

Our Voice



Mercy Health

Care first

THE GROUPWIDE NEWSLETTER OF MERCY HEALTH
AUTUMN 2015

Maternity Group Practice turns one

Celebrating a year
of births and bonding

Giving others a fighting chance

From military service
to Melbourne Marathon

Speaking their minds

Lorelle Tormey's inspiring
journey to healing
and being heard



Giving others a fighting chance

Defending remote Antarctic islands and supporting humanitarian programs in East Timor may seem worlds away from leading a Mercy Health marathon team in Melbourne. But for Application Support Team Leader Gavin Baumanis, it's all part of a continuum of compassionate service set in motion decades ago.

I joined the Navy Cadets at age 12," Gavin recalls, "and at 18 moved on to the Navy Reserves as a diver while I did Years 11 and 12. I originally wanted to be a psychologist. But after I contracted glandular fever in Year 12 I decided to put study on hold and join the Royal Australian Navy full time."

Making a commitment to serve his country for the next seven years led Gavin in some unexpected new directions before he found his way to Mercy Health.

"I became a radar technician in the Navy. That took me to Heard Island in the Antarctic Circle to help capture illegal fishing vessels and get them out of Australian waters. Then I went to Jakarta during the riots in 1996. After that I did security and humanitarian work in East Timor as part of Operation Warden from 1999 to 2000. We rebuilt a hospital and started building a school. One of the most heartbreaking things I saw was a five year old boy whose dog had been shot. It was still on its leash and he was dragging it around talking to it."

There were doubtless many more, and more traumatic, experiences which Gavin — like so many returned servicemen and women — simply never talk about. Instead he channels the profound sense of humanity nurtured in his years of military service into making a difference to civilian life. In March Gavin and an intrepid team of Mercy Health Support Services staff begin training for the Melbourne Marathon in October, with all proceeds directed to our current fundraising appeals.

"At the moment we have six members from IT but it's open to all staff from all facilities," Gavin says. "We're all going to do our own distances, but we

will be organising lunchtime training sessions for the half marathon. We even have one staff member who's game for the full marathon.

"I plan to ask our IT vendors to sponsor us, but we would definitely welcome support from within Mercy Health."

Training is bound to be gruelling, but is unlikely to deter a man who, during his military service, reached the rank of Leading Seaman before receiving the Australian Active Service Medal, International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) Medal and the Defence Service Medal. All three medals were on display when Gavin attended a 2014 Remembrance Day dawn service with three of his children — Jade, James and Jared — who have followed their father into the Australian Navy Cadets.

But rather than focus on his own achievements, Gavin views the day as a prism through which to recognise the selflessness of others. "It's a day of national pride, but also to remember the sacrifices of the people who didn't return from active service. And it's a tribute to those in uniform today who carry the spirit, determination and professionalism of all those before them."

Running in a charity marathon may evoke only faint echoes of that spirit, but its animating force is the same: service to others through individual and team endeavour. There can be few in the Mercy Health community better qualified to run that race than Gavin.



“Instead he is channelling the profound sense of humanity nurtured in his years of military service into making a difference to civilian life”

Like to sponsor Mercy Health's Melbourne Marathon runners?

Visit fundraiseyourway.everydayhero.com/au/mercy-health-melbourne-marathon
All proceeds will support Mercy Health's fundraising appeals



Enduring love

Wedding gowns are a silken celebration of one of life's brightest days. But as a generous supporter of Mercy Hospital for Women's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit has proved, they can also bring comfort in a family's darkest hours.

Fiona Kirk's husband was a little taken aback when she took her \$3,500 wedding dress out of her wardrobe and started cutting. "He'd hoped I would re-sell it!" Fiona recalls with a laugh. "But this was so much more rewarding; I'd do it 10 times over."

From this small, if startling, act the seeds of a beautiful initiative were sown. Fiona's Angel Gowns Australia charity recycles donated wedding dresses into garments in which grieving parents can dress the baby they have lost too soon as a way to honour their life. Each exquisite gown is given completely free of charge.

The charity was inspired by Fiona's compassion for a family who had recently lost their baby daughter. "I had been following a page on Facebook called Isabelle Rose My Precious Hero," Fiona explains. "Isabelle was diagnosed at four weeks of age with infantile leukaemia; on 26 March last year she sadly lost her fight."

"After reading that Isabelle had passed away I also read an article on the American NICU Helping Hands organisation that makes Angel Gowns out of wedding dresses. I'm a very creative person; I make a lot of art in different media including sewing, and as I had only recently married

I had a wedding dress to hand. So I put out a call on Facebook to start something similar; by morning I had more than 800 'Likes' on the page and my email had crashed!

"By the end of that week I had 2,000 'Likes' from people across the country wanting to help. Then I had the first 'signature gown' made for Isabelle: we make one signature garment from the main part of each donated wedding dress so it looks very similar to the original. I sent it to Isabelle's parents Kristy and Michael and their response was incredible. Now Kristy follows our page and knows I talk about Isabelle whenever I promote our work."

The program soon caught the attention of Nicola Harwood, Associate Nurse Unit Manager of Mercy Hospital for Women's NICU. "I saw the gowns on my Facebook feed because I 'like' organisations that support families who have experienced neonatal loss," Nicola says. "So I invited Fiona to come and speak at the August committee meeting for Australian College of Neonatal Nurses, on which I'm project officer."

"Fiona's presentation really confirmed the gowns give parents a beautiful way to honour their baby. So I requested some to help us support our families in the NICU."

In January this year 20 Angel Gown garments were delivered to Mercy Hospital for Women, each lovingly hand sewn. They now have almost 300 volunteers donating their time and skill to realise Fiona's vision. "It really strikes a chord with people," Nicola reports. "Organisations like this are so important in helping families celebrate the life of their baby, and recognising what they go through. It's an incredibly generous gesture."

"About a week after we first got them in, Fiona's Victorian representative Jessica called to say a lady in our gynaecological ward had requested a garment directly from Angel Gowns Australia. Jessica explained to her that her baby would probably be too small but because she really wanted one, we agreed to take some up for her to choose from. So it was wonderful to be able to do that for her because we had them right here."

Giving families such a tangible source of comfort is what sustains Fiona and her team. "There's a lot of excitement — in the most humble and compassionate way — knowing this is having such positive outcomes," Fiona confirms. "Some of the testimonials are amazing; one lady contacted me because her friend's six week old son had died and her friend couldn't



“So we want to them to feel when they receive one of our gowns that we really value them and the life of their baby, that we really want to honour them”

LEFT: Fiona Kirk, founder and president of Angel Gowns Australia Inc. BELOW: One of the beautiful gowns donated to Mercy Hospital for Women's NICU

bring herself to leave him at the hospital. So the lady took the gown in and they dressed her son together. It gave the mother the strength to go home."

Yet there's no denying the emotional, as well as financial, cost of these gifts. "There've been times when I've been packing the gowns ready to send to a hospital and I just could not pack another one because it was too upsetting. You can't help visualising what they're for."

"Then to present the gowns the way we do costs around \$18 per gown. We package each one in tissue paper and a beautiful gift box with an angel pendant and poem card for the family to keep."

"We make sure each one is perfect, to give families a moment of peace and beauty as they dress their child for the last time."

"We want to them to feel when they receive one of our gowns that we really value them and the life of their baby, that we really want to honour them."



How you can help?

Find out more about Angel Gowns at angelgownprogram.org.au



Worth his weight in gold

Every aged care home is a treasure trove: of profound life experience, cherished memories, rich histories told and untold. But few could rival those contained within the serene walls of Mercy Place Lathlain in inner city Perth.

“ We feel honoured that we are able to share in his life ... Everyone has such positive things to say about him ”

Mr Worth enjoys a cup of tea with Anita Ghose, Manager, Western Australia



Mr Alf Worth celebrates his 100th birthday at Mercy Place Lathlain

On November 20 last year, Mercy Place Lathlain resident Alf Worth celebrated his 100th birthday. Milestone aside, Mr Worth's achievement marks both a personal triumph and the embodiment of the Anzac spirit.

A Western Australian resident all his life, and for 68 years a Lathlain local, Mr Worth followed his father into the printing trade. But like many of his generation Mr Worth's path took a dramatic turn with the outbreak of World War Two.

Mr Worth enlisted as a 25 year old with the newly formed 2/4th Machine Gun Battalion which drew young men from across Western Australia together to train before deployment to Singapore. It was during training that Mr Worth married his sweetheart, Rose Sands, forging a union that was to last 68 years.

With the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 Mr Worth became a Prisoner of War under the Imperial Japanese Army. He and thousands of other Allied soldiers endured many months of unimaginable hardship as forced labour, first on the

infamous Burma-Thailand railway, then in a coal mine in Ohama. "We were down to skeletons," he told the *Western Australian* newspaper. It was while hauling a box car full of coal that Mr Worth learned the war was over.

From that moment, Mr Worth and his comrades refused to take another step. After a one hour stand-off with their Japanese guards, they returned to camp and shared the news with their fellow prisoners. When asked how he felt at that moment Mr Worth said, "You just could not describe it." He had survived through sheer determination and courage.

Mr Worth moved into Mercy Place Lathlain in June 2012, quickly becoming well known for his razor sharp mind. He is keenly interested in current affairs and completes the newspaper crossword every day in pen —

without corrections. Last year Mr Worth claimed the Rummy championship, the fruit of playing cards every Friday night with his fellow residents.

Befitting his centenary celebrations, Mr Worth received letters of congratulation from the Queen, the Prime Minister and the Governor-General. They were presented to him by Mr Steve Irons, the Federal Member for Swan at an afternoon tea held in Mercy Place Lathlain's community room. Mr Graham Edwards AM, State President of the RSL also attended to present Mr Worth with a commemorative badge marking 100 years since Gallipoli, and flowers to honour his birthday. The celebration was organised by Mr Worth's good mate Jim Allen, who had originally envisioned a small gathering of around 20 people or so. This quickly blossomed to 60, including remaining members of the 2/4th Battalion.

"We could have easily filled the room three times over with people who wanted to celebrate with Alf," recalls Mercy Place Lathlain Service Manager Barb Walton. "We feel honoured that we are able to share in his life."

"Everyone has such positive things to say about him: he's such a humble, caring and inspirational person. There were so many people there to celebrate his birthday, and I thought if I live to be 100 and have a party with half the amount of people who turned up, I'll have lived a good life."

That Mr Worth's life is well lived is beyond doubt; that he wears his heroism so lightly and quietly is remarkable. Yet he shares in abundance at least one trait with all our society's revered elders: a unique and inspiring story too seldom revealed to those of us who benefit daily from their wisdom, courage and sacrifice.



Speaking their minds

When Lorelle Tormey took the stage at Mercy Health's Annual General Meeting late last year, little seemed to set her apart from the evening's other equally poised and confident speakers. Until, that is, her remarkable story began to unfurl.

"I was diagnosed with schizoaffective mood disorder fifteen years ago," Lorelle announced to a spellbound room. It's a diagnosis many feel unable to share with their closest relatives, let alone a packed audience of executives, staff and guests. But it is Lorelle's courage and dedication to breaking down barriers that make her, in the words of Chairman Julien O'Connell, "truly extraordinary."

Mental illness itself is anything but extraordinary; almost half of Australians will experience it in their lifetime. Yet silence and stigma persist, leading sufferers to devalue their own perspectives and robbing their carers of crucial insights. Lorelle is committed to reshaping that landscape, using her own trials and triumphs to empower others.

As the first consumer advocate in Mercy Health's Community Care Units in Melbourne's west, Lorelle is helping clients reclaim their voices and forge their own path back to health. "I believe consumers have unique stories and can take an active role in their care," she explains over coffee at the facility, which offers both a haven for people experiencing mental illness and a pathway back to independent living. "I was approached to take the role while I was living here. I was editor of CCU's newsletter until Rod, my caseworker, steered me towards a peer

support role. But I think it may have been a dream even before he suggested it. As soon as I was discharged, I started the consumer group. It's kept me coming back in a way that's helped me stay healthy."

Good health — Lorelle's own and that of CCU's clients — is her lodestar. After numerous relapses punctuated by lifesaving visits from CATT (Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team) and admissions to Werribee Mercy Hospital's psychiatric in-patient ward, at 38 Lorelle found herself unemployed, homeless, friendless and estranged from her family. Referred to our Wyndham community team, Lorelle and her family received much needed acute support before case manager Victoria Calleja guided her to the CCU: a turning point she is eager to share with others facing the darkest days of their illness.

"I said to the staff the other day 'You were there when no one else could be, and that was really important.' CCU was like a bubble where only good things happened. But the main focus here is on self recovery through your own effort, courage and attitude."

Speaking for oneself is a key component of that process. Lorelle's consumer group is a weekly 'staff-free' forum that gives residents free reign to discuss their care, their dreams and sometimes, just to chat.

"It's important consumers have a voice in mental health because we're often not heard," she confirms. "Even our own families,

“It's a place for taking positive steps like sharing their life story and showing their unique talents”

doctors, friends, may struggle to fully understand what we've been through, and that can make you shut down.

"Having an advocate means we're finally allowed to speak about what's going on for us and how we can change things — and somebody's listening and will do something about it. So regaining your voice when you're healing is pretty inspiring.

"Residents like the connection you get through a consumer group. It's a place for taking positive steps like sharing their life story, and



L-R: Lauren, Ashleigh, Consumer Advocate Lorelle, Deanne and Occupational Therapist Edith enjoy coffee and sunshine during a recent Women's Group

showing their unique talents. We have singers, musicians, poets, Chinese herbal medicine practitioners, people from many different cultures. It makes them feel like I felt at the AGM, which makes me really happy.

"They're also not afraid to tell me their experiences, good or bad. I have a direct link to management which allows me to raise issues in a neutral way. My manager is very responsive; the feedback I get is 'We want to make sure that when a resident says something, it's followed through.' So that's where my role is important."

Recently that focus on responsiveness has blossomed into CCU's first Women's Group. Launched as a safe space for female clients to discuss women-centred issues (and have some fun), the group meets weekly. The venues are as diverse as the group's members: a coffee shop, a community centre, yoga, a movie, a day at the beach or an op shop expedition.

"We started it because women were outnumbered," Lorelle explains. "So you might not have seen each other often.

So Psychiatric Nurse Courtney and I set it up. Now our Occupational Therapist Edith comes with us but if she can't, we take the initiative and go anyway.

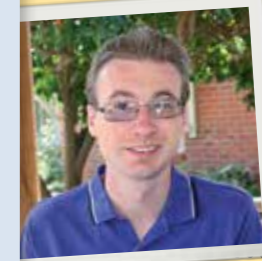
"We didn't realise how much benefit it would have until we got into it. We weren't even sure if we'd like it! But nearly all our female residents come to every group so it's helping us socialise, which is an essential part of getting well."

"I love that I get out a bit more," Ashleigh, a long-term resident, confirms.

"It's nice to do different activities together," resident Deanne agrees. "And I find when I go home for visits I really miss you guys!"

Connecting with peers can create a vital bridge back to living independently. "Relationships formed in the group continue for as long as you need them," Lorelle says. "But being in mental health we're always connected. We never forget each other."

Snapshot Ben



CCU consumer group member since August 2014

I attend the consumer meetings every week. Knowing we have someone here who can empathise and understand is invaluable.

Lorelle knows what it's like to hit rock bottom. It can be quite daunting coming here but she knows about issues that the staff, even though they're wonderful, may not think of. So it gives staff another perspective.

It's easy not to be heard and there are still stigmas surrounding mental illness. Having peer support helps to break down those barriers.

You have to get involved in your own rehabilitation and Lorelle is a great example of what this place can do. She's been a big part of instilling confidence and self-belief, and getting others to be enthusiastic about the programs here. I've learnt a lot of new skills: writing the CCU newsletter and presenting a speech here at a Mental Health Week carer's function. I've also been volunteering with the Salvation Army and Scienceworks.

I plan to go back to work soon. I've tried before but wasn't well enough; this time I'm ready. Being here has given me confidence to go back into the community.

I would definitely consider taking on a consumer advocacy role. Being there to listen is so important; encouraging people that no matter how big the goal is or how small the step, it's important to that person's recovery.



Called to care: a portrait of Kate Hewett

As architect of Mercy Health's aged care pastoral program, this remarkable woman has devoted her life to healing the spirit.

Kate now and at the start of her career in the late-1970s



The year is 1979. Malcolm Fraser is Prime Minister, disco dominates the airwaves, and most young women have three main career choices: teaching, nursing or office work — unless you're Kate Hewett.

"I decided I'd study theology, which in those days wasn't done," Mercy Health's former Director of Pastoral Services (Aged Care) recalls as she moves into well-earned semi-retirement. "I was only in my twenties, and my father wasn't happy because I had a secure teaching job. I enrolled at

the seminary in Manly, Sydney. The rector had never heard of a woman wanting to do theology!"

Kate's passion for the care of the spirit was fired by an extraordinary flowering in Catholic thought and practice.

"The 1970s was a great time in the Church; everything was possible. Young people were encouraged to take part and I caught that excitement, thinking things would open up for me within the Church."

Those formative years revealed a strong calling. "Pastoral care

is about having someone with whom you can share your deeper side; talk about spiritual or other things you might not have shared with anyone else. That's really beautiful.

"My parish priest said 'You should meet Bishop David Cremin because what you're doing is very unusual.' The bishop was fascinated! But he said 'I think the seminary is a bad idea. You're a young woman and that's a man's world. If I can get you into a place that accepts women, would you go?'"

“

The rector had never heard of a woman wanting to do theology”

"I'd never lived away from Sydney. But I agreed, thinking enrolments would have closed — forgetting I was talking to a bishop! By the time I got home my mother said 'The bishop's been on the phone.' I rang back and he said 'Pack your bags, you're going to Melbourne.'"

It was the first step on a path to personal and professional growth. "My course was at the National Pastoral Institute (NPI) which was very forward thinking, directed by wonderful people, especially Rosemary Crumlin rsm.

"I spent two years there. Half way through I went home to tell the bishop I wanted to stay on in Melbourne. He was very kind but said "Before you go back would you do me one favour? A group of priests here would love to meet you.' A week later they asked me to help them form Sydney's first pastoral team. I was only 28. That laid the base for my pastoral ministry and gave me lifelong friends and mentors.

"After that I returned to Melbourne to lecture at the NPI. It was one of my career highlights. I met amazing people like Daniel Berrigan, the radical American Catholic priest, and Maria Harris, a wonderful writer in pastoral care; people I would never have had the chance to meet otherwise.

"Then I became a psychologist to increase my pastoral skills. After that I joined Mercy Private Hospital as Pastoral Care Coordinator.

"I returned to Sydney for six years to work in aged care, just as Mercy

Health was also moving into aged care. Sr Helen Monkivitch contacted me to ask if I'd review pastoral care needs in their facilities.

"After each site visit I'd let Sr Helen know what was needed and she'd say 'Oh gee, it would be good if you would set it up.' And every time I'd say 'No, I've gone home to Sydney.'

"But I'm one of those people who feels 'called' to something. So when Sr Helen asked again I answered 'If you advertise the job I may put my hand up.' She said 'Stay here.' She returned with the head of aged care and they said 'You've got the job!'"

Four decades on, Kate is well placed to reflect on seismic changes in pastoral care. "After the 1970s the Church swung back to conservatism for a time. My idea of pastoral care has always been bigger than health but pastoral training pathways for laypeople had almost disappeared.

"That's why now is such an exciting time. I've just graduated from a new Diploma of Ageing and Pastoral Care and I'm teaching the course in 2015. It was born of nine aged care providers, including Mercy Health, talking about what was needed.

"Skills, attitudes and knowledge must evolve. So the course covers areas like pastoral care for dementia in aged care facilities, which is very different from a hospital setting. There are also units on palliative care and on communication."

Kate's new role will ensure her lifelong vision for pastoral care can resonate through future generations. "The people I want in the field are those who are constantly seeking to develop it.

"I ask them 'Where are your gaps?' Everybody's got them; it may be communication skills, or theology, or social work, or

psychology or aged care. So we're looking for people who want to be the best they can be."

While relishing her new role, Kate will miss her time as Director of Pastoral Services. "I've loved knowing I'm contributing to someone's quality of life. I went to Mercy Place East Melbourne recently and there were six residents from when I set up the service five years ago, which is amazing.

"As I was going one of the ladies turned and said 'You won't forget me will you?' It was a lovely moment. I'd thought I hadn't done much for her but there was a connection. These people have lived a long time before me and I don't think I'm indispensable to them, but it's nice to have shared their lives for that time."

Kate Hewett: highlights

- **1995:** Appointed Catholic Chaplains Association of Victoria President
- **2002:** Joins Catholic Health Australia's Education and Formation Committee
- **2008:** Begins leading Mercy Health's pastoral care team across Melbourne, regional Victoria and New South Wales
- **2014:** Receives the inaugural Catholic Health Australia's Excellence in Pastoral Care award



1 MGP turns one

Verity Bristow can honestly say what too few other mothers can: that she really enjoyed giving birth. As one of the first mothers to sign up for Mercy Hospital for Women's Maternity Group Practice (MGP) model of care after its launch last year, Verity remains enthusiastic a full year — and a healthy baby — later.

"It was amazing, the continuity of care was great," Verity recalls. "You get to know the staff really well and you develop a level of trust so birth becomes less stressful."

MGP gives women the option of being cared for by the same midwife from their first appointment until after their baby's birth. Aiming to reduce maternal stress levels and with it, potential complications, the MGP model has now been embraced by more than 400 mothers under the hospital's care.

Verity was cared for by Clinical Midwife Specialist Robyn Smith

with whom, after meeting at Verity's first consultation in January 2014, she was to take every step along the path to son Bryn's arrival in July 2014.

"Robyn was fantastic," Verity confirms. "I'm pretty sure I would have been a lot more stressed without her support. I really liked the fact that it was low intervention and provided a beautiful, positive experience. That really sets you up well for the journey after birth and through the first months of your child's life."

Robyn and Verity celebrated their shared journey at a Mercy

Hospital for Women event in February 2015 marking one year since the MGP model's launch. While the glowing testimonials of the mothers who attended naturally held the spotlight, Robyn is proud to report the program has also been transformative for the midwifery team.

"For us as caregivers, when a woman is fulfilled by her birth experience, that's the ultimate in midwifery," Robyn says. "It's well documented that you feel safe when you know your carer. This model of care is great because you get to know the mother really well, what her

BELOW: Verity Bristow and Bryn McCoy celebrate MGP's first birthday with Clinical Midwife Specialist Robyn Smith at Mercy Hospital for Women in February this year. RIGHT: The event brought together many of the 400 mothers who have chosen MGP for their model of care.



“It's a joy actually. It's such an honour to be part of that life-changing experience”

previous birth experiences may have been like, and what she's really wanting in the birth. That makes it so much easier to care for her in labour. It's a joy and an honour to be part of that life-changing experience with her.

"As a midwife it also means you can extend your skills; you have primary responsibility so you have to be autonomous. You need to think more laterally and consult with doctors across a whole range of different areas. That's been a steep learning curve but it's worth it for the skills you gain. Because you've got your own caseload of women and you're working

in a much smaller team, you really do build wonderful relationships. I still talk regularly to a lot of the women I've cared for; they're a part of my life now, which is amazing.

"The rewards have not been so great on my social life! It can mean some pretty long days. But I can speak for the team in saying that, in terms of our care for our women and the joy we get from those births, it's universal."

The program's Clinical Midwife Consultant Kym Harrison is thrilled with the response MGP has had in the community. "We have received great feedback

from the mothers over the past 12 months," Kym confirms. "Most of it has centred on how empowered they felt and how they valued the trust and respect the program fosters.

"The rate of normal births has been extremely high and the caesarean section rate very low."

Perhaps the last word should go to new mother Verity. "I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to others," she says. "It was a wonderfully supportive experience and the closest thing to a home birth without actually giving birth at home."



In their own words

30 years, two sisters, one path



Josephine (Mu Koon) Chan and Christine (Mu Fong) Woon celebrate 30 years of service with Sister Helen Monkivitch and Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen

Late last year sisters Josephine (Mu Koon) Chan and Christine (Mu Fong) Woon were celebrated at the inaugural Service Recognition Awards Dinner for 30 years of dedicated work at Mercy Hospital for Women. This is their extraordinary story.

Christine (Mu Fong) Woon

We were born in Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia. Josephine is a year younger than me but there was an express class at our school so she came up to my year level. By the time we finished secondary I had decided nursing was a good career choice, well recognised and I would be paid while I trained. My dad had six children to care for including younger ones to send to school. So we thought if two of us can go into nursing we can earn our own living.

We were quickly accepted into a nursing course in the UK. Josephine was still under age so

she began doing auxiliary work until she reached 18 and could start general nursing training. So we worked and trained together in the same hospital in London. During my training I fell in love with midwifery, so we both went on to study it, again at the same hospital. When I had completed training I was accepted back into the midwifery school as a staff member; when another vacancy came up, Josephine also began work there.

Dad suggested that, because we had another brother and sister studying in Melbourne, we should both apply to work in Australia: it would be like a family reunion. So we came over in 1978. Most of time we worked in the same hospitals doing the same shifts so we could travel in together.

We then worked at Jessie McPherson Hospital in the Queen Victoria before joining Mercy Hospital for Women in same year!

We've remained working at the hospital — as Associate Nurse Unit Managers on night duty for 30 years — because the people we work with are very positive, caring and supportive.

Josephine (Mu Koon) Chan

Although we've both worked at the hospital for a long time, people still get us confused! My highlights are the same as Christine's: we've both stayed so long because the staff are friendly and compassionate, especially the night duty coordinators. Without their support I don't think I could have stayed this long on night duty! We've seen a lot of changes; new systems and new staff. A lot of emergencies happen at night; Christine and I always work as a team to manage the Antenatal/ Postnatal Ward on the fifth floor.

We have similar ideas about everything so we can support each other. We're on the same wavelength.

We've seen a lot of change but it's good change. We've also been through a lot in our time here and that means we can help the newer staff with a lot of issues, sharing our experiences. It's quite interesting for them that we've followed such a similar path!



Consumer engagement



Profile: Scott Swanwick

One glance at Scott Swanwick's resume shows how highly he values consumer engagement. He joined Mercy Health in June 2014 as Senior Manager, Consumer Participation and Experience after several years at the Royal Children's Hospital as Consumer Engagement Officer and Quality Manager.

"Consumer engagement is about bringing consumers into the fold," Scott says. "It's about having all the voices of all the experts around the same table. For many years in the health sector, consumer voices were missing from that conversation.

"Thankfully, we've started to see a significant cultural shift away from the old 'Dr knows best'

medical model to a genuinely consumer-focused model."

Mercy Health's consumer engagement is led by the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), which meets in the Richmond office boardroom every second month. The CAC is updated on new developments at Mercy Health, and provides advice on what impact the change would have on the community we serve or other ways of getting that feedback. This is vital to ensuring we connect effectively with our consumers and their families.

"In addition to the CAC, we also have many Consumer Advisory Groups (CAG's)," Scott explains. "They meet on-site and engage directly with the local businesses such as Werribee Mercy Hospital.

"The important thing is that we listen to our consumers' stories and learn from them. Listening well really comes

“Consumer engagement is about bringing consumers into the fold”

down to the core Mercy Health values of compassion, respect and hospitality. It is extremely important we do what we can to ensure their experience is as pleasant as it can possibly be."

Members of the CAC and CAGs are drawn from across the community, and are generally people who have had contact with Mercy Health.

"And we are always recruiting," Scott says. "If anyone reading this is interested in getting involved, I'm more than happy to field those calls!"

Consumer engagement may be at a relatively early stage in the world of healthcare, but at Mercy Health — with Scott guiding the ship — we are leading the way.

Help us shape Mercy Health's care

Contact Scott Swanwick on (03) 8416 7589 or sswanwick@mercy.com.au to find out more about our Consumer Advisory Council and Consumer Advisory Groups.

MERCY HEALTH

BALL

KICKSTART FOR LIFE

SATURDAY
25 JULY 2015

Plaza Ballroom
191 Collins Street
Melbourne

SAVE
THE
DATE



Continuing our mission to fund projects which make a real difference, this year's Mercy Health Ball will support research and care of the most vulnerable and complicated pregnancies: those where there is a major risk of death or disability for either a mother or her unborn baby.

Our goal is to establish Mercy Perinatal, a leading centre of perinatal excellence that will transform the futures of at-risk mothers and babies here and around the world.

Your support will play a direct and fundamental role in giving our most vulnerable babies an all-important 'Kickstart for Life.'

Tickets \$265 for an individual or \$2,600 for a table of 10 guests. To purchase tickets, make a direct donation or to enquire about sponsorship opportunities please contact Meagan Nixon, Marketing & Events Manager on **03 8416 7714** or email **mnixon@mercy.com.au**.

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Your feedback...

We hope you've enjoyed the autumn edition of *Our Voice*, Mercy Health's groupwide newsletter.

Please send your feedback and stories via the details below:

Mercy Health: Our Voice

Level 2, 12 Shelley Street

Richmond VIC 3121

Phone: 03 8416 7788

Email: ourvoice@mercy.com.au



Our Voice will be back in June with our winter edition. In the meantime you can keep up to date with current Mercy Health news at mercyhealth.com.au.

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