



## Media Statement

From: Bill Lane, Senior Media and Communications Advisor, Mercy Health (mob: 0477 720 337)

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Mercy Hospital for Women has one of the most advanced Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) in Victoria, with specialist staff and equipment to care for some of the state's smallest and sickest babies. Some of them are in hospital for months before they can go home – like baby Frank, who clocked up a whopping 152 days in our nursery.

Frank was born on 25 May at 25 weeks' gestation, weighing just 601 grams.

Today, to the delight of his Echuca parents Amie McGillivray and Florio Skratulja, Frank 'graduated' from NICU. He is making his way home with continued support and monitoring from our Neonatal Hospital in the Home team, who will make sure that Frank continues to achieve critical growth and development milestones.

Mother Amie says it has been a year of highs and lows for the family. Tragically, Frank's twin brother Luca died at just nine days old. Amie says today is a major milestone for Frank, and a cause for celebration, but that Luca is always in their hearts.

She says she is grateful for the support of Mercy Health staff, whom she describes as her "guardians and friends".

"We have been through an amazing time with some incredible highs and lows," Amie says.

"Even in the last 48 hours, being permitted to room in with our beautiful Frank was such a wonderful moment."

She also praised the continued support of Mercy Health's Neonatal HITH program.

"We are so grateful for the compassion and expertise of caring staff at the Mercy," Amie says.

Mercy Health NICU staff, including Nurse Unit Manager Jemma Binney, gathered to farewell Frank and his proud parents.

"It is a privilege to be able to do this type of extraordinary, lifesaving work, and to see babies like Frank make their way home," Jemma says. 'At the end of the day, it is all about bringing mothers and babies safely home.'

**(ENDS)**