

Monash Children's Hospital

**Celebrating our achievements,
made possible with your support**



A personal message from Professor Nick Freezer

It's been just over three years since we opened our doors at the new Monash Children's Hospital. During that time we have achieved some remarkable outcomes for children in our care, across Victoria and globally. This Highlights report is to share with you a small number of the achievements that have happened during this time.

I can reflect quite proudly on our accomplishments and what strikes me most is the incredible generosity and care of our patients, their families and our community and corporate partners through philanthropic support.

We hope you feel as proud as we do that Monash Children's Hospital continues to be one of the world leaders in children's healthcare and that our large team of experts work every day with integrity and commitment to providing exceptional care for families here.

We are home to the state's largest neonatal intensive care unit, a purpose built children's cancer centre and specialist paediatric theatres. We are also home to Australasia's first dedicated paediatric Surgical Simulation Centre, giving students and surgeons the training they need to save lives.

Your support has enabled Monash Children's Hospital to become the hospital it is today. Thank you for your incredible generosity - we are so grateful to you.

We wish you all the best and we will be in contact with you again in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Nick Freezer
Director
Monash Children's Hospital

What we have achieved

In the 2018/19 Financial Year



69,264

Emergency Department attendances



66,429

Outpatient appointments



41,197

Inpatients



2,056

Newborn admissions



The new dedicated Paediatric Emergency Department

Monash Health's Paediatric Emergency Departments are among the busiest, and most experienced, paediatric emergency services in Victoria.

About 75,000 children a year present to emergency departments across Monash Health, and as the demand increases, so too does the need for a dedicated emergency department just for kids.

Well before COVID-19 hit, Monash Health had begun building works for a new emergency department to give our community's children the best possible care. In recent weeks and months, the need for a dedicated paediatric emergency department has never been clearer.

The new paediatric emergency department is planned to provide exceptional and timely healthcare in a positive, welcoming, child and family friendly environment.

All areas in the new ED will be designed to minimise the stress and anxiety of a hospital visit. Research shows that a purpose built facility, with calming elements, creates an environment that reduces fear. When kids are calmer, they let us treat them quickly and effectively.

The new children's emergency department will provide extra beds and equipment for children rushed in, allowing us to treat an additional 7,000 children each year.

A feature of the ED will be a Calm Room designed specifically for children with neurological conditions and complex needs. Ambient light and sound, in addition to textural elements, encompassed in the Calm Room will create an immersive environment, supporting children to feel less anxious in the ED.



Architect's impression of the new Emergency Department

In addition to the Calm Room, some of the planned features at the new emergency department designed especially for Victoria's children include:

- Completely separate areas for children so that they can have a more private and more appropriate atmosphere to be treated in.
- Additional beds to allow more children to be treated.
- Additional medical equipment to ensure children are treated with state-of-the-art technology.
- Ambient lighting throughout the department to help keep children calm and relaxed throughout their treatment.
- Reclining armchairs to allow parents a comfortable place to sleep near their little ones if they need to stay overnight.



Innovative clinical trial to improve health outcomes for our most vulnerable

In Australia nearly one in every ten babies is born prematurely every year. Sadly, some of these tiny babies don't survive. Often premature babies develop debilitating lung problems and brain complications like cerebral palsy. These complications have far-reaching consequences, not just for the baby, but for their family, the community and the health system that supports them.

Monash Children's Hospital is home to one of Australia's leading neonatal facilities and Victoria's busiest Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. We are embarking on a ground-breaking trial, which will lead to better therapies to prevent severe lung and brain injury and improve health outcomes for these precious babies.

Currently, there is a research gap as there are no reliable clinical trials being conducted with preterm babies in the world. Unfortunately the findings of similar trials in infants and older children indicate treatment often comes too late.

This innovative clinical trial is aimed at supporting the most vulnerable preterm babies, and will explore umbilical cord stem cell extraction and cell cleansing processes, providing the crucial developmental support that their early arrival takes away from them.

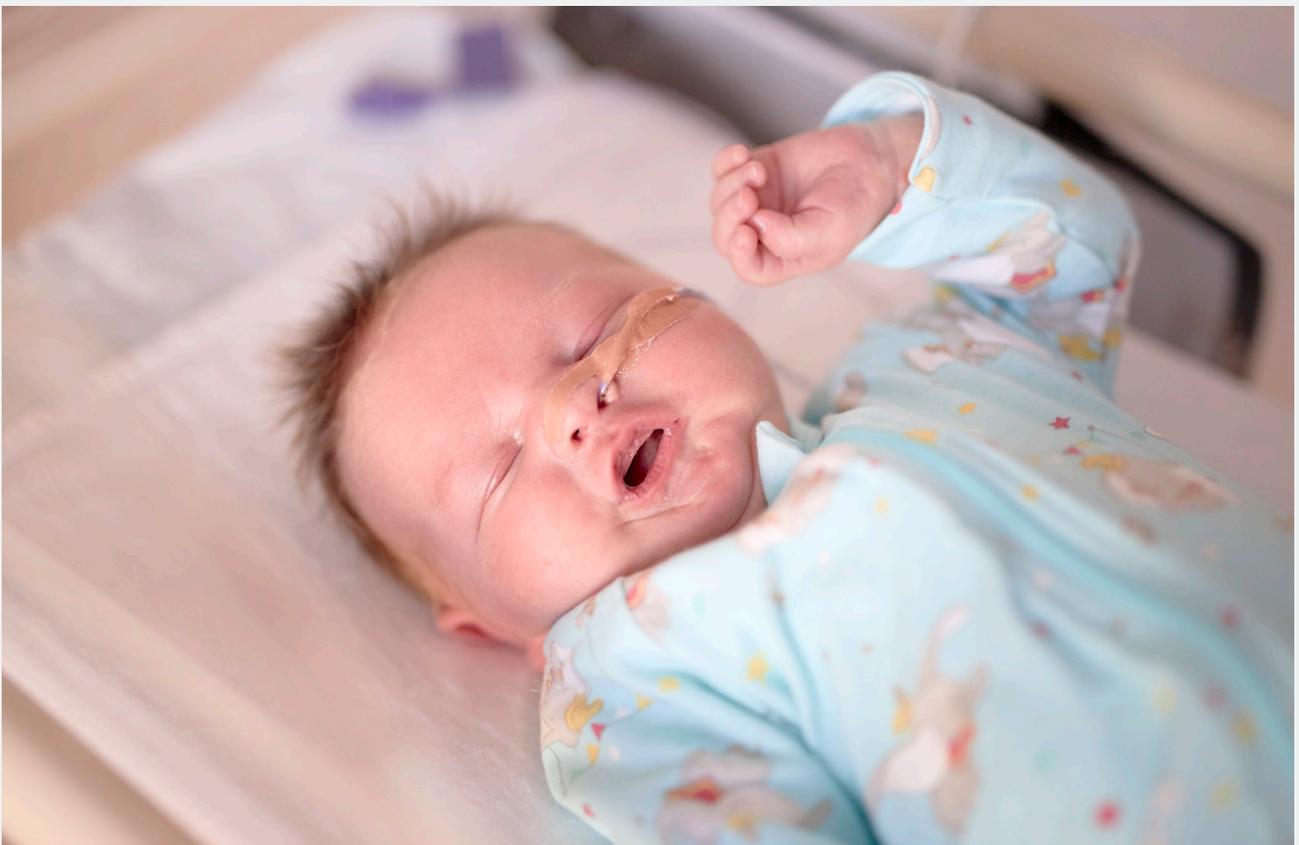
It will provide rigorous scientific research needed to ensure our findings can be translated into real-life therapies that will make a huge difference to preterm babies, their families and communities – locally and across the globe.

“Extremely premature infants born before 28 weeks’ gestation are at risk of significant problems including lung and brain complications.”

Dr Malhotra, Consultant Neonatologist at Monash Newborn said.

“In the CORD-SAFE trial, we are evaluating the safety and feasibility of transfusing stem cells from the extremely premature baby’s own cord blood, back to the baby. The idea is that these concentrated stem cells will help to decrease complications these vulnerable babies are at risk of.”

The trial will be entering the recruitment phase shortly and will take 6-12 months to complete.



Excellence in care for critically ill children

The new Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Monash Children's Hospital opened its doors on Valentine's Day 2018. Previously, children needing critical care were looked after in the Monash Medical Centre ICU.

The new PICU reflects our commitment to provide the very best care to the sickest children in Victoria. Monash Children's PICU is one of only seven units of this kind in the country and one of only two in the state.

No parent ever wants to have to walk through the doors of a PICU. For those who have to, the PICU has been designed to give reassurance and hope. The environment has been especially designed to cater for children and their carers during the most challenging time of their lives.

The PICU is light and bright and each child has a single room with space for a parent or carer to stay close any time of the day.

A quiet family room provides an opportunity for time away from the ward and there is a large balcony where families and patients can enjoy fresh air and sunshine.





Since 2018, nearly 1400 critically ill children have been treated in the Monash Children's PICU.

These young patients include babies, toddlers, school-aged children and adolescents who need critical care during a life-threatening illness or accident or following major surgery.

Many children have been transported to the PICU from other hospitals across Victoria, requiring our specialised intensive care to save their lives.

A team of specially trained, highly skilled, paediatric ICU nurses, doctors and allied health professionals care for the children in the unit. Previously, this team would have looked after adults, babies and children all at the same time and in one large ICU.

With the opening of the Monash Children's PICU two years ago, every professional can now focus on the specific needs of these vulnerable children and provide the very best paediatric care.

Looking into the near future, the team in the Monash Children's PICU is set to build upon the great work of the recent past. Important projects will see new approaches to team training in life-support take shape as well as better, more family-centred ways to communicate complex medical information to the community we serve.

“In the new PICU we are now able to solely focus on the needs of critically ill children. This allows for a much higher degree of population-specific and patient-centred care.

“The layout and technology help provide for optimal team performance, line-of-sight communication, swift response to emergencies and, importantly, care of the child and their family. In addition, we are also ‘house-mates’ with the other paediatric specialties at MCH. This means close links to our colleagues who have patients in the unit.”

**Associate Professor Felix Oberender,
Director PICU.**



Simulation Centre paves a new way to deliver education in face of pandemic

Our MCH Simulation Centre is home to the state-of-the-art Monash Children's Telehealth Centre, medical wards, operating suites and educational facilities.

Typically used to simulate a number of procedures that need to be monitored remotely and videoed, skills training and professional education and research, the centre was quickly transformed with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic to radically change the way that all healthcare professionals conducted normal clinical duties at MCH.

There was a large amount of information required to be distributed to all employees, which could have led to information overload and increased levels of employee anxiety. To ensure that the excellent levels of clinical care was maintained, the MCH Simulation Centre created interactive webinars for all MCH employees where clinical simulation scenarios were recorded and utilised to demonstrate new procedures or changes in existing procedures in relation to caring for COVID-19 patients.

These webinars were recorded and made available to all employees as resources on the organisation's Learning and Teaching Technology Environment (LATTE). These webinars were a way to continue to provide current education to employees whilst adhering to social distancing requirements.

MCH Simulation worked collaboratively with key stakeholders to ensure that information was accurate and current.

Following consultation with various stakeholders, a number of COVID-19 resources were created for the webinars. During the live webinars, a panel of experts from the key areas presented the content and answered questions from employees.

Prior to COVID-19, interactive webinars were not commonly utilised as a tool for education by Monash Health. With the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a need to find a new way to provide education, organisation wide, whilst allowing for safe social distancing for everyone.

Since this time, MCH Simulation has successfully utilised interactive webinars with GP education series and was able to offer departmental expertise to the organisation. Employees are able to complete this learning in the comfort of their own workplace/ home office at a time that is convenient to them.

This has led to a paradigm shift in how learning in the clinical workplace can be disseminated and have a lasting impact for the future.

COVID-19 has forced everyone to change the way they do business. We have transformed the Simulation Centre to become a leader in providing COVID-19 educational resources to the employees at MCH and Monash Health.

All of these educational interventions were building on successful MCH Simulation programs such as the Point of Return workshops that have been delivered to more than 200 paediatric ward and ED nurses. This program enables improved care to be delivered to a deteriorating paediatric patient. Although the massive increase in the telehealth response was initially led by the Monash Children's Telehealth centre it has now been successfully integrated into all workspaces at MCH.

All of the above activities demonstrate the significant impact that philanthropy can have in the optimisation of care to sick children in Victoria.



Associate Professor Ram Nataraja with Dr Sumit Matha

More families able to enjoy the benefits of 'kanga' care

Precious moments cradling your newborn are made even more precious when your baby has been born prematurely, is in an incubator attached to medical equipment and isn't able to be home with you. The times you are able to just sit and hold your baby or babies are invaluable.

Skin-to-skin contact between parents and babies – often called “kangaroo care”, provides major benefits to premature babies' hearts and brains.

Parent-infant skin-to-skin care (SSC) or kangaroo care, started in the late 1970s in Columbia when incubators to keep babies warm were not available. It is now widely recognised as a beneficial component of holistic care provided for pre-term infants.

Research has shown that kangaroo care attracts a wide range of physiological and emotional benefits, not only for babies but also their families. Skin-to-skin contact helps babies improve their respiratory and heart rates, while families enjoy the emotional bonding aspect of kangaroo care.

Since its opening, Monash Newborn have received 50 'kanga' chairs, largely through philanthropic support. Our aim is to ensure every parent has access to a 'kanga' chair to bond with their baby or babies, whenever they would like, so the goal is to provide every bedside with their own chair. Our Clayton site requires 14 more chairs to accomplish this goal for our families and the Special Care Nursery at Casey Hospital requires four more chairs.



Mum Courtney using one of the kanga chairs at Monash Newborn while enjoying bonding time with her son Aaron

“We have had some very generous donations over the years. These donations have now allowed 50 of our 64 beds within our unit to have a kangaroo chair at the bedside, meaning that we do not need to limit the parents’ skin-to-skin time. Kangaroo cuddles (skin-to-skin) can have an incredibly positive impact on both the babies and their parents – it improves bonding and breast milk supply for mothers, as well as physiologic stability of the babies including temperature and blood pressure regulation, as well as heart rate and respiratory stability.”

Kate Duthie, Nurse Manager – Clinical Service Lead, Monash Newborn

Better hospital experience with positive procedural support

Despite the new Monash Children's Hospital's welcoming appearance, Hospitals are often still a place that can make children anxious.

Needles are something that can cause fear in people both young and old.

When the new hospital opened it was identified by nursing, pathology and Child Life Therapy employees that the pathology morning round process could be improved to provide better support to patients and families.



Monash Children's Hospital patient Raph with Child Life Therapist Tammy



Monash Children's Hospital patient Kiara with Child Life Therapist Meagan

This joint initiative allows for a Child Life Therapist to shadow pathology team members on the ward rounds in the mornings, offering procedural support including distraction strategies during their procedures.

Previously, there were no processes in place to effectively incorporate procedural support for children during pathology rounds in a timely manner, which sometimes eventuated in distress for children, their families and employees. After the initial trial, the Child Life Therapy team developed and implemented a Quality Assurance project in order to gain feedback about patient, family and employee experience. The trial eventuated in this collaborative pathology round becoming standard practice at MCH.

The long-term vision for Child Life Therapy is to embed similar family-centred care practices for procedures across the Children's program, which would include other sites.

“The Child Life Therapy service strives for exceptional care by providing distraction and play strategies to reduce the anxiety and distress of the hospital experience for our children and families. Continual development and expansion of our workforce will help us provide this.”

Amy Thomas, Head of Music, Art and Child Life Therapies.

The Child Life Therapy and Pathology teams have since been recognised by Monash Health and received a quarterly organisation award for exceptional teamwork. This initiative was also presented at the Hospital Play Specialists Association of New Zealand Biennial Conference in March 2020.



New service developed for growing allergy needs of children

Recent studies have shown that food allergy affects one in every 10 Victorian children born. The allergies persist in 10% of children up to one year of age, 8% of children up to five years of age, and approximately 2% of adults.

Hospital admissions for severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) have doubled over the last decade in Australia, the USA and the UK. In Australia, admissions for anaphylaxis due to food allergy in children aged zero to four years are even higher, having increased five-fold over the same period.

(Source: Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy).

The new Paediatric Allergy and Immunology service at Monash Children's Hospital aims to improve the health and quality of life of children with allergies by providing an integrated Paediatric Allergy service. This service is in direct response to hearing the needs of children with allergies over many years resulting in this new initiative. The service will integrate care in partnership with primary health, GPs and community based paediatricians.



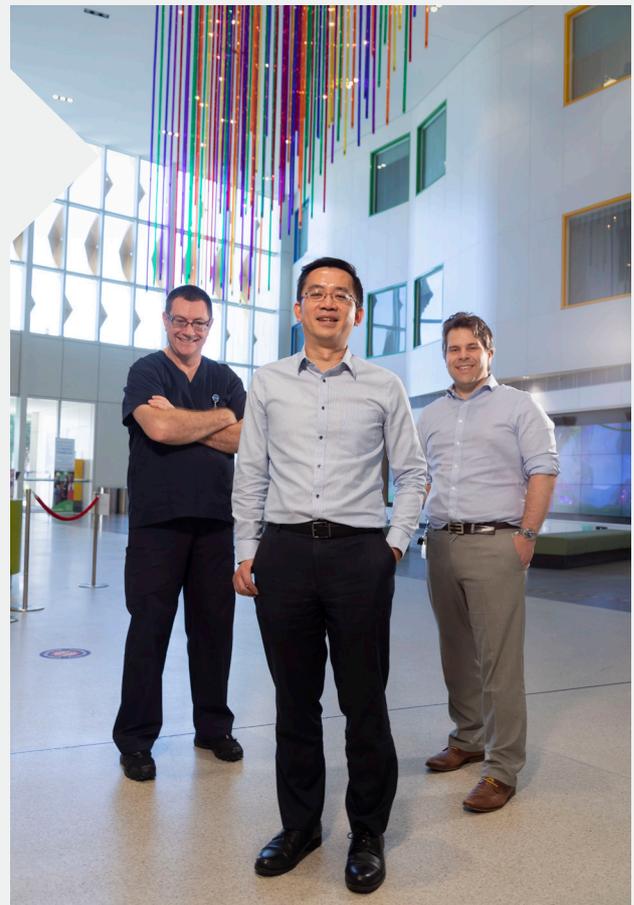
The service is based on an integrated model of care for Paediatric Allergy and is in the early development stages. This initiative was started by Professor Jim Buttery, the Head of Infection and Immunity and commenced with the recruitment of Paediatric Allergists and Immunologists Dr Paxton Loke (Clinical Lead) and Dr Mark Taranto in mid-February 2020.

Prior to its existence, there was no publicly funded Paediatric Allergy service for children in the Southern or Eastern Melbourne regions. The service aims to provide timely access to tertiary paediatric allergy care and a positive experience for patients, their families and referrals.

“The future outlook for the service is to develop it into an integrated clinical and academic centre for Paediatric Allergy and Immunology where excellence in clinical care can be provided alongside cutting edge research, training and education programs.”

Dr Paxton Loke, Clinical Lead.

As our population grows, so too does our demand for medical, nursing and allied health professionals to effectively deliver this level of care to the community.



L-R - Professor Jim Buttery, the Head of Infection and Immunity with Paediatric Allergists and Immunologists Dr Paxton Loke (Clinical Lead) and Dr Mark Taranto.



Visiting Pet Park

Whether a child is in hospital a few days, a week or months, one of the first things that they really miss is their pets.

Our visiting Pet Park allows children to visit with their pets on hospital grounds. Being able to enjoy that much longed for cuddle helps provide a sense of calm, security and normalcy. Spending some time with their pet really brightens their day and helps improve their mental wellbeing.

Our visiting Pet Park is used for:

- Visiting family pets
- Visiting animal farms with goats/sheep/ducks/chooks/rabbits etc.
- Birthday parties where the pets are also coming into join the party
- Outpatient consult appointments where the child is very anxious about coming into hospital so we do the consult in the pet park with their pet
- We have had miniature ponies in who were dressed as unicorns
- Lots of dogs



Visiting Pet Park



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