



# Mercy Health Year in Review 2011-12



# Care first

*This has been our way for generations.*

*For our foundress Catherine McAuley  
it was her life's purpose. So too  
for the Sisters of Mercy who,  
for over 180 years, have  
walked side by side with  
people who are sick,  
vulnerable and living  
on the fringes of our  
communities, guided  
by our Catholic tradition  
of providing compassionate  
care for those in need.*



*Caring for Our Future*

## Contents

**3 Residential and community care**

**7 Our people**

**14 Health services**

**23 Integrated care services: NSW and ACT**



# Residential and . community care

Mercy Health aims to continually respond to the needs of those in health, aged and community care and is privileged to be able to care for people at critical times in their lives.



*The focus of Mercy Health's aged care services is very much on catering for people's changing needs as they grow older. We aim to increasingly serve people at different stages of life and to make the transition between care services as smooth as possible for the elderly as well as those with special needs.*

## Managing “quality of care” in aged care

Just over 12 months ago Mercy Health began two projects to improve care for older people. These were the development of a quality management system and the creation of care modules, which are sets of documents that outline how care should be given. Both projects positively affect the way older people participate in and receive care.

“We wanted to make sure that we had systems and processes in place that could support older people as their circumstances and needs continued to change,” said Kerry Shearer, Executive Director, Risk Management & Quality, Mercy Health.

Susan Blackbourn, General Manager Quality, Mercy Health stated that “the new care modules provide a ‘recipe’ for care delivery, while the quality system ensures residents are considered in everything we do”.

Both the quality management system for aged care and the care modules have been rolled out to the majority of Mercy Health aged care homes, with the others to be completed by the end of 2012. Early feedback from employees indicates the changes are having a positive impact. In one of the homes 45 per cent of employees said the previous framework promoted care first. Once the new care modules and the quality management system were implemented, this figure rose to 98 per cent.

## Mercy Place: A great place to live

It is an exciting time for Mercy Health and our aged care residents as we redevelop and improve our homes in Bendigo, Shepparton, Albury, Warrnambool and Sandringham. These facilities will see significant improvements as we create comfortable and pleasant environments so older people can enjoy a well rounded lifestyle.

Renn Starcic, Executive Director Property & Development, Mercy Health said that feedback from staff and residents informs each development.

“Once a home has been occupied for three to six months, we run an evaluation. It’s vital that we find out what works and what doesn’t, what makes life easier for our residents and staff, and what improvements we need to make.

“We take everyone’s feedback to the architects and engineers and ask them how they can be implemented. That’s what it’s about after all, building homes that are great to live in and great to work in.”

Stage 1 of the redevelopment at Mercy Health Bethlehem Home for the Aged in Bendigo has been completed and includes 60 new bedrooms on the first floor with large living and sitting areas that capture views over the valley to the south and sunlight from the north. Work on Stage 2 of the redevelopment has begun, which will provide an additional 60 bedrooms and a new main entry including reception, administration, café, lifestyle and chapel facilities.

The 60 bedroom extension of Mercy Place Albury was completed early in the year and a number of the Sisters of Mercy who attended the blessing of

the home were involved with the home when it first opened in 1980.

Mercy Place Shepparton offers a new 30 bedroom extension and the design of the new building, with its high ceilings and large windows, embraces its country surrounds. The garden areas provide communal areas for all to enjoy.

Further development at Mercy Place Warrnambool continues and it is anticipated that late 2013 will see the opening of a new 55 bedroom extension at this modern home.

Mercy Place Fernhill in Sandringham was closed for redevelopment in April 2012. Members of the Aged Care team led by Kaye Rollinson, Acting General Manager Aged and Community Care Services, worked closely with all concerned to relocate residents to other aged care homes, including Mercy Health homes.

"We thank everyone for managing the transfer process with sensitivity and great care," said John Fogarty, Chief Operating Officer, Mercy Health. The new home is expected to be commissioned in 2014.



*Zauner Construction was named builder of the year in the commercial category at the Master Builders Association of NSW southern central region 2012 building awards for their work on Mercy Place Albury.*

## **Mercy Home & Community Care: Delivering services locally**

Mercy Home & Community Care offers a wide range of care and nursing services to help people live independent lives. In 2011-12 over 34,000 hours of care and services were delivered per month with more than 400,000 home visits.

In addition to its aged care services in the community, Mercy Home & Community Care successfully tendered for the delivery of Veterans' Home Care services across metropolitan Melbourne, Barwon South West in Victoria and our

southern New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory services. This will enhance delivery of the existing Veterans' Community Nursing services in metropolitan Melbourne, Barwon South West in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory.

With an increased focus on caring for people in their own homes, and between community and residential aged care, we spent much of the year improving the way we coordinate our services in Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. We have also started a process to improve the way we support people when they are ready to move into residential aged care.



## *Residential and community care*

Our commitment to safe, quality care is supported at all levels of our organisation and is led by the Mercy Health Board. During the year Mercy Health established a new Clinical Governance Committee to guide the way services are delivered across residential aged care, and home and community care. The committee is supported by Mercy Health's Risk Management & Quality team. Together, these teams of people set the standards for work practices across our organisation.

### **Increasing carers' skills**

In May 2012 Mercy Home & Community Care introduced a training program for their workers offering them the opportunity to gain a Certificate III in Home and Community Care. This will increase their skills and ability to deliver care services to an industry agreed standard.



Carer and Certificate III student Sue Hibbert (left) with Mercy Home & Community Care Rostering Coordinator Trish Culvenor (right).

### *Blokes day out*

On 26 March 2012, Mercy Place Rice Village and Mercy Home & Community Care hosted a games afternoon for men and their families for "Blokes Day Out" – an annual celebration of boys and men.

Sue Reymont, Area Manager, Mercy Home & Community Care Barwon said, "Blokes, particularly older men, are an integral part of our community. It's important that we not only care for them with respect and compassion, but celebrate their contribution to the community. We were really pleased to host this day and promote social connectedness."





## Pastoral care: Discovering and sharing our humanity

As a Catholic organisation, Mercy Health greatly values the spiritual, religious and personal dimensions of each person. We provide pastoral care to people through prayer, a listening presence, giving support and being aware of individual needs at times of change, illness, palliation or bereavement. Our pastoral care staff are integral to all Mercy Health services and are available to people, whether or not they have a particular faith.

“It has been a great delight to see the pastoral group expand and consolidate,” said Kate Hewett, Director Pastoral Services, Aged Care Services, Mercy Health. “During the year six pastoral students went on six month placements with members of the pastoral care team in various facilities. We also introduced job sharing arrangements that have brought a new richness of experience.

“Our pastoral care services continue to thrive and we are building solid relationships with other providers of care services.”

As they do each year, Mercy Health’s 17 pastoral care staff gathered for education and peer support days. Highlights included sessions on pastoral care assessment and the use of the Reverie Harp, a musical instrument that anyone can play. The Reverie Harp is being used by many pastoral

carers in residential aged care to create music experiences that can soothe and inspire.

Kate added that four members of the pastoral care team are enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Pastoral Care and Ageing through Charles Sturt University. “The team’s peer support now extends to group projects and encouragement with meeting assignment deadlines.”

## *Mercy Place Parkville hosts pastoral symposium*

This year, for the first time, Mercy Health co-sponsored a pastoral symposium, which was held at Mercy Place Parkville on 14 June 2012. Entitled “Three Pieces of the Jigsaw”, it focused on mental health issues, cultural diversity and men in aged care.

Geraldine Webster, Service Manager, Mercy Place Parkville said, “It’s terrific that we could be part of this joint venture and share our lovely chapel.”

This one day symposium was sponsored by Mercy Health, Benetas, Bapcare and Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria Inc.



# Our people

"Mercy Health is a unique organisation consisting of some of the most dedicated, compassionate and skilled people who, irrespective of their own culture, religion or beliefs, share a common desire to serve those in need.

"With a strong and proud Catholic heritage and an ethos that continues to reflect the original characteristics and commitments of the Sisters of Mercy, we are uniquely placed to respond to the health and care needs of today.

"Reflecting over the year, I am encouraged by our achievements and energised to look ahead to our future commitments. We have made solid progress in developing a service culture throughout our organisation and have implemented a number of initiatives to strengthen not only the range and type of services we provide, but to embed our ethos so that it can endure the test of time. Improvements have been made to the support of our frontline services in health, home and community care and aged care, and there is increased focus on middle management and leadership development. A review of Mercy Health Foundation has also

been undertaken so we can improve our efforts to raise funds to ensure we can deliver innovative, evidence based and sustainable services now and well into the future.

"Our new executive structure has seen an increase in skill levels and capabilities to ensure we have the necessary infrastructure and intellectual capacity to continue to provide high quality and effective services.

"Finally, there has been increased focus on supporting our employees and developing a strong advocacy voice which can be directed to improving health outcomes for the poor and marginalised.

"As Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Health, I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to each and every person who works with Mercy Health for their all encompassing commitment to providing quality care to the sick, the vulnerable and those who are at the end stages of life."

*Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen,  
Chief Executive Officer, Mercy Health*

## Community advisory: Listening to the people we serve

Part of our network of people committed to care first is the new Mercy Health Community Advisory Committee, a team of dedicated individuals that helps us engage with our different communities.

The committee held its inaugural meeting on 27 March 2012 and will be responsible for providing strategic advice from a consumer, carer and community perspective.

*"This committee is an important initiative," said Kerry Shearer, Executive Director, Risk Management & Quality, Mercy Health. "The process feeds directly into our strategic and operational framework and we'll be better placed to understand the physical, personal, social and spiritual needs of people in our community and how to deliver appropriate care services."*

## Institute of Sisters of Mercy: A new era

When Catherine McAuley founded the Sisters of Mercy in 1831 it was in response to the needs of the day. Likewise, the Sisters are responding to the needs of today to ensure they can continue to serve the community through their established ministries.

On 12 December 2011, the 180th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy, 14 of the 17 Australian congregations of the Sisters of Mercy, along with Sisters from Papua New Guinea, came together as the new Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

On that day, each group ceased to be a separate canonical and legal entity and the Sisters became members of the new Institute. The 15 uniting groups, comprising some 930 Sisters, are Adelaide, Ballarat East, Bathurst, Cairns, Goulburn, Grafton, Gunnedah, Melbourne, Papua New Guinea, Perth, Rockhampton, Singleton, Townsville, West Perth and Wilcannie-Forbes.



"The Mercy Health Board and executives will continue to work closely with the new Institute as we take our place within a national structure," said Julien O'Connell, Chairman, Mercy Health. "And we take this opportunity to honour the Melbourne Congregation and their Congregational Leader, Sr Kath Tierney rsm, for their leadership and health ministry to the people of Victoria. We look forward to this new chapter in the Mercy story."

Our **mission** is to follow Jesus Christ in His mission of mercy through the delivery of health, aged care and community services.

Our **vision** is to build an enduring capacity and passion to serve those with special needs.

Our **values** of compassion, hospitality, respect, innovation, stewardship and teamwork guide us in all that we do.

"As Chairman of the Mercy Health Board, I am constantly inspired by the selfless acts of so many who work for, and are associated with, the Mercy Health family. They allow us to foster and develop a pre-eminent service for all members of the community.

"I am heartened by the enormous privilege of meeting truly gifted people who make such an impact on people's lives, including mine. I refer to the people who provide our services and work with patients, clients, families, carers and staff all day, every day. Through them I see the links to our past and aspirations for our future.

"I acknowledge the inspiration we draw from the Sisters of Mercy who have dedicated their lives to service in so many fields, never wavering in their mission. I appreciate that the achievements across our organisation could not come to fruition without the respectful collaboration between our management team and our Board who have committed themselves to serving the community through Mercy Health.

"We thank Stephen Cornelissen, Chief Executive Officer, Mercy Health for his outstanding contribution during his first year in this role. Stephen has embarked on and led the organisation through a number of inspirational changes and has been pivotal in identifying new opportunities for Mercy Health to be at the fore in the training and development of those who work within our organisation. Stephen has already stamped his support for mothers and pregnant women confronting mental health issues.

"It is a collective of all of those who work within Mercy Health to remain focused on the sustainable delivery of our services so we can be available to those in need, including the marginalised, and always address the issues of our time.

"On behalf of the Board and myself, I congratulate all on an outstanding effort in adhering to, and delivering, our mission."

*Julien O'Connell,  
Chairman, Mercy Health*



## Mercy Health Foundation: Innovative ways to improve care

Mercy Health Foundation is a valued part of Mercy Health because it allows us to advance our value of innovation. Through the many supportive relationships the Foundation has developed, and indeed the generous gifts from so many people including our own staff, we have been able to lead the way in establishing new services or positions.

Foundation initiatives include the development of Mercy Health Breastmilk Bank, the establishment of the Sheila Handbury Chair of Maternal Fetal Medicine and the Chair of Aged Care. Each of these projects is improving the way we care for some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our communities.

The first of our key new projects to improve care for those in need of perinatal mental health support was launched at the 2012 Mercy Health Foundation Ball. Dr Megan Galbally, Head of Unit and Consultant Psychiatrist, Perinatal Mental Health at Mercy Hospital for Women addressed the 300 guests on the evening, giving them an insight into the issues surrounding perinatal mental health and how it affects mothers and babies.

In 2011, Megan was successful in obtaining a **beyondblue** National Priority Driven Research Grant for Perinatal Mental Health for the Mercy Health Pregnancy Emotional Wellbeing Study. It is the first in the world to comprehensively examine risk and protective factors for perinatal depression across psychological, hormonal, genetic and epigenetic factors and across multiple time points.

*"Care is not about buildings or equipment, care is about people. The Foundation invests in people, training and the constant advancement of care practices for the benefit of others."*  
Gavan Woinarski, Executive Director  
Mercy Health Foundation

## Inaugural Chair of Aged Care launched with \$1M gift

Mercy Health Foundation hosted a dinner at Mercy Place Parkville on 6 December 2011 to celebrate the launch of the new Chair of Aged Care position, a joint appointment between Australian Catholic University and Mercy Health. At this dinner The Trust Company formally announced a \$1M gift to support this initiative from the Fred P Archer Trust. We are very grateful to The Trust Company for choosing Mercy Health to partner with them on their new journey in long term philanthropic partnerships.



Professor Fran McNerney, the inaugural Chair of Aged Care, will work in partnership with 20 other organisations in the newly formed Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Mental Health located in Melbourne and Perth to translate research into improved care and health outcomes for older people.

## Culturally diverse: Everyone adds to our story

We are enriched by people from all cultures who care first for others. They continue to shape who we are and add to our story.

### *A warm African welcome*

Wemi Oyekanmi, African Liaison at Mercy Hospital for Women, welcomes African women to the hospital, assists and advocates for them through their antenatal, delivery and postnatal care, and makes sure they and the clinical staff caring for them are informed and comfortable about their treatment.

Wemi is well known in the Melbourne African community and has witnessed the birth of countless babies and the growth of many happy families. “I’ve known some of these children their entire lives and have been there with families through these important stages in their lives. It is such rewarding work, which is why I’ve stayed for so long. This is a wonderful place to work and I’m lucky to be surrounded by a very dedicated team in the multicultural and social work department.”



In 2011 Wemi Oyekanmi was awarded Victoria's Multicultural Award for Excellence in the category of Service Delivery to Multicultural Victoria Award – Women's Health. In the true spirit of teamwork she said, “The award I received was for all of us, I couldn't have done it by myself.” Wemi is pictured here (R) with Leticia (L) and two of Leticia's triplets. Leticia and her family enjoy an ongoing relationship with Wemi.

While there is a natural exchange of ideas and experiences between people in our organisation, we have guiding principles that help us create a safe, inclusive environment for all. Our Cultural Diversity Committee leads the strategic direction in cultural responsiveness across Mercy Health and tracks organisational activities against the standards outlined in the Victorian Department of Health's *Cultural Responsiveness Framework for Victorian Health Services*.

These include:

- Dedicated staff to support cultural responsiveness through the Multicultural Services Unit at Mercy Hospital for Women
- Bilingual case workers at Mercy Mental Health
- “Cultural responsiveness in health” sessions held for the Special Care Nursery, graduate nurses and secondary school students on placement at Mercy Hospital for Women
- “Caring for Muslim Women During Ramadan” sessions at Mercy Hospital for Women
- The Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit workshop and regular secondary group consultations for Mercy Mental Health employees to develop their cultural responsiveness skills
- Language services and the importance of CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) data collection in health services at Werribee Mercy Hospital
- An organisation wide language services policy, which was developed and implemented across all sites with local interpreting procedures put in place
- Mercy Mental Health's “Vietnamese Optimal Health” program
- “Mental Health First Aid” training sessions conducted for African and Vietnamese communities through Mercy Mental Health

*“Be ever ready to praise, to encourage...”*  
Catherine McAuley



## Providing care first

Together, we are guided by Mercy Health's values of compassion, hospitality, respect, innovation, stewardship and teamwork.

We keep our heritage alive through our values committees, our Mercy Ethos Program and celebration days, and in June 2012 we launched our first online pulse survey to see what people had to say about our culture.

"Our aim was to find out if the behaviours associated with our core values are evident throughout our working environment," said Kate McCormack, Executive Director People, Learning & Culture. "Almost 50 per cent of email account holders responded, which was a great result for our first online survey. Of this number, 87.5 per cent agreed with the statement 'I am proud to work at my facility'."

Part of culture management is succession planning, and in April 2012 we began the new Mercy Health Middle Managers Program to develop our future leaders. Twenty employees from across the organisation were identified by their executive directors to participate in the program. The training is accredited and will include interactive online and face-to-face learning. Participants will graduate with a Certificate IV in Frontline Management at the end of the program.

We continue to support older members of our workforce and are delivering a Mature Age program with \$40,000 funding from the Department of Health. Initiatives include Age Management Leadership forums, Create Your Future seminars focused on life planning and career transition, IT training delivered across the organisation to enhance skills in Microsoft Outlook, Basic Excel and the intranet, Transition to Retirement seminars and one-on-one financial planning sessions.

## Celebrating our achievers on International Women's Day



This year Mercy Hospital for Women marked the second joint International Women's Day celebration between Mercy Hospital for Women and Austin Health. On the day each hospital recognises outstanding employees

who inspire other women, with this year's theme "Connecting Girls, Inspiring Futures".

The 2012 award winner was Natalija Nesvadba, Manager Multicultural Services who passionately advocates for women from culturally diverse backgrounds so they are not disadvantaged in accessing healthcare.

Accepting her award, Natalija said, "I've been in Australia 17 years now. When I arrived I didn't speak English and it was a difficult time. This experience drives me every day to make sure that we support women who need help to access healthcare."



Natalija added that Mercy Hospital for Women continues a successful partnership with Austin Health where staff interpreters are shared between the two hospitals.

## Training and professional development

The key to our achievements rests with the excellence of our people. “We are looking to recruit and retain employees who are interested in joining us by providing education not only in classrooms or through e-learning, but by also moving into the area of simulation which can provide learning experiences for real world situations,” said John Fogarty, Chief Operating Officer, Mercy Health.

### *Transitioning into healthcare*

Andrew Gill is a third year Australian Catholic University nursing student who is currently completing the Transition to Nursing Program. He is employed as a Personal Care Attendant in Werribee Mercy Hospital's Emergency Department and is a highly valued member of the team.

Andrew said, “The program is fantastic. When I was on clinical placements elsewhere, I always felt ‘insignificant’. Here I don’t feel that way at all and hope to do my graduate year here. I am gaining so many skills and feel that I will be much better prepared for next year when I become a registered nurse.”

### **“Achieving the Best in the West” Maternity Simulation Learning Environment Project**

Werribee Mercy Hospital is the lead agency in this Australian Government initiative which includes project partners Western Health, Victoria University, The University of Notre Dame and Mercy Hospital for Women. It aims to deliver simulation based education and training that replicate aspects of real world maternity care in an interactive manner. The project began in March 2012 to support and expand the maternity workforce in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne. This project was possible through \$730,000 funding made available by Health Workforce Australia.



## E-learning

Our e-learning project supports the development and delivery of online learning for five organisational mandatory competencies including orientation, emergency procedures, diversity, manual handling and infection control (hand hygiene). In conjunction with a learning management system, it will improve reporting on training activity to ensure compliance across the organisation.



## Mercy Health Training Institute

Our registered training organisation provides nationally recognised qualifications and non accredited training to support our people in the workplace and progress their careers.

Some key activity for 2011-12 includes:

- New Course in HIV and Hepatitis C Test Advisor (Midwifery), which equips midwives to engage in pre and post HIV and Hepatitis C antibody test discussion and prevention education
- Seventy one Mercy Health staff engaged in the online Certificate IV in Frontline Management program
- Certificate III in Aged Care traineeship program began at Mercy Place East Melbourne and Mercy Place Parkville
- Professional development program for all Mercy Home & Community Care staff
- Career pathway courses for personal care workers in our residential aged care facilities including Certificate IV in Aged Care, Certificate IV in Leisure and Health and Certificate IV in Frontline Management



## Professional achievements

In 2012 Professor Michael Permezel (Mercy Hospital for Women/The University of Melbourne) was appointed President Elect Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG).

This year Professor Peter Maher, Gynaecologist, was appointed a clinical Professor of The University of Melbourne, Department of Endosurgery at Mercy Hospital for Women.

*"Our congratulations go to Professor Michael Permezel who provides leadership at Mercy Hospital for Women as Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology," said Dr Linda Mellors, Executive Director Mercy Public Hospitals Inc. "Congratulations also to Professor Peter Maher, who has been a pioneer in gynaecological minimally invasive surgery and co-performed the first laparoscopic assisted hysterectomy with colleague David Hill in 1991."*

*"These appointments exemplify the many achievements of our people who are highly regarded within Mercy Health and the wider community."*

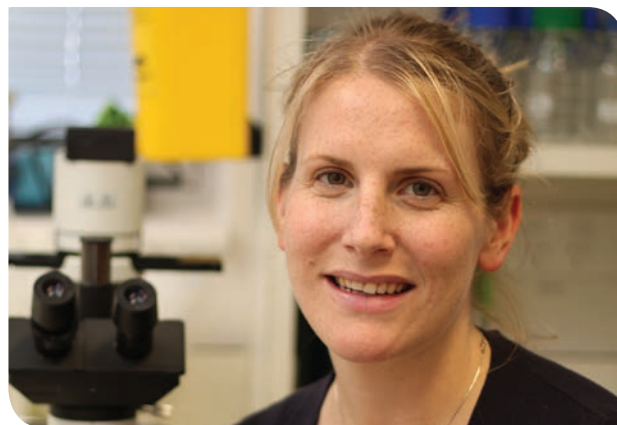
## Awards

### 2012

- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency's (EOWA) Employer of Choice citation (fifth consecutive year)
- National Business Achievement Award (NBAA) for Industry Education Engagement
- Better Practice Award from the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency in the Innovation Category for Mercy Place Parkville's "Ageing Abroad Program"
- 2012 Employee Award, ACCV (Aged and Community Care Victoria) Award: Patrick Comarmond, Pastoral Care Associate
- 2012 Minister for Health Volunteer Awards: Pauline Harris, Volunteer and Secretary, Lions House Foundation, "Award for Individual Achievement"

### 2011

- Catholic Health Australia's "Sr Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award": Sister Helen Monkivitch rsm AO, Executive Director Leadership & Mission for her enduring contribution to Catholic health and aged care services
- Catholic Health Australia Emerging Leader of the Year award: Professor Sue Walker, Director Perinatal Medicine and Sheila Handbury Chair of Maternal Fetal Medicine, Mercy Hospital for Women
- 2011 Austin LifeSciences Research Week "GlaxoSmithKline Young Researcher Award" and the "Austin Medical Research Foundation Young Investigator Award": Dr Clare Whitehead
- 2011 Austin LifeSciences Research Week "Austin LifeSciences Prize for Basic Research": Dr Kirsten Palmer
- 2011 Victoria's Multicultural Award for Excellence in the category of Service Delivery to Multicultural Victoria Award – Women's Health: Wemi Oyekanmi, African Liaison, Mercy Hospital for Women
- Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) National "Sir Ken Robinson Award for Workplace Flexibility": Mercy Health (This award recognises management strategies that allow diverse groups of employees to flourish through flexible work practices.)



*Dr Clare Whitehead, Researcher, recipient of two of seven prizes awarded during the 2011 Austin LifeSciences Research Week: the GlaxoSmithKline Young Researcher Award (the top award of Research Week) and the Austin Medical Research Foundation Young Investigator Award.*

# Health services

Mercy Health is committed to meeting people's healthcare needs through specialist and general medical services. We do this through our hospitals and clinics and in partnership with other service providers.

**In Victoria, the majority of our services are delivered through Mercy Public Hospitals Inc. These include Mercy Hospital for Women, Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre, Mercy Health Lymphoedema Services, Werribee Mercy Hospital and Mercy Mental Health. Our palliative care services are provided at Werribee Mercy Hospital and across the western region of Melbourne through Mercy Public Hospitals Inc and Mercy Hospice Inc.**

One of the opportunities for Mercy Hospital for Women to offer specialist services to mothers and babies is through shared care with Austin Health. The two hospitals are collocated and can bring together teams to support patients with complex medical needs.

In January this year Stacey, a young woman in the late stages of her second pregnancy, went into severe heart failure and was taken to the cardiac unit of Austin Health. A multidisciplinary team of approximately 20 clinicians, with specialised obstetric care provided by Mercy Hospital for Women, assessed her condition and she was booked in for a caesarean section the following day. However, given the mother's heart condition there was a high risk she would not survive surgery.

Professor Sue Walker, Director Perinatal Medicine and Sheila Handbury Chair of Maternal Fetal Medicine, Mercy Hospital for Women said, "I remember holding Stacey's hand and talking to her as the anaesthetists were putting in all the lines before putting her to sleep. She was asking me to tell her partner and daughter that she loved them and had no regrets. She was very aware that she might not survive the surgery. The operation was difficult but she survived thanks to a fantastic team in anaesthetics, ICU, cardiology and paediatrics. Everyone did an amazing job."



*We aim to continually improve care for women, babies and families.*

## Mercy Hospital for Women: Celebrating 40 years of service

Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg is one of Australia's leading women's and babies' hospitals offering maternity care, gynaecology, oncology and neonatal paediatrics.

On 23 September 2011, employees at Mercy Hospital for Women sealed a time capsule to celebrate the hospital's 40th anniversary.

## Record number of births

13 October 2011: Mercy Hospital for Women experienced a record number of births: 77 babies in 72 hours.





The capsule – a handmade box crafted by an employee's husband – was placed in a column in the foyer of the hospital to be opened on 10 February 2051. "It will serve as a reminder of where we've come from, of the dedication and inspiration of those who have brought us to where we are today and of our hopes for the future," said Deborah Pidd, Nurse Unit Manager Outpatients Department and Chair of Mercy Health's Values Committee.

Part of this future is changing the way services are delivered. "We need to find the best ways to provide care to patients and work with other health professionals in the community," said Clinical Director Gynaecology, Dr Michael Rasmussen. "We have recently restructured our gynaecology services at Mercy Hospital for Women to foster growth and specialist services in the general gynaecology units so we can improve patient service and admissions and increase opportunities for research and training."

These changes will also see improvements in the way GPs and hospital employees work together to care for women in the community.

The hospital also provides gynaecological oncology services and in February 2012 the Oncology

Unit hosted a special "Afternoon Teal" to support Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and bring people together to share their experiences.

"The opportunity to look after women with ovarian cancer and our involvement with their family during the entire journey with this condition is a constant source of inspiration and satisfaction to all of us working in the unit," said Associate Professor Peter Grant, Head of the Department of Gynaecological Oncology.

### Transitions Clinic: "Nurturing Mother's Spirit"

The hospital's services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and babies continues and, in 2011, the Transitions Clinic at Mercy Hospital for Women was renamed "Nangnak Baban Murrup", which means "Nurturing Mother's Spirit".

"With the growth of the Transitions Clinic we saw it was time for women who use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services to have ownership of a name that reflects the care provided to them when they birth at Mercy Hospital for Women," said Dr Linda Mellors, Executive Director, Mercy Public Hospitals Inc.

"I was fortunate to be invited to the renaming ceremony of the Transitions Clinic," said Stephen Cornelissen, Chief Executive Officer, Mercy Health. "Those present were witness to the most inspiring and touching Welcome to Country and saw firsthand the special relationship our hospital has developed with the Aboriginal community in supporting women and their partners through their pregnancy and into early childhood."



Lyn, pictured with Associate Professor Peter Grant, was keen to participate in the Afternoon Teal, share her story with other patients and raise awareness of this disease.

### Other key activities

- Obstetric model of care review underway for implementation in 2012-13
- Australian Council on Healthcare Standards accreditation periodic review undertaken
- Emergency Department reconfigured
- Private consulting suites renovated

## Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre: More complex care for families

Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre is a specialist early parenting centre supporting families of 0-4 year olds across Victoria. The residential, day and community programs provide child focused parenting skills to promote safe child development, and the centre is increasing its supports for vulnerable families including families with mental health issues.



*Building relationships through play.*

A new initiative is "Playsteps": a program for parents and young children with an emphasis on learning through play. It aims to build parenting skills, support relationships and improve health and development outcomes for young children. The program is conducted over nine weeks and is provided by Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre at the centre and in the community. Positive results from research evaluation have encouraged the Centre to continue delivering the program.

During the year Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre partnered with Anglicare and Cara to develop a new program "Cradle to Kinder" in the outer east region of Melbourne. This Department of Human Services funded initiative is an intensive case management program for vulnerable young families. It will support mothers from 26 weeks of pregnancy to when a child is four years of age. Support includes facilitating pregnancy care, residential family admission, day stays and group support at Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre. The Centre will also provide intensive home based parenting education and support.

*Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre achieved its first Community Service Organisation accreditation. Overall the surveyors were very impressed with the service, the environment and employees.*

On 23 March 2012 the inaugural Early Parenting Services Forum was held in Melbourne to celebrate the collaboration between Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre, Tweddle Child and Family Health Service and the Queen Elizabeth Centre: Victoria's three early parenting centres. "It was wonderful to share knowledge, education, culture and research," said Dr Linda Mellors, Executive Director Mercy Public Hospitals Inc and forum facilitator, "and discuss our transition from providing generalist services to providing early intervention services for vulnerable families." The Hon. Mary Wooldridge MP, Minister for Mental Health, Women's Affairs and Community Services attended the forum as a special guest and speaker.

## Mercy Health Lymphoedema Services: International exchange

There was a great deal of international exchange this year with members of our lymphoedema team attending international conferences and pursuing volunteer work overseas.

Mercy Health Lymphoedema Services Manager, Penelope Sanderson and Physiotherapist, Jane Philips presented papers at the International Society of Lymphology Congress in Malmo, Sweden in September 2011. Both papers focused on paediatric lymphoedema, an area in which our lymphoedema specialists are extending their clinical skills and understanding. Following the conference, Penelope and Jane had the opportunity to visit the Red Cross Hospital in Stockholm which has a comprehensive lymphoedema clinic, including a specialist paediatric program.

In June 2012, Penelope presented a paper at the International Lymphoedema Framework Conference in Montpellier, France on the work Mercy Health Lymphoedema Services has undertaken with teenagers.



During Lymphoedema Awareness Month in March 2012, the Australasian Lymphology Association launched the national awareness campaign for lymphoedema at Mercy Hospital for Women. There were many activities, including a “Boost and Brunch” morning for young women, and two young clients organised a fundraising event “Lyrical Love for Lymphoedema” raising \$1,000 for the clinic.



*Lymphoedema client, Yelka, was involved in a range of activities for Lymphoedema Awareness Month, which helped bring people together to learn more about this condition and how to enhance their wellbeing.*

The Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program continues to provide financial support for Victorians requiring compression garments and was successful in securing additional funding from the Victorian Department of Human Services to meet increasing demands on the program.

## Mercy Health Breastmilk Bank: Growing strongly

In July 2012 we celebrated the one year anniversary of the first baby to be fed with pasteurised donor milk from Mercy Health Breastmilk Bank at Mercy Hospital for Women.

During the year Mercy Health Breastmilk Bank helped 58 sick and premature babies to a better start in life.



“We have received a great response from our families,” said Dr Gillian Opie, Neonatal Paediatrician and Head of Unit, Mercy Health Breastmilk Bank. “Parents in the nursery have been very positive about the use of pasteurised donor milk and have been well supported by enthusiastic staff. With the success of Victoria’s first breastmilk bank, we will continue our efforts to grow this service.”

## Fast facts

- Mercy Health Breastmilk Bank is unique in Victoria
- The first breastmilk donor was recruited on 1 March 2011
- There were 58 recipients to June 2012. The first two babies were fed on 21 July 2011.
- There have been 59 donors to date
- By June 2012, over 416 litres of breastmilk were donated
- None of the babies who were fed pasteurised donor milk developed necrotising enterocolitis, a potentially fatal bowel condition that affects extremely premature infants. This trend is encouraging and Mercy Health Breastmilk Bank will continue to gather evidence on the relationship between donor breastmilk and the reduction of this condition.



*Translational Obstetrics Group (L-R) Dr Louie Ye, Dr Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino, Dr Clare Whitehead, Ms Laura Tuohey, Associate Professor Stephen Tong.*

## Breakthrough research programs

Our research output continues to grow and many of our teams are creating breakthrough programs. During the year the Translational Obstetrics Group at Mercy Hospital for Women/The University of Melbourne made a groundbreaking discovery in the treatment of pre-eclampsia, a potentially fatal condition that kills 60,000 women globally each year.

The group identified that a particular enzyme MMP14 may contribute to the body attacking some of the maternal organs. Published in *The American Journal of Pathology*, this work was mainly undertaken by two young scientists – Dr Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino and Dr Kirsten Palmer – and led by Associate Professor Stephen Tong who said of the team's work, "Our group has been working hard to unravel the key biological steps causing pre-eclampsia. Our discovery could have a very real impact on how we care for women with pre-eclampsia in the future."

The implication of this exciting discovery is that a very specific target to develop a drug for pre-eclampsia has been identified and the Translational Obstetrics Group is already moving forward with their discovery, trying to develop a drug.

*You can read more in the "2011 Mercy Public Hospitals Inc Research Report" online: [mercyhealth.com.au](http://mercyhealth.com.au).*

In keeping with our mission to deliver health, aged and community care services, we continually review our services and programs so we can respond appropriately to the needs of our time.

In June 2012, Mercy Health appointed Dr Linda Mellors to the new role of Executive Director, Mercy Public Hospitals Inc where she now has overall responsibility for Mercy Hospital for Women, Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre, Werribee Mercy Hospital, Mercy Mental Health and Mercy Palliative Care.

"We have been creating better links between our health services in Victoria for a number of years," said Stephen Cornelissen, Chief Executive Officer, Mercy Health. "By appointing Linda to lead all of our Victorian health services, we will be able to strengthen the way we care for the communities we serve. Having Linda in this role, supported by our Chief Operating Officer, John Fogarty, Mercy Health is well positioned to not only improve the health services we offer, but to ensure this is done in the most efficient and effective way."

*"It's a privilege to be able to take up this opportunity. My key priorities are the safe and efficient provision of high quality services to patients, and I look forward to supporting the staff who deliver our services to communities across Victoria," said Dr Linda Mellors, Executive Director, Mercy Public Hospitals Inc.*



## Werribee Mercy Hospital: Evolving with the community

Werribee Mercy Hospital is a community general hospital providing surgical, medical, maternity, newborn, renal dialysis, emergency, mental health, aged and palliative care. It also operates a Community Rehabilitation Centre and provides a range of home based support services across south western metropolitan Melbourne.

The hospital is expanding its obstetric and maternity capacity to better meet the needs of the community and deliver the best public healthcare possible. Two new obstetricians and gynaecologists have been appointed, as well



*The new state-of-the-art maternity facility at Werribee Mercy Hospital gives women and families in the Wyndham area access to some of the best maternity services in Australia.*

as more midwives, who work together to care for mothers, babies and families. Services are focused on giving women choice in how they birth their babies and maximise their comfort and care before, during and after birth.

The once integrated maternity unit has split birthing and postnatal care into two areas. “Our new maternity facility can cater for up to 32 women at any one time,” said Marni Dove, midwife at Werribee Mercy Hospital. “Women will enjoy a real ‘home away from home’ in our new maternity wing. They’ll stay in the birthing suite for a couple of hours after having their baby, then come across to the single rooms in the postnatal ward. They’ll usually stay one or two nights, depending on their requirements and their clinical needs. Their partners are also welcome to stay. The new rooms have beautiful, big double beds and fantastic ensuites, which are private and comfortable.”

As part of this \$14M redevelopment of Maternity Services, the Special Care Nursery has also been upgraded to provide care for more premature and unwell babies. The nursery is interlinked with the new maternity facility, giving families and employees easy access between the birthing and postnatal care areas. Beautifully designed, the Special Care Nursery creates a peaceful, pleasant environment for families who are experiencing additional challenges at this critical time in their lives.



*“The architecture of the new unit and integrated landscaping clearly define these areas of the hospital and celebrate new life,” said Renn Starcic, Executive Director Property & Development, Mercy Health.*

## New training opportunities

After many years' work between Werribee Mercy Hospital, the State Government and The University of Notre Dame, The University of Notre Dame Australia, Melbourne Clinical School at Werribee Mercy Hospital was officially opened in February 2012. This purpose built educational facility will be the centre of education for Werribee Mercy Hospital so that current and future healthcare professionals can be developed through coordinated programs that reflect our values and approach to providing care.



*Third year medical students preparing for a presentation to their class.*

"This new initiative is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration and will give significant exposure to the next generation of medical professionals to Mercy Health and to our Werribee campus," said John Fogarty, Chief Operating Officer, Mercy Health. "As the hospital grows it will be important to attract medical practitioners and other health staff to the region and we hope the new school and multidisciplinary education precinct will contribute to that."

The hospital also enjoys strong relationships with a number of other universities and we work collaboratively with them and the government to keep developing a highly skilled and contemporary health workforce.

## Enhancing our facilities

We continue to strengthen our partnership with Victoria University and Australian Catholic University and, in March 2012, began our Australian Catholic University and Mercy Clinical School for Nursing based at Werribee Mercy Hospital. A donation from the Werribee District Hospital Charitable Foundation has contributed significantly to this \$3.3M multidisciplinary learning centre, which will provide much needed training and student accommodation facilities to support student placements. Building works will begin in late 2012 and be completed in late 2013. In addition, \$140,000 of funding will provide video conferencing and IT equipment to support training at our subacute health services in Albury and Young in New South Wales. These projects were possible due to funding made available by Health Workforce Australia.



Construction of a new Community Rehabilitation Centre and 30 bed subacute Geriatric Evaluation and Management unit at Werribee Mercy Hospital is about to commence. This project (Stage 1a) is a two level building that will be located in front of the existing hospital. The Community Rehabilitation Centre will provide continuity of care and access to subacute ambulatory care services. For many clinical conditions, direct access to the centre will allow early and effective discharge from admitted care. Construction works are expected to be completed late 2013.

In November 2011 the Renal Dialysis Unit redevelopment was completed, offering 16 treatment chairs for patients. The medical staff accommodation and office space were completed in April 2012.

## Other key activities

- Transition Care Program implemented
- Werribee Mercy Hospital joins the Western Clinical Placement Network
- Werribee Mercy Hospital is involved in the Western Maternity Collaboration to address the capability and demand for obstetric services in the western region



## *Paying attention to the details*

We draw on a wide range of resources as we strive to empower individuals, work swiftly to bring comfort and include all who share the journey, and for each person the process is unique.

Joanne was a 48 year old woman admitted to Mercy Palliative Care in February 2012 with colon cancer that had quickly spread to different parts of her body. She was referred by a hospital for symptom management and end-of-life care at home, where she was cared for by her two sons.

“One of Joanne’s main concerns was to be independent with toileting and showering,” said Fran Gore, Deputy Director of Nursing/Manager Mercy Palliative Care Services. “Through the equipment grant we received from the Department of Health and Ageing we were able to provide an over toilet seat and shower stool, a walking frame and wheelchair

to assist with her mobility, and (later) a bedside commode so Joanne could maintain her dignity.”

To make daily living more comfortable, a pressure relief cushion was provided for Joanne’s lounge chair so she could enjoy sitting in her lounge room for longer. When her condition deteriorated, a hospital bed and air mattress were made available. Joanne requested an over bed table to keep her photos close by and she also used it to lean forward and rest her head on a pillow as this helped her breathing.

The gradual introduction of specialised equipment allowed Joanne to be cared for safely, added to the quality of care she received and minimised the physical workload for her family. Joanne died peacefully at home, as she had wished, with her family at her bedside.

## *Kind hearted donors help children through hard times*

Werribee Mercy Hospital’s young patients have received a welcome gift from a local group of generous donors. The Federation Residential Village Werribee Social Club sponsored a box of distraction therapy toys for the hospital’s Emergency Department. The toys in the “Distraction Box” are designed to engage children’s attention at a time when they may be scared or in pain, during treatment or following a medical procedure.



John Stafford, Emergency Department Associate Nurse Unit Manager at Werribee Mercy Hospital with donors (L-R) Fran Stivey, Roslyn Hoey and Marion Daye.



## **Mercy Palliative Care: When every moment counts**

In caring for people who are terminally ill, we are profoundly committed to people dying with dignity in their place of choice, surrounded by love.

This year, Mercy Palliative Care with Western Health received a grant from Western & Central Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service to set up a Symptom Management Clinic to cater for people with advanced cancer not currently receiving palliative care services. This will be instrumental in improving access to community palliative care



for oncology patients in line with the funding requirements.

The increasing need for palliative services in the western region of Melbourne resulted in approximately \$500,000 funding to Mercy Palliative Care from the Victorian Government for an additional 215 community patients. This target was met early in 2012 and further growth in patient numbers is expected in the next financial year.

Carers are also benefiting from a number of new initiatives, including a carers massage program, which aims to provide some of the personal supports they need.

*"I heard about the Carers Support Group run by Mercy Palliative Care in Sunshine and it's been amazing and surprisingly joyful. I have gained strength and wisdom by talking to other carers and have had my faith in people restored." Carer*

## **Mercy Mental Health: Increasing clinical care**

Mercy Mental Health treats people in south west metropolitan Melbourne with severe and complex mental illnesses by providing acute and community based care. Services are available to adults through acute inpatient programs, residential rehabilitation programs, crisis and community recovery focused treatment programs. These services include a perinatal mental health service to women and infants in western Victoria.

During the year the service received funding from the Victorian Government for community clinical positions which will be used to employ 10 community clinicians and one psychiatrist, allowing Mercy Mental Health to better meet the current demand for services. Mercy Mental Health comprises a busy inpatient unit and community teams who manage up to 500 people in the community at any one time. The Crisis Assessment Team provides community assessment and treatment for up to 35 people a day and the 24 hour triage service manages hundreds of calls per month.

This funding for the integrated teams servicing the Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay and Wyndham

communities will ensure that each team has 15 clinicians to provide clinical management to people living at home or who are homeless. "It will allow us to be more responsive to our community by increasing the number of people we see," said Mario Blandin de Chalain, Manager, Mercy Mental Health.

## *Cooking with care*

Eating a balanced diet is an ongoing challenge for many Australians. Yet, with the added impact of a serious mental illness, everyday activities such as preparing a healthy meal can be very difficult. To assist its residents, Mercy Mental Health Community Care Units converted its activities room into a fully fitted kitchen so people can cook healthy meals together. The kitchen was made possible through contributions from HardyGroup International, Mercy Health Property & Infrastructure Team who assisted in the fit out of the kitchen, Mercy Health Foundation and Mercy Health Support Services employees who assisted with fundraising.

Reflecting on the feelings of isolation that are too often associated with mental health issues, a resident said, "The new kitchen will help us come together and share food as a community."



*Mercy Mental Health Community Care Units residents prepare morning tea for the opening of the kitchen.*



# *Integrated care services:* NSW and ACT



Mercy Health also operates subacute health, residential aged care and home and community care services in southern New South Wales. Community care services are provided in the Australian Capital Territory and services are made available to local communities and the surrounding regions.

“We can support individuals whether they are at home, in one of our hospitals or need to transition into residential aged care,” said Kathy Hetherington, General Manager, NSW Services. “It’s so important that we can provide continuity of care as people’s needs change.”

Mercy Care Centre Young (a 26 bed inpatient facility) and Mercy Health Albury (a 50 bed inpatient hospital) offer a significant range of outpatient and community based care services to the local and surrounding communities. Mercy Place Mount St Joseph’s in Young is a 65 bed high level residential aged care facility and Mercy Place Albury is a 120 bed residential facility providing a range of low and high care beds and a dementia specific unit.

## **Key activities**

### **In health**

- Mercy Care Centre Young and Mercy Health Albury achieved a three year Australian Council on Healthcare Standards accreditation
- Both facilities maintained an “A” rating by the NSW Food Authority
- Successfully completed the Palliative Care National Standards assessment
- Awarded \$93,000 for equipment through the Local Palliative Care Grants Program

### **In residential aged care**

- Mercy Place Albury and Mercy Place Mount St Joseph’s achieved three years accreditation, compliant in all standards
- Mercy Place Albury opened 60 new beds on 20 March 2012, doubling the size of the facility to 120 beds and expanding to include low care and dementia specific accommodation in two new wings
- Mercy Place Mount St Joseph’s underwent renovations and has a new entrance, renovated administration area and improved resident common areas

### **In the community**

- Mercy Home & Community Care increased its Community Aged Care Packages in Temora and established a new service in Harden following a successful tender in the 2011 Aged Care Approvals Round
- Increased provision of brokered support services for the Murrumbidgee Local Health District Transitional Aged Care Program in the Temora and Cootamundra regions

## Where we are located

Mercy Health cares for people in Victoria,  
southern New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

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### Health services

#### Victoria

Mercy Hospital for Women,  
Heidelberg: 03 8458 4444  
Well Women's Clinic,  
Ivanhoe: 03 8458 4880  
Mercy Health Lymphoedema Services,  
East Melbourne: 03 8458 4990  
Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre,  
Canterbury: 03 8416 7600  
Werribee Mercy Hospital,  
Werribee: 03 9216 8888  
Mercy Mental Health,  
Saltwater Clinic: 03 9928 7444  
Mercy Mental Health  
Triage Service: 1300 657 259  
Mercy Palliative Care: 03 9364 9777  
Mercy Grief Services: 03 9364 9838

#### NSW

Mercy Health Albury: 02 6042 1400  
Mercy Care Centre Young: 02 6382 8444

### Aged care

#### Victoria

Mercy Health Bethlehem Home for the Aged,  
Bendigo: 03 5440 8200  
Mercy Place Colac: 03 5233 5600  
Mercy Place East Melbourne: 03 9413 1777  
Mercy Place Montrose: 03 9724 6000  
Mercy Place Parkville: 03 9385 9222  
Mercy Place Rice Village, Geelong: 03 5241 3686  
Mercy Place Shepparton: 03 5832 0900  
Mercy Place Wyndham, Werribee: 03 8734 6500  
Mercy Place Warrnambool: 03 5564 2800

#### NSW

Mercy Place Albury: 02 6024 9500  
Mercy Place Mount St Joseph's,  
Young: 02 6380 1300

### Home and community care

#### Victoria

Mercy Home & Community Care:  
City of Melbourne: 03 9658 9733  
Colac: 03 5233 5603  
Geelong: 03 5272 3133  
North West Metropolitan Melbourne:  
03 9385 9444  
South East Metropolitan Melbourne:  
03 8530 6999

#### ACT

Mercy Home & Community Care:  
Canberra: 02 6253 3868

### Health worker training

Mercy Health Training Institute: 03 9261 2085

### Support and administrative services

Mercy Health: 03 8416 7777

### Mercy Health Foundation

Richmond: 03 8416 7766

### Careers

For careers information at Mercy Health  
go to: [careers.mercy.com.au](https://careers.mercy.com.au)