

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Manager, Mercy Health

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Gandel Philanthropy donates \$300,000 to Werribee Mercy Hospital expansion

Gandel Philanthropy, one of Australia's largest independent family philanthropic funds, has donated \$300,000 to Werribee Mercy Hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Appeal.

The donation is one of the largest individual gifts to Wyndham's only public hospital and has been used to create a wellness room to help patient recovery. The room includes a landscaped terrace which sits behind a glazed screen with motorised louvers providing natural ventilation to the space. There is also a variety of seating options to promote comfort and relaxation.

Gandel Philanthropy's Flagship Grants are awarded to programs and activities that have the potential to build more resilient, vibrant and inclusive communities.

"The trustees of Gandel Philanthropy decided to support the Werribee Mercy Hospital as it is one of the key public hospitals in the growth corridor that is the western suburbs," Gandel Philanthropy Chief Executive Officer Vedran Drakulic OAM explained.

"Appropriate health services are important for all residents of Melbourne, and indeed Victoria. Our support is directed towards the wellness area, because such spaces in a hospital aim to improve health outcomes for patients.

"Research shows gardens or wellness areas can help relieve symptoms, reduce stress and anxiety in patients and also improve their overall sense of wellbeing and hopefulness. Wellness gardens are a refuge and a source of goodness not only for patients but also for their families and for staff."

Werribee Mercy Hospital received \$85 million in the 2015-16 Victorian State Budget to provide intensive care and other essential services to the Wyndham community.

Construction of an eight-bed ICU, six operating theatres, 56 inpatient beds and a Central Sterilising Department is now complete.

As part of receiving government funding, the Mercy Health Foundation (together with the Werribee Hospital Foundation) committed to raising \$2 million to furnish and equip the new ICU.

The long-awaited and much needed ICU aims to provide families with critical and lifesaving care close to home, minimising distance and some of the burdens families face in times of medical emergencies.

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen said the support of Gandel Philanthropy will be felt for many years to come.

"We are extremely grateful for Gandel Philanthropy's decision to support the growing population in Melbourne's south west," Adj Prof Cornelissen said.

"Their generous donation will provide our patients and their families with a welcoming and tranquil space

where they can enjoy some fresh air and hopefully distract themselves, if only for a short time, about their hospital stay.” Adj Prof Cornelissen said.

The ICU Appeal has received an overwhelming response from local businesses, community groups, philanthropic organisations and individuals.

To donate or to learn more, visit mercyhealthfoundation.org.au

– Ends –

For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

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