassion and selflessness that are so integral to health care workers, including our own caregivers and which have been so evident particularly throughout this time of COVID,” she said.

“He is a very worthy recipient of this honour and we are delighted to see him recognised.” 🍷





“We are very fortunate to have James as a Board member. He epitomises the values of courage, compassion and selflessness that are so integral to health care workers, including our own caregivers and which have been so evident particularly throughout this time of COVID,”

– BOARD CHAIR MRS KERRY SANDERSON AC CVO



Pictured: Left to right: Dan Smetana, Vic Jakovich, Professor Michael Quinlan, David Goldstone, Jack Bendat, Dr Shane Kelly, Archbishop Barry Hickey, Don Good.



Pictured: Jack Bendat and his wife Eleanor at the opening of Horizon House Geraldton in 2006.

Vale

Jack Bendat

St John of God Health Care and St John of God Foundation are deeply saddened by the passing of highly respected, well-known WA businessman and philanthropist Jack Bendat AM CitWA.

Jack was passionate about improving the lives and health outcomes of West Australians and his contributions have made significant and long-lasting impacts to so many.

He, along with his family, have been philanthropic supporters of St John of God Foundation for 20 years.

His philanthropic contributions of almost \$10 million over that time have enabled world class cancer care, leading medical research and provided stability and support for vulnerable young people at St John of God Health Care services in Western Australia.

Notably, he and his family provided generous support towards the Bendat Family Comprehensive Cancer Centre at St John of God Subiaco Hospital, which brought together many of the elements involved in cancer care including oncology, haematology and palliative care, and research. Outside of his and wife Eleanor's personal donation, Jack was instrumental in the fundraising campaign for the centre, serving as Campaign President.

He also provided generous support to establish several Bendat Horizon Houses across Western Australia and Victoria which provide accommodation and support services for young people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

His legacy will also live on through the ongoing advancements in medical care enabled through the Bendat Respiratory Research and Development Fund, which included establishing and continuing the only thoracic cancer biobank in Western Australia, enabling meaningful research into the future.

His passionate support for the health care and wellbeing of our community was boundless.

We are honoured to have an enduring legacy with the Bendat family, and are forever grateful for Jack's long term support and dedication to improving and transforming the lives and health outcomes of West Australians.

We extend our deepest condolences to Jack's family and loved ones at this difficult time.

Mrs Kerry Sanderson AC
CVO Chair of St John of God Health Care

Dr Shane Kelly
Group CEO St John of God Health Care

Mr Tony Howarth AO
Board Chair of St John of God Foundation

Bianca Pietralla
CEO St John of God Foundation



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