

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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**Paediatrics ward celebrates its first birthday**

Under normal circumstances Werribee Mercy Hospital’s Paediatrics Ward would today be celebrating its one-year anniversary with a small party and birthday cake.

Unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic has put paid to any such plans but the team can still be well satisfied with its efforts over the past 12 months.

Paediatrics’ main business since 7 August 2019 has been treating general children’s issues such as asthma, bronchiolitis, gastroenteritis, fever-related illnesses, jaundice and poor weight gain in babies. The ward opened with 12 beds but staff are able to ‘flex up’ when the need arises.

Clinical Director of WMH Paediatrics and Special Care Nursery Dr Kathy McMahon said the availability of pull out beds has encouraged parents on occasions to stay overnight.

“It’s important for mums and dads to be involved in all their child’s care. Having parents on hand is an important part of children’s recovery,” Dr McMahon said.

“We have worked very successfully in collaboration with our tertiary unit (Royal Children’s Hospital, RCH) while patients with sub-specialty requirements, such as children with cancer, are referred onto our colleagues at RCH.”

The aspect that Dr McMahon says she’s enjoyed most is seeing children from local families having access to excellent paediatric care not that far from their homes.

“Seeing bright bubbly smiles on the local kids when they are better, makes it all worthwhile.

“The recruitment of both medical and nursing staff has been successful as well, with most having worked and trained at the Royal Children’s Hospital,” she said.

Aurora Phillips will be remembered as the very first Werribee Mercy Hospital Paediatric Ward admission. After a brief stay, Aurora, who was only two months old at the time of her admission, went home happily after being treated for bronchiolitis via the WMH Emergency Department.

Dr McMahon said while there were some initial teething problems informing the community that paediatrics was ‘open for business’, she has no doubts that the ward will continue to build with increased demand.

Mercy Health Chief Executive of Health Services Jason Payne has also congratulated Dr McMahon and her team for the completion of 12 months of operation.

In some bright news, this week Mr Payne has announced a new Paediatrics outpatients’ clinic at WMH, which will provide additional paediatric services for the Wyndham community.

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