

MOMENTUM

Monash Health Foundation News

Winter/Spring 2026



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Message from the Monash Health Foundation Director



John De Rango
Director
Monash Health Foundation

I am delighted to reflect on the extraordinary generosity, commitment and community spirit that continues to make such a meaningful difference for patients, families and care teams across Monash Health.

In this edition of Momentum, we are proud to share stories that demonstrate the very real impact of your support – from advancing world-leading care for our patients and families, to recognising the inspiring people and partnerships behind our work.

This year’s Monash Children’s Hospital Walk and Shine Gala events are wonderful examples of what can be achieved when our community and partners come together for a common purpose. More than 3,000 people joined us for our biggest walk yet, while the Shine Gala brought to life the stories of our inspiring young patients and their dedicated care teams through an incredible night of entertainment – with both events raising important funds to support life-changing care for young patients and their families.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported the vision for Victoria’s first ‘ICU of the Future’ to be developed as part of the new multi-storey tower being built at Monash Medical Centre, scheduled to be completed in 2029. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we have received more than \$900,000 in donations and pledges to help reimagine intensive care for some of our most critically ill patients.

On behalf of our patients, families and care teams, thank you for your continued support of Monash Health.



Monthly gifts changing patient lives every day

Discover the power of regular giving

Join our Regular Giving Program for a simple, secure way to make a powerful impact.

Regular giving provides a reliable source of funding that enhances healthcare services and experiences for our community. Your ongoing support will be at the heart of our ability to continue providing world-leading health care, research and education, so our community can live their best lives.

Please join Monash Health’s Regular Giving Program today and help make a meaningful difference to patient care every day.



Scan the QR code to join, or visit monashhealthfoundation.org/ways_to_give/regular-giving

Shining success for Monash Children’s Hospital

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported our 2026 Monash Children’s Hospital Shine Gala on Saturday, 13 June. The inspiring evening raised more than \$600,000 for Monash Children’s Hospital, supporting the life-changing care provided by our Paediatric Cleft and Craniofacial Anomalies Service for young patients and their families.

Guests joined us at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins for a spectacular evening of entertainment, featuring special performances by Anthony Callea, Sarah C, Daniele Buatti, and Jason Dean’s Piano Men, competitive bidding in our live and silent auctions, and the exciting draw of the winner of our car raffle.

We had the privilege of hearing from Monash Children’s Hospital patients and families who shared their inspiring stories, including Ruby, now 22-years-old, who was born with a cleft lip and palate, underwent seven surgeries throughout her childhood, and has since graduated from university as an occupational therapist.

Professor Eugene Yafele, Chief Executive Officer of Monash Health, and Dr Nelson Low, Head of Paediatric Plastic Surgery and Research at Monash Children’s Hospital, took to the stage to speak about the power of giving and the difference these funds will make – not only to surgical outcomes, but importantly to supporting the wellbeing of patients and families throughout their long and complex journeys.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, guests and supporters, our teams can continue to advance world-leading care to help patients born with a cleft lip and/or palate embrace life with a smile, their voice, and the confidence to use it.



Scan the QR code to watch the event highlights vimeo.com/1202002688/e22f-5044cd?fl=ip&fe=ec



Pictured: The Monash Children’s Hospital Paediatric Cleft and Craniofacial Anomalies Service care team and patients on stage.



Pictured: Anthony Callea’s special performance.



Pictured: Tamara Bolam - Clinical Nurse Consultant and Cleft Care Coordinator at Monash Children’s Hospital, Steph Anderson - Nine News journalist and MC, and 22-year-old Ruby Davie - cleft patient and guest speaker.



We also gratefully acknowledge our Major and Supporting Sponsors.

Cover image: Our cover image features 18 month old Monash Children’s Hospital patient Tsion, his dad, Junior and mum, Jodie. Tsion was born with a cleft lip and palate and has received care from our Paediatric Cleft and Craniofacial Anomalies Service. Their family generously shared their journey to support raising funds at our 2026 Monash Children’s Hospital Shine Gala.

Transforming kidney transplant care in Victoria and Tasmania

The Monash Health Foundation and Nephrology team are proud to have supported the purchase of a new kidney perfusion machine (known as XVIVO Kidney Assist Transport) to help transform kidney transplantations across Victoria and Tasmania.

The world-leading portable transport device uses the power of oxygen to improve and extend organ preservation times, graft viability, and enhance peri-transplant care. Studies have demonstrated its game-changing benefits for transporting organs over the standard 'icebox' technique.

Affectionately named 'James', the machine has now joined two other machines in the state kidney transplant program, 'Darren' and 'Greg', supporting DonateLife Victoria to grow capacity and optimise outcomes for patients on the kidney transplant waiting list.

The purchase of the machine was made possible through a generous, anonymous donation to the Monash Health Foundation from a local family, reflecting their deep commitment to advancing transplantation outcomes for patients with kidney disease.

All Victorians and Tasmanians on the kidney transplant waiting list have the opportunity to benefit from this incredible gift. 'James' has already contributed to its first successful transplant at Monash Health, with this exciting program aiming

to assist in the transportation of around 100 kidneys destined to be transplanted across Victoria, this year alone.

Early feedback from clinicians has been overwhelmingly positive.

'For individuals awaiting life-changing surgery, this incredible technology not only improves the preservation and quality of precious donated organs – it also gives surgeons the gift of time to plan transplants more effectively, especially when managing multiple organs,' said Professor John Kanellis, Head of Nephrology, Monash Health.

The machines' benefits are expected to translate into improved post-operative function, faster recovery, and better long-term outcomes for transplant recipients.

'It is only with the incredible support of our donors that we have been able to re-imagine care for our patients. With their help, we can continue to lead the future of Nephrology care, working with our partners across donation, retrieval and transplant services to improve and save even more lives.'



Pictured: The Monash Health Nephrology and DonateLife team with the new kidney perfusion machine.



We're designing an ICU of the Future

Emma's Story

At just 29-years-old, Emma was healthy, active, and excited to embrace life as a mum of two. But within hours of giving birth, everything changed...

After bleeding during birth and being rushed for tests, doctors discovered that Emma had developed a rare and aggressive form of leukaemia. Almost immediately, she developed Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation (DIC) – a dangerous condition that causes both severe bleeding and clotting, attacking the organs. Her kidneys began to fail.

Emma was transferred to Monash Medical Centre Clayton and taken straight to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

'Things from that point on were a bit of a blur. But the doctors at Monash Health saved my life,' said Emma.

Emma spent close to two weeks in ICU. Much of that time she drifted in and out of consciousness, but the memories that remain are vivid. She experienced hallucinations and intense delirium.

'ICU was terrifying. I didn't know what was real. What I went through... it stays with you. I didn't realise how much the environment affects your mind. The noise, the lighting, the shadows, the not knowing the time. It all played into the delirium.'

While being treated for her leukemia and DIC, Emma remembers the persistent, loud noise that felt like it was coming from behind her and the suffocating feeling of being in a room that made her feel closed in.

'I would fall asleep and wake up in a panic,' said Emma. 'I had horrible nightmares. I dreamt my girls were trapped in a car. I dreamt I was stuck in a restaurant and couldn't get out. I saw aliens around my bed.'

These hallucinations were part of intense delirium, a frightening condition common in ICU. Delirium is a temporary but severe feeling of confusion that happens when someone is very unwell. It can make

the world feel unreal and people may see or believe things that aren't actually happening.

'I would hear nurses talking to someone else and think they were talking to me. My sister, Sarah, said I was answering questions no one had asked. I didn't know what was real. I didn't know where I was. I didn't know what time it was,' said Emma. 'Even small objects became terrifying.'

'My family had put a salt lamp in the room to try and calm me, and I thought it was on fire.'

Emma experienced more than one ICU admission within a few months, alongside dialysis sessions three times a week, complications, sepsis and profound separation from her children.

There were moments Emma still cannot fully explain – waking up and believing her family had come to say goodbye, thinking she was dying, feeling terrified to fall asleep.

'Even a short stay in ICU can cause trauma. I had more than one.'

Emma is now in remission from leukaemia and awaiting a kidney transplant. She continues to attend dialysis and work through the psychological aftermath of her ICU stays.

'If we can make ICU calmer, safer and less traumatic... it will change people's lives,' said Emma.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we have received over \$900,000 in both donations and pledges to support Victoria's first ICU of the Future.

An exciting expansion of the Monash Medical Centre Tower is well underway, including a new Intensive Care Unit. With your generous support, we can equip this world-class facility with state-of-the-art technology that will transform care and enhance the experience of our patients in ICU, just like Emma.

All funds raised will support new technology to build a calm environment with room features such as circadian lighting, noise-reducing systems and with patient wellbeing at the centre of their design.



If you would still like to make a donation to help build the future of healthcare or our community, you can do so online at monashhealthfoundation.org call us on (03) 9594 2700, or scan the QR code.

Recognising our care teams and creating career-defining opportunities

Celebrating excellence in Nursing and Midwifery

Congratulations to all of the Monash Health 2026 award winners, including Midwife of the Year, Marnie Douglas and Nurse of the Year, Adrienne Pendrey, who were recognised at the 20th Annual Nursing and Midwifery Awards and Scholarships (NAMAS) on Friday, 22 May.

The Monash Health Foundation was proud to sponsor the award category 'Excellence in Foundational Nursing and Midwifery Care' awarded to Marnie Douglas, our Clinical Support Midwife at Dandenong Hospital who has been a part of the Monash Health team for 17 years.

Thank you to all the valued sponsors, Friends of the Children Foundation, Monash University, Smart Group, HESTA, Bank Vic, Deakin University, ALH and Nurses and Midwives Health for supporting this special event and important recognition.



Pictured: Marnie Douglas – Midwife of the Year.



Pictured: The Monash Health 2026 NAMAS winners.

Transforming research and careers in neuroscience

Thanks to the heartfelt generosity of parents Raj and Divya, the 'Bhavya Sethi Neuroscience Scholar Award' will be awarded annually in honour and loving memory of their daughter, Bhavya.

Announced on 27 May, the anniversary of her birthday, the award will support a neurosurgical or neurology resident, registrar, trainee, fellow or early-career clinician researcher whose work advances patient care, improves outcomes, or drives innovation in neurosurgery or neurology.

Bhavya's high school and netball club have also established awards in her honour. It is a great privilege to be part of Bhavya's legacy and to recognise her life, positivity, generous spirit and loving nature.



Would you like to learn more about supporting Monash Health staff to provide world-leading care for our community?

To discuss awards and research opportunities with the Monash Health Foundation, please email foundation@monashhealth.org



Pictured: Monash Health's McGrath Cancer Care Nurses: Katie Evans, Catherine Healy, Sara Jorgenson, Rebecca Lay and Gurpreet Grewal.

Compassionate care for breast cancer patients in our community

At Monash Health, we are privileged to have the support of five McGrath Cancer Care Nurses across our Moorabbin, Casey and Dandenong Hospitals.

The nurses' important roles ensure that patients and families facing breast cancer across our local community receive expert and compassionate care when it matters most. They provide clinical, psychosocial, practical, and emotional support.

'Our role is to support and advocate for patients and families. We are here to be their direct contact for any questions as they progress through treatment, connect them with community services, and really be available to help navigate every step of their journey,' said Katie Evans, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Monash Health Breast Services.

They support patients in our hospitals from diagnosis through to survivorship and palliative care.

'We have an open line available to the community and often receive calls like "my mum's just been diagnosed with breast cancer. She lives in Berwick, what do I do?"' said Gurpreet Grewal, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Monash Health Breast Services.

'It is a privilege to be let into someone's life in such a vulnerable time, and for them to be so open and honest with their worries and fears that sometimes they can't share with their family members.'

In our catchment area of 1.2 million residents across the south-east of Melbourne, this role also plays a critical role in enhancing care coordination for our growing multicultural community.

Caring for around 350 new cancer patients every year – the impact of the care delivered by McGrath Cancer Care Nurses is felt far and wide in our community. With an increasing number of new breast cancer diagnoses, their roles ensure women get equitable access to cancer care.

'We are so grateful to have their incredible care and expertise as part of the Monash Health team. We look forward to continuing our long-standing partnership with the McGrath Foundation providing exemplary care for women facing challenging breast cancer diagnoses,' said Dr Corinne Ooi Head of Monash Health Breast Services.

Your impact in action

Getting sick kids home to the things they miss

The Monash Health Foundation is a proud partner of Hospitals United for Sick Kids, a national alliance raising funds in support of children's hospitals throughout Australia.

Since the alliance partnership began in 2019, Hospital's United for Sick Kids has distributed over \$2 million from product sales and point of sale donations to Monash Children's Hospital. Supporting our care teams to bring projects to life that help our patients get home to the people and things they love and miss the most.

This year, the Monash Children's Hospital hosted the launch of the Hospital's United for Sick Kids national Coles Campaign – with all funds raised in Victoria helping to enhance care and fund new initiatives at Monash Children's Hospital.

Coles shoppers could shop for sick kids across the month, with 50c donated from the purchase of more than 170 participating products – or round up their shop and donate at the checkout.



Pictured: Hospitals United for Sick Kids mascot Blip visiting Monash Children's Hospital patient, Zayda.

The incredible campaign raised over \$490,000 to get sick kids home sooner.

'Over the last 12 months, we've been able to see 16 per cent more kids in the home environment, thanks to some of the equipment and models of cares that have been designed through the Hospitals United for Sick Kids support,' said Dani Smith, Operational Director at Monash Children's Hospital.



Pictured: John De Rango – Director of Monash Health Foundation, Rick Jones – General Manager Victoria at EML, Sam Kolasa – Chief Executive Officer at Glen Education, Professor Rhonda Stuart – Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Epidemiology at Monash Health, and our MC, Bill Haggerty.

Monash Health Foundation Business Breakfast

The Monash Health Foundation hosted a timely Business Breakfast and discussion, led by Professor Rhonda Stuart, Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Epidemiology at Monash Health, to work together to improve the health of our community ahead of the winter months.

The event, made possible by our sponsor EML, was the fifth in our Business Breakfast Series – connecting business leaders from across Victoria and discussing the importance of protecting our community and workplaces from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Save the date for our next event on Thursday, 22 October. For more information, email foundation@monashhealth.org

Fundraise your way

Fundraise for purpose

Do you have a great idea to fundraise in support of Monash Health?

Whether you are looking to fundraise in tribute of someone, for an area of healthcare you have a personal connection to, or just have a great fundraising idea, we can help you make it a reality!

Learn more about fundraising for purpose by visiting fundraiseforpurpose.org



Leadership cycle for blood cancer research

Professor Stephen Opat, Program Medical Director of Cancer Services at Monash Health, rode in the Sicilian Cycling Challenge this May, in support of patients facing blood cancer.

His cycling team, 'Blood on the Road' took on Mt Etna – covering an incredible 1,000km in 8 days and fundraising over \$14,000 to help Monash Health Haematology Research deliver life-saving new therapies.



Casey Thunder kicking goals to support sick kids

Mums Shannon and Pam brought their women's football club and local community together for a superhero-themed fundraiser, celebrating the bravery of sick kids and raising more than \$4,000 for Monash Children's Hospital.

For the couple, the fundraiser was a deeply personal way to give back to the hospital and staff who cared for their now three-year-old son Archer in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit when he was born.



South Oakleigh College steps up for Monash Children's Hospital School

Students and teachers at South Oakleigh College came together to support Monash Children's Hospital School, raising over \$25,000 to support programs and education for sick kids when they're in hospital.

Over 600 participants stepped up to take on the walk-a-thon, showing their commitment and care for children receiving a hospital-based education, in recovery and reintegration.

Creating special moments for patients, families and staff

Anthony Callea meets the team ahead of taking the stage

We welcomed singer Anthony Callea to Monash Children's Hospital ahead of his performance at our Monash Children's Hospital Shine Gala, for a heartfelt visit with our young patients, their families, and to learn more about the work of our care teams.

His familiar face, generosity and warmth brought smiles to faces down the corridors, across the wards and all the way to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), where he met newborn Phoenix, who attends our Paediatric Cleft and Craniofacial Anomalies Service, the beneficiary of the funds raised at the event.



Pictured: Anthony Callea with newborn Phoenix and Mum, Mieke.

Making magic for sick kids

The amazing magician, Jonathan Usher stopped by to perform mesmerising shows in the Monash Children's Hospital foyer and wards, performing tricks for our young patients. We couldn't believe our eyes as Jonathan made smiles appear out of thin air!

Many thanks to the Rotary District 9815 for making this special visit possible — the day was filled with laughs, wonder and unforgettable moments.



Pictured: Colin and Leanne Byron from Rotary District 9815 with magician, Jonathan Usher.

Visitors from a galaxy far, far away

Conquering the galaxy for good — members of the 501st Legion Knightfall Garrison stormed our wards to the delight of patients, families and care teams in celebration of May the Fourth (aka Star Wars Day).

From photos and high-fives, to surprise appearances at the bedside, the community group brought unexpected play and imagination to the wards, brightening everyone's days.



Pictured: 501st Legion Knightfall Garrison with Monash Children's Hospital staff.

Does your organisation have a fun and healthy way to engage your brand with us? We'd love to hear from you.

To learn more about partnership opportunities with the Monash Health Foundation, please email foundation@monashhealth.org

Supporting dementia care with connection and comfort

At the Kingston Centre, a simple innovation has been making a meaningful difference for patients living with dementia and delirium.

Supported by bequests to the Monash Health Foundation, the robotic pet therapy program has introduced calming, lifelike companions into care, helping to reduce distress and promote comfort in the hospital environment.

People living with dementia often find hospitals distressing, disabling and boring environments. Delirium can be a frightening and isolating experience, associated with poorer health outcomes and longer hospital stays. Early, person-centred and therapeutic strategies play a crucial role in improving health outcomes for these patients.

Since 2024, the robotic pets have been used with patients, with overwhelmingly positive feedback. Patients describe a sense of companionship, comfort through touch, and meaningful reminders of home.

A world-first study into robotic pets in the hospital setting is also showing promising improvements in quality of life, mood, and engagement for patients interacting with the pets — creating a calm environment for staff to deliver their care.

If you are interested in supporting the robotic pet therapy program at the Kingston Centre, please get in touch with us at foundation@monashhealth.org



Pictured: Dr Sanjay Naidu, Advanced Trainee in Geriatrics and General Medicine at Monash Health.



Gifts in Wills

Would you like to learn more about leaving a lasting legacy to shape the care of our community? By leaving a gift to Monash Health in your Will, you can make a meaningful difference in patient care, education and medical research.

To discuss supporting a cause close to your heart with the Monash Health Foundation and access to Will writing services, please email bequests@monashhealth.org

Support Monash Health directly with a donation

There are lots of ways you can donate



- 1 Scan the QR code or visit monashhealthfoundation.org/donate.
- 2 Detach and post this form in the reply paid envelope supplied or return to: **Monash Health Foundation, Locked Bag 29, Clayton South VIC 3169.**
- 3 Call **03 9594 2700** to pay by bank transfer.

