

# Your Supporter Update

July 2021



Western Health  
FOUNDATION



## CHIRPING UP SICK KIDS

### A colourful new mural is bringing joy to sick kids at the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's at Sunshine Hospital.

Artists Rowena Martinich and Geoffrey Carran were commissioned jointly by Western Health and the Western Health Foundation. Thanks to your donations, this is the third and largest mural the Western Health Foundation has supported.

The latest mural is featured in high traffic areas of the children's ward to brighten up what could be a sterile clinical space. Beginning in the lift foyer, children and their families are greeted by the colourful display, extending into the reception area and main corridors.

"This work is like a gateway into the children's ward," says artist Rowena Martinich. "It differentiates the space as a place that is safe, welcoming and a bit less clinical than a typical hospital environment."

The couple spent three weeks on the commission and collaborated with staff who selected the quote on the welcoming piece in the foyer; 'Caring today for a healthier tomorrow'. The quote was painted by Nurse Unit Manager and scripter Kate Ambry.

The artworks are proving to be popular with staff, patients and their families and were recently profiled in the Sunday Herald Sun.

*"I hope that this work will provide a moment of distraction to patients and their carers, giving them some respite during a time that can be really stressful,"* says Rowena.

*Limited edition prints inspired by the mural are available for sale, with 10% from the sale of each print donated to the Western Health Foundation. Visit <http://martinich.com.au> for more details.*



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to *Your Supporter Update*, the newsletter of the Western Health Foundation where we showcase the impact your contributions make on delivering best care for our community in Melbourne's west.

With such a strong focus in recent months on COVID testing – and now vaccinations, it's easy sometimes to lose sight of the rest of the incredible work being done by the Western Health team across all our services.

We're so grateful to all of those who have kept the bulk of our healthcare services running over the past 12 months, often under very challenging circumstances.

We are also very grateful for the generosity of supporters like you, who continue to support our vision of transforming the health and wellbeing of the west.

Enclosed in this edition you will read about how your donations have helped to purchase essential equipment for our hospitals. Your help has also provided funding for upgrades to specialist facilities, and helped fund a new mural on the children's ward to brighten up the lives of sick kids.

You'll also read about the work being done behind the scenes to establish and run some of Melbourne's busiest vaccination hubs. Western Health is pleased to see a significant uptake in vaccinations with over 190,000 vaccinations administered to date through our hubs.

Thank you to everyone who has made appointments, or stood in line in the cold weather, to get the #jabdone.

On behalf of all our staff and patients at Western Health - thank you. We are truly grateful for the support you have shown over what has been an extremely challenging year.

Warm regards

**Julia White**  
Director  
Western Health Foundation

## DELIVERING BETTER HEALTHCARE

**While our primary focus over the last 18-months has been on responding to the COVID pandemic, Western Health has remained committed to delivering better healthcare for Melbourne's west with a number of significant projects underway.**

On March 26, construction began on the long-awaited new Footscray Hospital. Set to open in 2025, the 500-bed facility will have the capacity to care for an additional 15,000 patients per year and an extra 20,000 to be treated in emergency.

It's location on the corner of Geelong and Ballarat Roads, directly opposite Victoria University, will create a major healthcare education and research precinct, furthering Western Health's reputation as a leading healthcare training provider and research organisation.



On July 1, Djerriwarrh Health Service – servicing communities in Bacchus Marsh, Melton and Caroline Springs - became part of the Western Health network. The voluntary amalgamation will ensure a greater coordination of health services across the west and improved access to health services. This follows on from the announcement in December 2019 that Western Health will be managing the new Melton Hospital with an anticipated construction commencement in 2022.

For further information on these projects visit [www.vhba.vic.gov.au/health/hospitals](http://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/health/hospitals)

# SUPPORTING WOMEN IN RECOVERY

**Donations will help provide women with a safe and comfortable refuge while undergoing rehabilitation at Western Health's Drug Health Service.**

The service runs a six-week Women's Therapeutic Day Program focusing on relapse prevention and harm reduction. Approximately 80 women attend the program each year, where they are educated on social and life skills, family violence, financial counselling and nutrition.

The program is run out of a former residential house at 49 Nicholson Street, Footscray. The house came under the management of Western Health in 2000, following the closure of Westadd, a community drug and alcohol organisation that had purchased the house with assistance from a local donor.

*"For over 40 years, this house has been central to providing community-based alcohol and drug rehabilitation services to the community of Melbourne's west,"*

says Brad Roberg, Director Drug Health Services at Western Health. "It's a valuable part of our service offering, providing women with a safe and comfortable environment away from the clinical hospital environment."

Built in the 1940s, the house is a wonderful example of the architecture of the arts and crafts era, with many of the original features and fixtures still in place. However, maintaining upkeep on the ageing structure has proven to be a challenge. Government funding is generally reserved for programs and services, leaving little leftover in the budget to cover ongoing maintenance costs.

"Our main issue with the house is foundation failure," says Brad. "We also need to get the carpets replaced and give the walls a fresh coat of paint, and we also want to install air-conditioning and ramps. It's not just an important psychological investment for our clients; it will also make it a more comfortable environment for our staff as well."

Recognising the value of the house to the Drug Health Services program, the Western Health Foundation has committed to raising \$30,000 to assist with short term repairs, and to help find a solution to ensure that it can continue to serve women in the community for many years to come.



If you would like to donate in support of this special project, you can do so on the enclosed donation form, or you can **contact the Foundation on 8345 7660.**

# GETTING THE JAB DONE

**Lisa Smith is the Project Director for the Western Health COVID vaccination program. We sat down with her to get a behind the scenes look at what's involved in managing such a large-scale program.**



## **Q. What is Western Health's involvement in the vaccination rollout?**

Western Health oversees the West Metropolitan region, managing two high volume sites at Sunshine Hospital and the Melbourne Showgrounds, as well as an outreach service at the Melbourne Airport. Additional hubs are soon to open at Melton and Wyndham. In addition, we also provide governance and supply vaccine to the Royal Melbourne, Royal Children's and Werribee Mercy vaccination sites.

## **Q. What does your role as Project Director entail?**

I provide operational oversight of commissioning and logistics - that is how we get the vaccine here, how much we need, managing the consumables we require, distribution to other services, choosing and setting up sites, and forward planning. Day-to-day is really about problem-solving.

## **Q. What experience helped prepare you for this role?**

My extensive operational background across complex environments made me suitable to take this role. I was previously the Maternity Operations Manager at Western Health for four years, and most recently, the acting Assistant Director of Nursing and Midwifery. I was also heavily involved in developing the processes for COVID contact tracing in wave two in 2020, so this role has been a continuation of being part of the way out of COVID.

## **Q. What did you have to consider in setting up the hubs?**

Scoping out suitable sites in the first instance. We really didn't have much to go on. While we looked overseas for inspiration, the situation there is quite different, so it was left to us as a project team to develop what it would look like. As we were the first hospital to set up a mass vaccination hub, many other organisations came to us looking for inspiration. Most of the other sites are a variation of what we have done. We are very proud of that.

## **Q. What have been some of the logistical challenges?**

Initially, it was the pace and the urgency and so many competing demands. Our first hub was the Melbourne Airport which opened on February 22. We had just four weeks to set it up. Probably the biggest challenge has been starting from nothing and relying on overseas experience. I'm fortunate to work with such a fantastic team with a 'can do' attitude. We just got in and got it done.

## **Q. What about the positives?**

There have been lots of positives. For me, it's about being a part of the solution. That my kids can see that I have had some significant input. More operationally - the amazing people here at Western Health that I have worked with and the new relationships I have formed—collaborating with other health services and working closely with the Department of Health to lead this key strategy.

Get vaccinated today. Visit <http://covid-19vaccination.wh.org.au> for more details.

# GIVING THANKS FOR SECOND LIFE

**Viswanathan Nair counts himself as one of the lucky ones. The 74-year old spent a total of 125 days as a patient of Western Health last year – 30 of those in Intensive Care – after contracting COVID-19.**

Visiting from India with his wife Lalitha, Mr Nair was enjoying an extended holiday catching up with his son Abhi, daughter-in-law Dhara and his ten-year-old granddaughter Aashi when he was suddenly taken ill.

Admitted to Footscray Hospital on July 4, Mr Nair was later transferred to the Intensive Care Unit, where he spent almost a month fighting for his life on a ventilator. After undergoing a tracheostomy so that he could be weaned off the ventilator, Mr Nair was subsequently transferred out of the ICU before finally being discharged home on November 10.

Being on a ventilator and immobile for such an extended period led to significant damage to Mr Nair's lungs and caused his muscles to wither away. His recovery in hospital involved months of physiotherapy treatment to help him learn to walk again, build up his lost muscle strength, and increase his lung capacity.

Mr Nair credits his miraculous recovery to the fantastic team at Western Health, who never gave up on him.

"I am a most satisfied person", says Mr Nair. "I have been given a second life. I'm thankful for all the doctors and nurses who looked after me and the physiotherapy team at Sunshine Hospital for helping me to regain my strength," he said.

Six months on, Mr Nair is still recovering from his harrowing ordeal. Ongoing shortness of breath, fatigue and joint pain in his shoulders and fingers has impacted daily life, limiting his movement.

"Walking was one of his favourite pastimes," says son Abhi. "Back home in India, he would walk everywhere. Now he can only manage a few hundred metres before he has to stop. He would also help me in the backyard - he loved gardening - but he is no longer able to do that."



Before his illness, Mr Nair and his wife were due to return to India in June 2020. With Mr Nair still not medically cleared to fly back home, the family has applied for a VISA extension. The current situation in India is understandably of concern to the family.

"Many of my friends back home – people I studied and worked with – have died," says Mr Nair. Abhi, too has had friends of his own age succumb to the illness.

Despite the ongoing challenges and the financial burden that the illness has caused, the family wanted to give something back to Western Health to show appreciation for Mr Nair's care.

"We are so grateful for everything that the hospital did for my father," says Abhi. "We hope that our donation can help others in a similar situation."



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Many patients, like Mr Nair, choose to say thank you for the care they have received with a donation to the Western Health Foundation.

Grateful patient donations support programs and services at Western Health and continues our vision of providing best care for all patients.

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# AT THE HEART OF INNOVATION

**Donations are supporting the integration of innovative new technology to diagnose and treat heart disease.**

The Western Health Foundation has committed to supporting phase two of the Western Health Electronic Medical Record (EMR) project, with the purchase of 30 wireless electrocardiogram (ECG) machines to provide accurate and timely diagnosis of heart disease.

The Western Health Electronic Medical Record (EMR) project, a major deliverable of the Western Health Digital Strategy, provides accurate and real-time information about a patient at their point of care. Replacing a physical paper record, clinical notes, test results, diagnoses and treatments are recorded directly to a patient's digital record, making them easily accessible by all involved in a patient's care. Whereas in the past, clinicians would spend a significant amount of time gathering all these disparate pieces of information, they can now be readily accessed through one central system.

An ECG is a standard medical test that detects cardiac abnormalities. By seamlessly integrating the ECG machine to the EMR system, raw data can be directly stored in a patient's digital medical record, saving time, and providing clinicians with an immediate picture of a patient's condition on screen.



They are also wireless, removing the tangle of wires around each patient and making care much easier.

It's another way that your donations to the Western Health Foundation are helping to transform the delivery of healthcare in Melbourne's west. Thank you!

## BLADDER SCANNERS AID DIAGNOSIS

**Donations have enabled the purchase of five bladder scanners for Sunshine Hospital to aid in diagnosing patients with urinary retention.**

Urinary retention - the body's inability to completely empty the bladder - is a common medical issue that causes severe and constant discomfort in patients.

The causes of urinary retention are numerous but generally are the result of a bladder obstruction such as urinary tract stones, an enlarged prostate in men, or reduced bladder functionality due to medications or nerve issues that interrupt signals from the brain to nerves in the bladder that control the release of urine.

Bladder scanners provide a safe, non-invasive diagnostic tool for assessing a patient's ability to empty their bladder, as opposed to a more



invasive catheter option which can be painful as well as having an associated risk of infection.

The scanners, worth over \$16,000 each, are portable, hand-held ultrasound devices that reflect sound waves from a patient's bladder to the scanner. Data is then transmitted to a computer in the hand-held unit to automatically calculate bladder volume.

**It is with thanks to supporters like you that we can continue to deliver best care for our patients by investing in the latest equipment.**

# A PASSION FOR GIVING

## Joining the Women for Western Health Giving Circle was a no brainer for Samantha Barr.

The proud 'westie' has Western Health in her DNA. She was born at Footscray Hospital, and her mother worked there for 20 years in the payroll office. Samantha too began her working career there as a radiographer.

Giving back to the community and supporting healthcare in the west is something that Samantha is very passionate about. As a volunteer consumer representative at Western Health, Samantha's mission is to help patients navigate their way through the healthcare system. Something she is all too familiar with after her late husband's journey with oesophageal cancer.

When the opportunity came to join the Women for Western Health Giving Circle, Samantha jumped at the chance to contribute further to an organisation she is so passionate about.

"When the invitation came through, I immediately felt drawn to what the Giving Circle wanted to achieve. To bring like-minded people like me together who want to support this fantastic organisation. It was a no-brainer for me," says Samantha.



"I want to do everything I can do for a hospital that has been a part of my family's life and my life from my very earliest memory. It's such a privilege and a thrill to be in the position to participate in this way. It makes me very happy and proud."

The Women for Western Health Giving Circle brings together women like Samantha who want to help transform the health and wellbeing of Melbourne's west through the power of philanthropy.

Each year, members contribute a minimum donation of \$1000. The funds are pooled, and then the group decides how to distribute the total gifts to a project of significance at Western Health.

For further information, visit our website at [whfoundation.org.au](http://whfoundation.org.au), or contact Jane Harris, Senior Manager Donor Relations on **8345 7660** or email [jane.harris@wh.org.au](mailto:jane.harris@wh.org.au)

# GOLF DAY SCORES HOLE-IN-ONE

After 14 months of restrictions, the Western Health Foundation was excited to be staging its first fundraising event on Friday, 30 April.

The Western Health Corporate Golf Day saw 104 golfers take to the 18-hole course at Medway Golf Club in Maribyrnong, raising over \$112,000 to support new electrocardiogram (ECG) machines for the diagnosis and prevention of heart disease.

Post-golf, players and guests enjoyed a sit-down lunch emceed by sports broadcaster Tiffany Cherry, who also hosted a Q&A session with special guests Peter Gordon, former Chair of the Western Bulldogs, and Collingwood player Jordan Roughead, a former 2016 Western Bulldogs premiership player and a long-time advocate for Western Health.



Our thanks to all players, sponsors and guests for contributing to the day's success.

**Major sponsors:** Compass Group, Gordon Legal, Plenary Group

**Competition sponsors:** Care Park, EcoLab, Honeywell, Lendlease, NCS Project Solutions, Netflow, Perpetual

**Hole sponsors:** Alchemy Construct, Building Engineering, Concrete Construction Systems, Delta Group, Form700, Multiplex, Plan Group, Waterman

**Breakfast sponsor:** Maxxia

**Prize sponsors:** Faddy Zouki, Medway Golf Club, Najla Sarkis, Patient Wolf Gin, Quest Maribyrnong, Scotchmans Hill, Senteurs d'Orient, Victoria Racing Club, The Athenaeum Theatre, The Melbourne Opera

**Yes, I would like to donate to Western Health**

\$35  \$85  \$120  \$250  \$1,000

Other \$

**OR**

I want to give an ongoing monthly gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Western Health Foundation deducted from my nominated credit card on the 15th of each month (or next business day).

Please find enclosed my:

Cheque / Money Order (payable to Western Health Foundation)

**OR**, please debit my:

Visa  MasterCard  Amex



Name on card:   
Card number:   
Expiry date:  /  CVC:   
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**From:**  
First Name:  Last Name:   
Address:   
Phone:   
Email:   
DOB:  /  /  (We use your DOB to identify you on our database)

Please send me information on how I can remember Western Health in my Will

I have already included Western Health in my Will

Please return your donation form to the address below:



**Western Health Foundation**

Locked Bag 1200  
SUNSHINE VIC 3020

T: 03 8345 7660

[whfoundation.org.au](http://whfoundation.org.au)

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**Thank you. Donations over \$2 are tax-deductible.**

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