

Spring Newsletter

Mercy Health Foundation



September 2022

Message from the Chairman

As the weather begins to warm and the flowers begin to bloom again, I am reminded of the new life and new beginnings that come with the turning of the seasons from Winter to Spring.

I am grateful for the opportunity to get out and explore the beautiful surroundings of Victoria. A recent trip to Mildura reminded me of the beauty of country Victoria — I was also reminded of how lucky we are to be able to travel after two years of strict lockdowns. During this trip, I was fortunate to connect with and witness, yet again, the compassion and hospitality of our local communities — including those of you who continue to support Mercy Health.

I would like to extend a warm and heartfelt thank you to everyone who gave so generously to the recent Tax Appeal, and another thank you to those of you who attended our Cocktail event and Indigenous Art Auction. All funds

raised through the appeal and the event have gone to Mercy Perinatal to support their third round of clinical trials to confirm their findings that metformin, a simple and readily available drug, can be used as a treatment for preeclampsia. I would also wish to extend my thanks to Shannon Boland for sharing her personal journey with preeclampsia, and her connection to Mercy Perinatal. Shannon's story is an important reminder to all of the importance of the work conducted by Mercy Perinatal.

As the weather continues to warm, I am looking forward to enjoying more of Melbourne's beautiful surrounds. I am especially looking forward to our upcoming Golf Day on Tuesday 11 October, at the prestigious Kingston Heath Golf Club, which is proudly supporting Mercy Perinatal. You can read more about this event on the last page of this newsletter.

In this edition of our Foundation newsletter, I am pleased to share an update on Wyndham Brickfest and how their community fundraising efforts are supporting Werribee Mercy Hospital. You will also be able to read about our *Compassionate Support* fund which helps our patients, residents and clients in hard times.

Finally, we share with you a very special project run by the Mercy Hospital for Women Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, which is funded thanks to your support.

Please enjoy this edition and stay safe. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you at one of our upcoming events.

Best wishes

Mr Julien O'Connell AO
Chairman
Mercy Health Foundation

LEGO community helping Wyndham's young patients



Andrew Elsbury presents Maree Pane with LEGO cheque

The Werribee Mercy Hospital Paediatric Ward has again been the beneficiary of some colourful and creative craftsmanship which has emerged from the Wyndham Brickfest LEGO building competition held earlier this year.

Wyndham Brickfest President Andrew Elsbury yesterday handed over both a cheque for \$3000 — made from LEGO, of course — and a 1.2-metre-high LEGO artwork of a colourful lion, which he hopes will

entertain and inspire some of the Paediatric Ward's young patients.

The donation will be put to good use on the Paediatric Ward, which cares for about 1,500 patients a year, ranging from 0 to 18 years old. At the younger end of the spectrum are patients like 12-week-old twins Etuate and Leilani, who spent five nights in the Paediatric Ward last month receiving treatment for a respiratory infection.

Parents Paula Nasovasova and Alice Taylor — who is also an Associate Nurse Unit Manager on the ward — praised the exceptional care.

“I have worked on the Paediatric Ward since it opened, but this was my first experience on the patient's side,” Alice says.

“The staff were amazing, they were so patient and compassionate, they explained everything. We didn't feel rushed or pressured.”

Werribee Mercy Hospital General Manager Maree Pane says the public hospital is always extremely grateful for community support.

Thank you to Wyndham Brickfest for their generous and ongoing support!

If you are interested in hosting your own community fundraising event to support Mercy Health, please get in touch with the Mercy Health Foundation team on the details below.



Mercy Health staff and patients with Andrew Elsbury

Other ways to support us.

We have partnered with Silkies Rose Farm who are generously donating a portion of all sales of their Catherine McAuley potted rose to support Mercy Health. The plants will be sold from November at \$62 each. If you would like to secure a plant for November please email or call us on the following details:
foundation@mercy.com.au
03 8416 7766

**Donate today through the Mercy Health Foundation website or call our team:
mercyhealthfoundation.org.au | 03 8416 7766**

Helping to keep memories close for families in need

Each year, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Nursery (SCN) at Mercy Hospital for Women care for about 1,600 babies who are born premature or sick.

Sadly, about 20 of these precious babies lose their fight for life, despite the dedication and round-the-clock care of the NICU and SCN teams.

Mercy Health Foundation were recently approached by a team of nurses working in the NICU and SCN who wanted to do something to offer solace and support to the families grieving the loss of their baby.

Neonatal Services Equipment Nurse, Meg Salmetti, asked the Foundation to fund memory boxes.

“A ‘memory box’ helps families who have suffered the overwhelming loss of their baby to create precious memories by providing a place to keep items such as hand and foot prints or a lock of hair”, says Meg.



An example of a memory box

Research shows that the way people are treated by health professionals when they endure a loss can significantly influence the way they will experience the grieving process.

“It is extremely important that every family that experiences a loss in our nursery is given the love and comfort they deserve. We believe a key element of this care is the

provision of special memory boxes to the grieving families,” says Meg.

“The box and its contents reinforce the fact that their baby existed and that he or she is loved and remembered. These boxes become very personal possessions for the family to carry out of the hospital and to hold the precious memories of their baby”.

Many of the staff in the NICU and SCN volunteer their time to sew and craft these memory boxes, which contain a grief card, a glass bottle to keep a lock of hair, butterfly seeds for the families to plant at home, a candle, teddy and two fabric hearts — one to be placed with the baby and one to be kept by the parents.

If you would like to support the Mercy Health NICU and SCN staff to create more memory boxes, please contact Mercy

Health Foundation on the details below, or scan the QR code to donate online.



Compassionate support guiding us in all we do

At Mercy Health, our values of compassion, hospitality, respect, innovation, stewardship and teamwork guide us in all that we do. They reflect the key behaviours that guide our interactions with each other and everyone we serve. This is why we established the *Compassionate Support Fund* – so

that we are present for others in their time of need.

In July last year, the Foundation received an email from Umesh, one of Mercy Health’s passionate occupational therapists at Werribee Mercy Hospital. Umesh was desperate to help save a patient’s finger. The patient had recently had

surgery to repair damage caused by a circular saw injury and needed follow up hand therapy. The patient didn’t speak English well and was experiencing extreme financial distress.

The patient was at risk of losing his finger function and faced possible amputation. Umesh was

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**To support Mercy Health’s neonatal services please donate online or call our team:
mercyhealthfoundation.org.au | 03 8416 7766**


determined to find a way to help. Eventually Umesh sought the advice of Mercy Health's Director of Allied Health who recommended knocking on the Foundation's door for help and the possibility of accessing funding from the compassionate support fund.

The Foundation was pleased to provide \$2,000 in financial support, to ensure that the patient received the care they needed to save their finger.

The Compassionate Support Fund supports some of our most financially and socially disadvantaged patients, residents, clients and their immediate families. The Fund helps people and families through particularly hard times, until they can access alternative support.

Your generous donations allows us to continue supporting the most vulnerable people in Mercy Health's care — thank you.



 **To find out more, or make a donation to the Compassionate Support Fund, scan the QR code or contact us on the details below.**

Upcoming events

Mercy Health Foundation Golf Day

We are pleased to announce that Mercy Health Foundation will be hosting a golf day on Tuesday 11 October 2022 at Kingston Heath Golf Course.


The golf day aims to raise vital funds to support Mercy Perinatal. Since 2016, Mercy Perinatal has built a reputation as a leader in

the care of high risk pregnancies. Based at Mercy Hospital for Women, the internationally renowned centre of excellence provides clinical care, education and research.

There are both 'Golf Play' and 'Non-Playing' sponsorship options available. So whether you are looking to get your team of avid-golfers together for a day of friendly competition, or are just looking to

promote your organisation, there is something for everyone.

If you, or your organisation, are interested in sponsoring this event, please get in touch with Mercy Health Foundation using the details below for more information.

 **Scan the QR code to learn more about this event.**

Mums of Mercy Silver Wattle Gala Ball

The Mums of Mercy (MoMs), supported by Mercy Health Foundation, proudly invite you to the Silver Wattle Gala Ball on Saturday 15 October 2022.


With 100 per cent of proceeds raised donated to Mercy Perinatal, the Silver Wattle Gala Ball helps Mercy Perinatal continue their important work to bring mothers and babies safely home.

Please join us for a fabulous evening and enjoy live entertainment from the ultimate 80s supergroup "Absolutely 80s", with a sit-down three course dinner, all beverages, silent auction and incredible prizes to win! All in the stunning surrounds of the Sofitel Hotel Grand Ballroom.

You will also hear from Professor Sue Walker AO, co-director of Mercy Perinatal, who will discuss the life-saving work she and her team do to ensure more mothers

and babies make it safely home. This is a truly special night when you can make a difference in support of Mercy Perinatal.

If you, or your organisation, are interested attending or sponsoring this event, please get in touch with Mercy Health Foundation using the details below for more information.

 **Scan the QR code to purchase tickets.**