



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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A NEW ERA IN HEALTH

ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA ADOPTS NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL



Richard Harpham, Chairperson
Trustees Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

*"This is a genuinely exciting time for
St Vincent's Health Australia."*

St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) has a proud history of providing health and aged care in Australia. After an extensive and highly professional review of its governance arrangements, SVHA is adopting a new structure, following approval by the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

The state-based boards (St Vincents & Mater Health, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and St Vincent's and Holy Spirit Health) will cease to operate from 1st October 2010 and the national board will assume full fiduciary responsibility for SVHA operations. The directors of all four boards (including SVHA) agreed to resign and were all invited, by the Trustees, to apply for positions on the national board. The Trustees greatly appreciate the selflessness of all directors in supporting the new structure and facilitating the resultant board changes.

Selection of the new board proved a significant challenge for the Trustees due to the outstanding quality of those applicants – nine out of ten new SVHA board members come from within from this group.

The members of the new board are:

- Associate Professor John Gurry, Chairman
(formerly SVHA board)
- Fr Frank Brennan sj AO
(formerly SVHA board)
- Brendan Earle
(formerly St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne board)
- Patricia Faulkner AO
- Gary Humphrys
(formerly St Vincent's & Holy Spirit Health board)
- Belinda Hutchinson AM
(formerly SVHA board)
- Paul Robertson AM
(formerly SVHA & St Vincents & Mater boards)
- Peter Smith
(formerly St Vincents & Mater board)
- Greg Sword AM
(formerly SVHA & St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne boards)
- Sr Helen Clarke rsc
(formerly SVHA board)

More information on each individual board member can be found in Latest News and Press Releases at: www.maryaikenheadministries.com.au

The Trustees are confident that SVHA is now positioned to react positively to the challenges and opportunities likely to arise in a fast-changing national health environment – while at the same time increasing the effectiveness of its contribution to, and advocacy for, the poor and marginalised.

All existing directors who will not be serving on the new national board have been invited to serve on the regional Community Advisory Councils. These are being established to play a significant role in building and strengthening our organisation, and our impact and standing in the local community.

BEATING THE ODDS

Nine years ago, Michael Schultz was running triathlons. The busy PE teacher was extremely fit and active but persistent pain in his right knee caused him to visit his local GP. The GP referred Michael to a specialist who, after investigating with an arthroscope, diagnosed a tumour. It was a deadly sarcoma.



Michael Schultz has celebrated the milestone of eight years cancer free after receiving treatment from St Vincent's orthopaedic surgeon, Prof Peter Choong.

Michael was then referred to St Vincent's orthopaedic surgeon, Prof Peter Choong, world-renowned for his success in treating this aggressive form of cancer.

"He was very honest with me," says Michael of his first encounter with Prof Choong. "He told me I was in strife, that what he had found was particularly nasty, but it would be OK."

Michael commenced three months of chemotherapy before undergoing surgery, then a further six months of chemotherapy to rid his body of all trace of the tumour. Although he has needed subsequent knee replacements since the surgery, he is now approaching eight years of being cancer-free.

Despite the shock of the initial diagnosis and the whirlwind of treatment, Michael recalls being reassured by Prof Choong's reputation.

"You don't get two goes at this stuff," he says. "But there was no doubt in my mind that Prof Choong was the right person for the job. He has such confidence in what he does, and everyone I spoke to had such confidence in him."

"You hear stories about surgeons and their poor bedside manner, but he dispels all of those myths. When he sees you at 5am on a Sunday morning, you know just how much he cares about his patients. It is so important to him – you can see his patients come first."

Michael still teaches PE but he has had to curb his fitness regime, giving up his beloved running. He has an important reason to conserve energy, though – his three year old son, Archie.

"I like to try to save myself for running around after him," he says.



Aboriginal Liaison Training Officer, Michelle Williams, leads Aboriginal heritage walks through Fitzroy.

NEW BEGINNINGS

The opening and blessing of St Vincent's Brisbane on 25th June represented a significant commitment by the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries & St Vincent's Health Australia.

The services offered seek a different approach to healthcare – a niche medical hospital offering a selection of programs not based on commercial value, but on programs that are reflective of healthcare trends and needs of an aging population. Integrated programs and service synergy that can comprehensively care for chronic disease; persistent pain; comprehensive geriatric restorative care; and palliative medicine are now present within St Vincent's Brisbane.

St Vincent's has its own unique place in the Brisbane health care setting. We are not in competition with our neighbouring hospitals. We are here to complement the acute hospital system both in the private and public settings.

Care providers that can innovate, develop and deliver more comprehensive medical solutions for the complex chronic illnesses that surround geriatric care, will be well placed to deliver better patient outcomes.

The people who have contributed to this journey are not just those of recent years but also the significant people of our past. To celebrate this rich history, as part of the redevelopment, we have integrated a heritage walk, beautiful displays that honour the Sisters' heritage and tradition, paying homage to significant others, community donors and loyal supporters of this hospital over the last 57 years.

This contemporary redevelopment and the hospital's commitment to compassionate care of the chronically ill and aging will ensure the Sisters of Charity's pioneering spirit of service will endure well into the future.



Bishop Joseph Oudeman, ofmCap DD, blesses the hospital.



Sisters of Charity gather with Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc, Congregational Leader, at the blessing.

WALKING WITH MEANING

St Vincent's Aboriginal Liaison and Training Officer, Michelle Winters (pictured left), leads groups of staff on a walking tour of the Fitzroy area to raise awareness of the rich Aboriginal history and the cultural significance of many sites along Gertrude, Brunswick and Smith Streets.

The groups follow the Fitzroy Aboriginal Heritage Walking Trail, marked by 16 plaques to commemorate places of significance and the former sites of influential Aboriginal services.

Michelle suggests to people: "Take a look around at where you work. It's not all cafes. There's an important history here. This is where people fought for rights.

"Fitzroy became the largest Aboriginal community in Victoria and was the social and political hub of Aboriginal Melbourne," she explains. "I like to show that Aboriginal culture is vibrant. It's still here. And I explain how important St Vincent's has been to the local Aboriginal community."

St Vincent's has a proud history of providing care to the Aboriginal community. Our Aboriginal Health program and the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer role have helped build our reputation as a culturally sensitive service. We are the state's largest metropolitan provider of Aboriginal healthcare services for adults, with between 200 and 600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients accessing our services each month.

CONVERSATIONS AROUND CHARISM



Elizabeth Dodds rsc, Trustee Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

Catholic Religious Victoria (CRV) has an Education/Governance Network that has been meeting regularly since 2005. In November 2009, it held its first Governance Forum for approximately 80 participants connected to the governance of schools and colleges, owned by Religious Institutes or PJs.

At the Forum, charism emerged as a significant theme. It's not uncommon for this theme to emerge at this type of gathering because – as noted at an Australian Conference of Religious Institutes Workshop in 2005:

“Religious institutes have a significant responsibility in praying, reflecting, talking about and promoting the charism because this gift to the people of God has been originally and traditionally mediated by the congregation.”

Conversations around charism often get bogged down in the debate around definitions. To encourage wider discussion, the CRV Education/Governance Network hosted its own focussed conversation around charism at Our Lady of Sion College at Box Hill, Victoria on 2 September. About 45 people attended, among whom were some of our College Board Directors and Executives.

Three speakers – John McMahon fms, Regional Director, Marist Schools Australia, Kate Fogarty, Principal of St Joseph's College Echuca and Dr Rosemarie Prosser, pastoral theologian and academic – made brief comments to stimulate conversation. Bernadette Keating pbvm, Congregational Leader Presentation Sisters Victoria facilitated the ensuing table conversations.

Since the conversation evening, my thoughts have centred round our own experience since the establishment of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. Our ministries are led by an amazing array of talented women and men who, through the lens of the deep story of Mary Aikenhead and the charism of the Sisters of Charity, respond to the call of the Gospel.

Across our ministries, I sense electricity in the air when traditional interpretations of the nature, role, carriage, and proclamation of charism encounter new, innovative and unencumbered re-interpretation and re-contextualisation of what inspires, animates and impels our mission.

Elizabeth Dodds rsc
Trustee Mary Aikenhead Ministries

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WELCOMING NEWS!

The Trustees are pleased to announce the appointment of two staff to the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries (TMAM).

Many of you would know Lesley Jordan who has been on secondment from St Vincent's Health Australia over the last four months. Lesley will conclude her secondment from SVHA on 1 October 2010 but will be staying on in the capacity of General Manager. Over the last four months, in addition to supporting the appointment of the new SVHA Board, Lesley has provided significant executive support to the Trustees and has been instrumental in bringing a high degree of professionalism to our administrative activities.

We are also pleased to advise of the appointment of Ms Julia Frowein as Executive Assistant in the TMAM office. Julia has extensive experience as both a personal assistant and office manager, and will bring a broad range of high level administrative skill to the role. Julia commenced in her position on 1 September 2010, and we look forward to introducing her to you over the coming months. Julia's contact details are:

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Julia Frowein, Executive Assistant.

