

# MEDIA RELEASE

## For immediate release

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Officer, Mercy Health

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## Mercy Health Public Hospitals jump into Kangaroo-a-thon

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Nurseries at Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg and Werribee Mercy Hospital care for more than 1300 premature and sick babies each year.

As part of the specialist care these vulnerable babies receive, 'kangaroo care' (or skin-to-skin care) with the baby's parents is encouraged at every opportunity. Research shows kangaroo care is extremely important in babies' growth and development, particularly for preterm babies. It's also crucial for the health and wellbeing of their parents.

To promote the importance of kangaroo care, Mercy Hospital for Women and Werribee Mercy Hospital are proud to be participating in Australia's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Kangaroo-a-thon organised by the Miracle Babies Foundation.

Program Director Women's and Children's Services Gillian Evans said the benefits of kangaroo care are widespread and cannot be replicated by any other form of care.

"Kangaroo care has proven successful in improving survival rates of premature and low birth weight newborns and in lowering the risk of infection and severe illness," explained Ms Evans.

"It's important as a health service that we promote best practice and we're glad the Kangaroo-a-thon provides a creative avenue for us to do just that."

The Kangaroo-a-thon will see the NICU and Special Care Nurseries at Heidelberg and Werribee logging as many hours of kangaroo care as possible during a two week period starting on Sunday 15 May 2016 (Kangaroo Awareness Day).

"No doubt there will be some friendly rivalry between our two hospitals but all of our babies and their parents will be winners simply by taking part," said Ms Evans.

**- Ends -**

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