



Women's & Children's
Hospital Foundation

IMPACT REPORT

2024-25

What Drives Us

The WCH Foundation partners with our generous community to fund vital programs and services that support the Women's and Children's Health Network and the patients and families under its care. From medical equipment and emergency family support to our Lakinyeri Beach House, Arts in Health, and life-changing research, we're here to make a real difference.

Our impact reaches beyond metropolitan Adelaide, supporting children and families across South Australia, the Northern Territory, Broken Hill, and the Sunraysia Region of Victoria who rely on specialist care from the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Our Vision

Every child and family thrives, with access to the best health care, facilities, services and support when they need it most.

Our Mission

Through our research, initiatives, programs and partnerships, together we enhance the health care experience and make a real impact on the lives and health of children and families.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation acknowledges the Kaurna people as the Traditional Custodians of the Adelaide Plains, the land on which we work and support the Women's and Children's Hospital. We recognise and respect their enduring connection to land, waters, skies, and community, and their ongoing contribution to the health and wellbeing of children and families. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Minnie wearing a tutu donated from Paolo Sebastian

A Message From the CEO



In my first year as CEO of the Women’s & Children’s Hospital Foundation, I am humbled and privileged to share the difference that your support makes to the patients and families who rely on the Women’s and Children’s Hospital, and the vital services of the Women’s and Children’s Health Network.

Thanks to the unwavering support of our partners and donor community we have celebrated a record-breaking year of impact with more than \$5.4m contributed to enhancing clinical care, improving the patient experience, directly supporting hospital families in need, and expediting improved treatments and cures through medical research. But our impact is measured in more than just dollars donated. Play Therapy has supported a reduction in the need for anaesthesia, the Cocoon collaborative care program has resulted in improved appointment attendance rates of infants experiencing vulnerability, and specialised ultrasound machines have improved the administration of intravenous medications to children without pain.

By working shoulder-to-shoulder with those on the frontline of healthcare, we have a deep understanding of what patients, families, clinicians and researchers need to make a tangible impact where it matters

most. This year, in partnership, we’ve established an inclusive and holistic Grief and Loss service that offers bereavement support to any family regardless of the circumstances of their child’s death. We have brought dance as a therapeutic art form to patients in hospital and to women at Helen Mayo House. We’ve helped eight families to stay close to their hospitalised child by funding their short-term accommodation nearby. It is only because of you, that we’ve been able to respond to the needs of families when it matters most.

As the official charity partner and largest philanthropic contributor to the Women’s and Children’s Hospital, we are excited to be a part of new infrastructure that will benefit generations of women and children in our community for years to come. The future is bright.

Thank you for standing with us, working hand in hand for health. Your support truly does make a difference.

With gratitude,

Verity

Verity Gobbett | Chief Executive Officer

Our Board of Directors

At the heart of the Women’s & Children’s Hospital Foundation is an incredible team of professionals who dedicate their time, expertise and passion. Our CEO, Verity Gobbett and Board of Directors, led by Chair Michael Luchich, work tirelessly to ensure we strive to achieve our mission.



Verity Gobbett
Chief Executive Officer



Michael Luchich
Chair



Ben Gulliver
Board Member



**Commissioner
Cameron Baker**
Board Member



Christine Molitor
Board Member



Daniel Lalic
Board Member



Dr Evelyn Yap, OAM
Board Member



Jim Birch, AM
Board Member



Lee Girolamo
Board Member



Leonie Boothby
Board Member



Morry Bailes, AM
Board Member



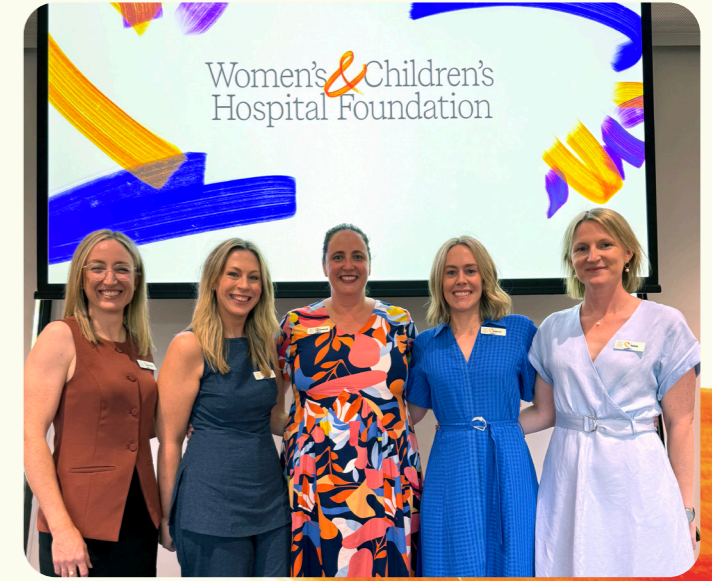
Phil Boyle
Board Member

We extend a heartfelt thank you to Wee Chan, who retired as Deputy Chair in early 2025 after an extraordinary 16 years of dedication and incredible contribution to the Foundation. To read more about our Board and see our list of Committee members go to: wchfoundation.org.au/our-people.

Our Senior Leadership Team

The WCH Foundation is guided by an exceptional, all-female Senior Leadership Team whose collective expertise and commitment shape the direction of our work. With a focus on creative thinking, collaboration, and innovation, they provide strategic leadership that supports continued growth and impact.

Dr Chelsea Mauch – Head of Programs & Impact,
Jess Sinclair – Head of Marketing,
Danyelle Robson - Head of Finance & Governance,
Verity Gobbett – Chief Executive Officer,
Fern Cargill – Head of Fundraising.



Welcoming Elspeth Hussey

In June 2025, we welcomed journalist and presenter Elspeth Hussey as an official ambassador. With a career dedicated to sharing meaningful stories with South Australians, Elspeth now brings her passion and voice to support our mission.

Elspeth’s connection to the Women’s and Children’s Hospital runs deep. Her mother worked as a midwife and Nurse Practitioner in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for 40 years, and Elspeth herself experienced the care of the hospital when she gave birth to her son, Monty, in 2024.

“When I was approached to become an ambassador, it was an easy and wholehearted yes,” she shared.

We are thrilled to have Elspeth helping us shine a light on the work we do, and we look forward to partnering with her to share stories that inspire and elevate the impact of our community.



And ultimately contributes to a world where **EVERY FAMILY** has the opportunity to thrive due to **OPTIMISED HEALTH** and **WELLBEING.**

SO THAT WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Are empowered in their healthcare journey
- Benefit from the translation of new knowledge into policy and practice
 - Experience equitable and inclusive healthcare
- Have access to the best available equipment, technology and treatments
 - Experience improved health and wellbeing

RESULTING IN

- Improved quality of care
- Greater access and equity for all families
- Practical and emotional support for children and families
 - The creation of new knowledge
- State-of-the-art medical equipment, technologies and spaces

WE INVEST RESOURCES INTO

- Directly supporting families in need
- Transformative health and medical research targeting areas of need
 - Improving the patient experience
 - Enhancing clinical care
 - Listening to the needs of families

BY PARTNERING AUTHENTICALLY

- With the Women's and Children's Health Network
- With our growing community of over 8,000 donors
 - With our corporate supporters
 - With women, children and their families

THE SITUATION

Children and their families will continue to be affected by illness, injuries and medical conditions that require care. The health and wellbeing needs of children and families are evolving rapidly. By partnering with the health service and our generous community, the WCH Foundation can transform the nature of care by addressing gaps and offering opportunities for innovation.

Our Theory
of Change.



Working
Hand in Hand
for health.

Year in Review

July



August



September



October



BEACH HOUSE 5TH BIRTHDAY

A special group of supporters gathered to celebrate the 5th birthday of our much-loved Lakinyeri Beach House. Since opening its doors in July 2019, this special place has been a sanctuary for hospital families, made possible by the incredible generosity of our community of donors, corporate partners, gift-in-will supporters, and founding families who helped bring this vision to life.

We've now welcomed more than 200 families into the Beach House. For many, it's been their first opportunity to experience a holiday together, a precious chance that's often out of reach due to the high care needs of their child. Five years on, family connection remains at the heart of every stay, and we are honoured to help create treasured memories.

COLLAB FOR A CAUSE

This year's Collab for a Cause event raised an incredible \$70,000! Created and championed by LOT.100 Head Chef Shannon Fleming and his wife Nicole, whose twin daughters received care in the Hospital's NICU. Chefs, bartenders, and servers generously volunteered their time, with all wine donated by local wineries and the stunning LOT.100 venue provided in-kind.

This celebration of food, wine, and community has again made a profound impact for families in need, supporting them when they need it most. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event truly unforgettable.

WINNER! BEST WORKPLACE AWARD!

We were thrilled to have been crowned the winner of the Best Workplace category at the Xref Engage Awards, recognising our outstanding employee engagement and satisfaction! This achievement is a true reflection of our team's incredible dedication and passion.

Key factors in this recognition include strong and compassionate leadership, flexible work options, and our purpose-driven, supportive culture. Notably, 100% of staff reported they believe in the Foundation's values and purpose. This shared vision continues to inspire and drive us as we work together to support women, children, and families.

PLAY THERAPY DAY

A fun-filled day of celebrations highlighted the incredible work of the Play Therapy Team. This important service offers emotional support to young patients, helping them feel safe, and easing stress and anxiety during hospital stays.

The day was packed with engaging activities, including sensory play with playdough, badge making for self expression, decorating 'hospital buddies' to explore emotions, a collaborative window mural to build community and keyring-making activities for adolescents. This special celebration shone a spotlight on the vital role of play in promoting healing and recovery.

Year in Review

November



CHARITY CRICKET DAY

In November, we were honoured to be the beneficiary of Procure Group's inaugural South Australian Charity Cricket Day. A fantastic event that combined community spirit, friendly competition, and meaningful impact.

Held on a perfect spring day the event brought together six corporate teams: EML Group, Gallagher Bassett Australia, Lawson, QBE Insurance / Guardian Exercise Rehabilitation, Suncorp Group, and Procure. The final saw a spirited match between EML and Gallagher Bassett, with EML taking out the title of 2024 Champions!

Thanks to the generosity of all involved, Procure Group nearly doubled their original fundraising target, an incredible achievement. We're so grateful to the Procure team and all participating organisations for not only raising vital funds but also creating a memorable day filled with energy, connection, and community.

December



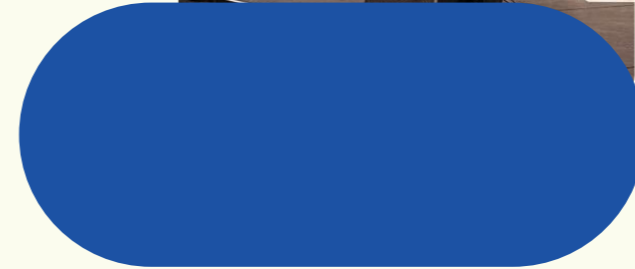
LEADERSHIP TRANSITION, A CHAPTER CLOSES AND A NEW ONE BEGINS!

After 50 dedicated years in healthcare, and just over 8 at the Foundation, our remarkable CEO Jane Scotcher retired, leaving behind an enduring legacy of compassion, integrity, and leadership in advancing community health and wellbeing.

We welcomed Verity Gobbett to the role who has been instrumental in shaping the Foundation's mission during her time as our Head of Mission. Verity is now leading our organisation into an exciting future of innovation and impact for women's and children's health in South Australia.

We extended our heartfelt gratitude to Jane for her tireless dedication and leadership. Her influence and legacy will continue to inspire us all.

March



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Our team attended the South Australian Business Chamber's International Women's Day event, where our CEO, Verity Gobbett, took to the stage as a young female leader of one of Adelaide's most iconic charities.

Verity's speech highlighted the need for change in leadership representation, drawing on 2024 ASX300 statistics that show only one in eight new CEOs are women, with 82% of key leadership pipeline roles held by men. With our all-female Senior Leadership Team present, the event reinforced our commitment to supporting women in leadership and fostering supportive communities, including in the workplace, so families can thrive.

May



MORNING TEA IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

We had the privilege of attending the Women's and Children's Hospital Paediatric Palliative Care Morning Tea to honour National Palliative Care Week.

This touching event brought attention to the vital role paediatric palliative care plays in ensuring children with life-limiting conditions live meaningful, enriching lives. We heard from parents, including Remiko Harris, who shared powerful stories about how this care is so much more than end-of-life support.

We remain committed to supporting the statewide Paediatric Palliative Care Service, which provides programs that uplift children and their families, offering opportunities to create cherished memories.

PARTNERING TO CREATE HEALTHIER FUTURES

Stronger Together

One of the year's highlights was the Easter Token Campaign, which raised an incredible \$25,000. Customers purchased tokens displayed in BIG W stores across the state, each one representing a small act of generosity with a big impact. The funds raised helped create a dedicated breastfeeding space at the WCH, a calm, private room where parents can care for their babies in comfort.

BIG W's commitment to supporting early childhood development was also reflected in their funding of infant therapy play bundles. Developed in collaboration with the Occupational Therapy Department and Infant Development Team, these bundles are filled with carefully selected items designed to support the developmental milestones of babies receiving care.

With around 200 referrals to the Infant Development Team each year, many families face long and complex care journeys. These new bundles have replaced the team's reliance on handmade or short-lived resources, easing the financial burden for families and giving therapists reliable tools to support children's growth and learning.

At Christmas, BIG W brought festive spirit into the Hospital. Beautifully decorated Christmas trees donated and installed by BIG W teams, filled the

This year, BIG W continued its meaningful partnership, delivering practical and heartfelt support for children, families, and hospital staff.

hospital lobbies, helping to create a warm, joyful environment. On Christmas Eve, Santa made a special visit to the wards, bringing smiles to children and families spending the holidays in hospital.

Beyond the hospital walls, BIG W's efforts to raise funds and awareness reached thousands more through their community initiatives. The national Wrapathon event saw customers donate to the Foundation in exchange for having their Christmas gifts wrapped by BIG W staff and volunteers, with proceeds supporting vital hospital programs. A special range of wrapping paper, designed by children in hospitals across Australia, also offered customers a simple way to give back during the festive season.



BIG W's Heart Token campaign was another standout initiative. Customers could purchase \$2 tokens each designed by a young patient from the hospital, and display them on the "Big Heart Walls" in-store.

With BIG W matching donations up to \$20,000, the campaign raised vital funds and demonstrated the power of community support. Each token was a symbol of care, connection, and shared purpose.

Reflecting on the partnership, BIG W Managing Director Dan Hake said "BIG W has been proud to be a long-term partner with a network of children's hospitals and research institutes across the nation, supporting important programs that bring joy and assistance to children and families. Even a simple \$2 donation can make a big difference.

A donation doesn't just help raise money; it also spreads love by providing happiness, support, and hope."

Over the past year, BIG W has provided over \$125k and a total of \$668k in the 5 years we've been partnered.

Their support has helped fund essential programs, enabled improved care, and lifted the spirits of families during some of their toughest moments. Their partnership with the Foundation is a powerful example of how corporate and community support can create brighter futures for children.

We thank the entire BIG W team and their generous customers. Your support is helping us build a healthier, more hopeful future for South Australian families.



Big W staff bringing the festive spirit



Indie drawing her Big W token



The Lensical: A Creative Partnership Changing Hospital Care

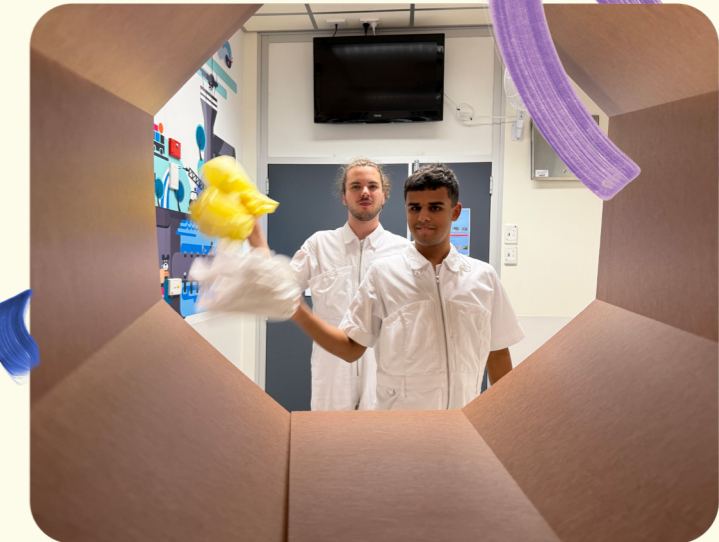
In May 2025, a transformative new performance project unfolded within the walls of the hospital.

The Lensical - an imaginative, short-form dance theatre experience was the result of over a year of creative development through our pioneering partnership with Restless Dance Theatre, Australia's leading creator of dance by artists with and without disability.

Designed specifically for the hospital environment, The Lensical brought 15-minute immersive performances to paediatric patients and staff across selected wards. These intimate works were conceived and directed by choreographer Michelle Heaven, who is also a qualified Play Therapist, and visually shaped by acclaimed designer Ben Cobham. Our support of the project enabled the creative team to spend over 12 months crafting a work that was not only visually and emotionally impactful but also clinically appropriate.

The team led the hospital integration, tailoring every aspect of the experience to meet clinical protocols and patient needs. A custom-designed, mobile, and hospital-safe, cone-shaped frame was developed as a performance portal, allowing dancers and patients to interact without physical contact, at the bedside and in playrooms. Music was delivered via headphones or small portable speakers, further immersing the participant in the experience.

The performances, which demonstrated the way art can elevate care, took place in post surgical recovery spaces, four paediatric wards and within the Hospital School. Each visit was carefully coordinated with nursing staff and hosted by Play Therapists, ensuring patients' health conditions aligned with the gentle, uplifting experience.



The Dancers, Abbie Madden, Sidney Debba, Bhodi Hudson and Michael Hodyl, all with their own experiences of receiving healthcare support, were able to extend The Lensical's impact beyond the patients. Staff members often working under intense emotional strain were invited to enjoy performances, providing them with a moment of connection, and emotional restoration.

The Lensical not only delivered therapeutic moments to children and families but also positioned the Foundation at the forefront of a growing global movement.

By merging artistic excellence with health care provision, fostering the importance of the arts in health, and creating a scalable model of bedside creative care that other hospitals around the world can emulate.

This partnership was more than a performance, it was a reimagining of how care, creativity, and compassion can co-exist within a hospital environment. It all began with a shared belief that every child deserves to experience the joy and power of the arts.

“It just cuts out the whole hospital surrounding and narrows it down to really what’s happening just for them... **A LITTLE MOMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO ANOTHER PLACE.**”
- Dani, mum of patient in Newland Ward.

Over two and a half days The Lensical delivered **51 INTIMATE DANCE PERFORMANCES.**



Celebrating Excellence

Niki, generously performed at the 2025 WCHN Excellence Awards, where she shared the harrowing yet inspiring story of her daughter Leni's battle with sepsis.

At just two years old, Leni experienced a life-threatening episode of septic shock, caused by invasive Group A streptococcus. Thanks to the exceptional care provided by the Women's and Children's Paediatric Intensive Care team, Leni's life was saved. Her recovery involved three weeks in the PICU, six more weeks in Cassia Ward, and ongoing support from outpatient services, including speech pathologists and physiotherapists.

A key part of Leni's recovery was the work of the Play Therapists. Once Leni was more awake and able to sit up, the Play Therapists stepped in to help her regain her strength. "The Play Therapists made it fun for her. They helped her feel like herself again," Niki shares.

Niki Vasilakis, critically acclaimed orchestral violinist performed at this year's WCHN Excellence Awards.



Niki with daughter Leni

Leni's remarkable recovery became the focus of our 2024 Christmas Appeal, where Niki's heartfelt story inspired incredible generosity from our community. The appeal successfully raised \$57,000 to support critical hospital services that make life-changing recoveries like Leni's possible.

Leni still has milestones to reach, but her progress is a testament to the support, dedication, and expertise of the Hospital team. Through her music, Niki now gives back to the community that supported her family. Reflecting on their experience, Niki expressed immense gratitude for the Hospital's life-saving care and the hope they bring to families during difficult times.



Niki Vasilakis

"Leni's recovery **FEELS LIKE A MIRACLE** and we'll never stop being **THANKFUL** for that." - Niki.

Together, we can partner to create healthier futures for children and their families.



Our Community Climbs to the Top of the Ladder

For the second consecutive year, we proudly partnered with the AFL as the official charity partner for the 2025 AFL Gather Round.

From 10 to 13 April, thousands of footy fans, corporate supporters, and community champions ‘Gathered Round their Hospital’ to make a difference for children and their families.

The campaign asked footy goers to ‘Kick It For Kids,’ encouraging fans to donate the equivalent of a goal (\$6) to help ‘get kids home sooner to the things they love: football!’ The original target was to raise \$20,000 or 3,000 goals. Thanks to the incredible generosity of the community and the momentum of the AFL Gather Round, the results far exceeded expectations.

Together, we raised over \$114,000, the equivalent of 19,000 goals kicked for kids.

This achievement was made possible thanks to the generous backing of Peter Kittle Toyota, who matched donations as the Matched Giving Partner. AFL CEO Andrew Dillon also contributed in a big way, pledging \$1,000 for each goal scored in the Collingwood vs Sydney Swans game, adding an impressive \$28,000 to the fundraising total. South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas, also stepped onto the field and made an incredible commitment to match every dollar donated to the ‘Kick It For Kids’ initiative.



Amy and Jack Purling

At the heart of the campaign the Purling family, our hero ambassadors, shared their deeply personal story. Their sons, James and Jack, were both born prematurely with Neonatal Allo-Immune Thrombocytopenia, a rare and life-threatening condition.

Amy shared a heartfelt glimpse into their reality, saying, “It’s the little things that people don’t see or can’t appreciate that truly take their toll, the ongoing health challenges, tests and treatments, and long and lonely hospital stays. We know the hospital is where Jack needs to be when he is unwell, but that does not make it any easier. We still count down the days until we can go home.”

For families like the Purlings, this campaign wasn’t just about raising money; it was also about lifting spirits. ‘Kick It For Kids’ is about helping kids get out of hospital and home to their families, their backyards, and their footy games.

Thanks to the incredible community of supporters and the magic of footy, we showed once again that when we stand together, no child gets left behind.

WE KICKED 19,000 GOALS for sick kids
through our partnership with the AFL.

Supporting Innovative Solutions in Childhood Mental Health

This March, our Bloom Research Program brought together leading researchers, industry professionals, and individuals with lived experience for a pivotal Round Table event.

The focus? Shaping the future of prevention, early intervention, and treatment for childhood and adolescent mental health disorders.

Hosted at the Adelaide Oval, the event created a collaborative environment that fostered the development of new project ideas, listened to the needs of stakeholders

and welcomed invaluable feedback on the proposals presented. Attendees included researchers and clinicians along with consumers with lived experience of mental health disorders and organisations working in the mental health space such as Yourtown and Headspace.

Together, they set the stage for the next generation of transformational research projects set to begin in 2026, projects that will enhance outcomes in mental health for children and young people.



Donors' **IMPACT**

15,523 donors and organisations have supported our **IMPACT THIS YEAR.**

Our eldest donor is **105 YEARS OLD.**

6,127 kind-hearted people made a **MONTHLY DONATION** to support our impact.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CULTURALLY SAFE CARE

Supporting Aboriginal Women’s Health Through Yarning Circles

Integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing into the healthcare system, by co-designing and testing community-based Yarning Circles is the focus of this Foundation-supported research.

This vital research aims to improve sexual, reproductive, and perinatal healthcare for Aboriginal women and families.

The rate of stillbirth, preterm birth and other sexual and reproductive health issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women remains unacceptably high. There is a clear need for culturally safe education and support to close this gap in health outcomes.

Cathy Leane, Darug woman and Strategic Partnerships, Aboriginal Health Division, says, “We are building up the skills and knowledge of our Aboriginal grandmothers, our Aboriginal Aunties, our Aboriginal big sisters, who will then be able to support women on their journey through sexual health and parenting.”

Bec Smith, Principal Project Manager of the SA Health Maternal, Neonatal and Gynecology Strategic Executive Leadership Committee, says, “We undertook specific Aboriginal engagement and what we found is that we weren’t embracing Aboriginal ways of knowing and traditional Aboriginal ways of finding information.”

Thanks to our funding of this vital research, the team will test community-based yarning circles to improve sexual, reproductive and perinatal health care amongst Aboriginal women and families.

Yarning uses storytelling to share knowledge, build understanding and create connection, and has been used by Aboriginal communities for generations.

It is hoped that integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing into the healthcare system will engage and empower Aboriginal women and families, leading to improved sexual, reproductive and perinatal health.



Rebecca Smith and Cathy Leane



Professor Alice Rumbold, Rebecca Smith, Cathy Leane and Karen Glover

Aboriginal books for NICU



Shelly Russo

Reading and storytelling play a vital role in a baby's brain development, fostering imagination, language skills, and early learning. Beyond that, these moments of connection strengthen the bond between caregivers and infants, providing comfort and promoting attachment.

This year we've supported a heartwarming initiative bringing special Aboriginal-authored books to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Led by Shelly Russo, a passionate NICU staff member, these book bags are designed to nurture both cultural pride and baby-caregiver connections.

"Up to 30% of the babies in the unit at any given time are Aboriginal," Shelly shares. "We hope this initiative will honour and promote Aboriginal culture and perspectives while supporting that special bond between parent and baby."

Consulting closely with the Women's and Children's Health Network's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, each book has been thoughtfully chosen to ensure cultural sensitivity and relevance.

This project is a celebration of community, connection, and culture, honouring Aboriginal perspectives and enriching the experience of families in the NICU.

Tjunguringanyi



Our team is working hard behind the scenes to prepare Tjunguringanyi - Coming Together, a collaboration with Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Art Centre Collective.

The exhibition will showcase the talents of six First Nation women artists: Nyunmiti Burton, Yaritji Heffernan, Megan Lyons, Sandra Pumani, Margaret Richards, and Leshaye Swan.

A collection of works illustrating the lived experiences, knowledge, and wisdom of Aboriginal women, central themes include wellness, the importance of family and fostering strong, healthy communities. The exhibition reflects the strength and unity of women supporting one another, across generations and both urban and remote settings.

Tjunguringanyi marks our fourth inclusion in the prestigious Art Gallery of South Australia's Tarnanthi program. Tarnanthi is a nationally renowned platform celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and their stories. It offers opportunities for

artists to not only share their culture but to extend their practice and create significant new works. Tarnanthi features exhibitions, art fairs, workshops, and performances at the Art Gallery of South Australia and across SA, spotlighting the incredible depth and diversity of our nation's First Nations art and culture.

Sandra is a Yankunytjatjara woman, artist, respected community leader and is the current Chairperson of the APY Art Centre and says "I grew up in Mimili with my grandparents and mum. I grew up around these areas out bush and down the lines of family. I was taught so much with the storylines. It is important for us to teach the kids our storylines and my paintings are to teach. My Grandma, Milatjari Pumani, was an artist and my Mum, Ngupulya Pumani, was an artist and my Aunty Betty Pumani is an artist, so it is in the Pumani family."

Tjunguringanyi Coming Together will open on 20 October 2025. Stay tuned for the exhibition brochure and artist forum details by visiting: wchfoundation.org.au/arts-in-health/gallery-exhibition-program.

"We hope this initiative will HONOUR AND PROMOTE ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND PERSPECTIVES while supporting that special bond between parent and baby." - Shelly Russo.



Weaving Culture and Care

We are proud to have supported a culturally significant initiative that focused on the wellbeing of the Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Care (AMIC) workforce, based within the Ngangkita Ngartu Aboriginal Family Birthing Unit.

Through a series of weaving workshops led by Aboriginal practitioners, this initiative provides culturally grounded and restorative care to the dedicated team who deliver essential support to Aboriginal women and families.

The AMIC team, made up of four trainees and one senior practitioner, provides culturally responsive antenatal, birthing and postnatal care to around 120 Aboriginal families annually. These practitioners are much more than clinical caregivers; they are keepers of cultural wisdom and lived experience, ensuring that care is safe, holistic, and culturally inclusive.

While the impact of the AMIC workforce is profound, the emotional and cultural responsibilities of this work are significant.

The team often faces complex social circumstances, heightened emotional demands, and high caseloads, all while navigating the resource challenges and emotional toll that come with their roles. Recognising these pressures, the AMIC team turned to culturally grounded wellbeing practices, and identified a restorative alternative to traditional counselling: weaving.

A series of four Aboriginal-led weaving workshops were held across the year. Designed as a space for connection, cultural expression and quiet reflection, these workshops offered the team and Aboriginal midwifery students on placement an opportunity to engage in the ancient art of mararla weaving.

Each session invited participants to learn traditional weaving techniques, share stories, and reconnect with culture through the rhythmic, meditative practice of fibre art.

Weaving served not only as a cultural link to generations past but as a powerful act of self-care, healing and collective support. Staff described the workshops as a safe space to yarn, recharge and build strength both individually and together.

This simple yet meaningful initiative exemplifies the importance of supporting the emotional and cultural needs of our Aboriginal health workforce, not only through recognition of their work but through honouring Aboriginal ways of healing and being.

By listening, responding, and enabling culturally relevant support, we are proud to stand alongside the AMIC team as they continue to provide safe, respectful, and empowering care.



STANDING BESIDE FAMILIES THROUGH THICK AND THIN

Supporting Children and Families Through Palliative Care

At the heart of paediatric palliative care is the commitment to helping children with life-limiting illnesses live as well as possible, for as long as possible. We are proud to support the South Australian Paediatric Palliative Care Service (PPCS), helping to provide compassionate, round-the-clock care for children and families both in hospital and at home.

Led by a multidisciplinary team, this highly specialised service offers much more than clinical care. It provides tailored support to manage complex symptoms, giving families the space and comfort to focus on creating meaningful memories together.

“We offer a really intensive hospital-in-the-home service, 24/7 on call care to families and support to staff caring for families. There are lots of symptoms that we’re managing in palliative care, and often over a long period of time, and we’re focusing on managing them to allow people to live life well so that they can really be comfortable to do the things that they want to do.” explains Dr Mary, Specialist Paediatric and Palliative Care Physician.

Art therapy is a vital tool in that care. It provides children and siblings with a safe, supported outlet for emotions they may not have the words to express.



Dr Mary Cossich with a patient under the care of WCHN

“Art therapy is another really important part of our service that the Foundation supports. I cannot speak enough about the importance of art therapy in supporting children and families through grief and loss. It connects directly into the Alongside Grief and Loss Program, another Foundation-supported initiative that helps families navigate the emotional landscape of palliative care and bereavement. It is amazing what comes up in art therapy. Kids just express so freely and so beautifully through the medium of art and with our very experienced, trained therapists. Being able to support siblings experiencing the death of their brother or sister in the family and giving them a means to express those huge emotions that they might not otherwise have the words for is incredible.” says Dr Mary.

And when it’s time for a break from appointments and routines, the Laklinyeri Beach House offers families a peaceful space to reconnect and rest.

“Palliative care is about helping children and families to live as well as possible in the setting of life-limiting illness. I think the Beach House really allows people to live as well as possible, to experience those things that many of us take for granted, like a family holiday. It is amazing to be able to offer that break, that respite, but also that experience for families.”

Precious Moments Spent Together



April at the Laklinyeri Beach House

Jasmine Williams and her daughter April, who lives with Metachromatic Leukodystrophy and is under the care of the Paediatric Palliative Care Service, have stayed at the Laklinyeri Beach House multiple times.

“For us it is a place of rest where we feel really welcome and at home. We are always very spoiled when we stay, from the many vouchers provided and treats to enjoy, and the attention to detail through the home is always amazing. Last year we stayed on April’s 11th birthday and there was a big surprise waiting for her when we came inside, which she loved!” Jasmine shares.

For Jasmine, the accessible features including the hoist and bath sling mean they can relax safely and comfortably in a space designed for families like theirs.

“The amenities and special equipment the house provides mean that we can continue to give April the same care as we would at home in a safe environment. April gets to enjoy a nice relaxing bath in the special disability bathtub, and the lifting equipment in particular is so

helpful and such a necessity now April is getting bigger.”

The Beach House gives their family precious time together by the sea, away from hospital routines, filled with comfort, connection, and the space to build lasting memories.

“The WCH Foundation have always been amazing to deal with and **A BIG SUPPORT FOR OUR FAMILY**, we are so grateful.” - Jasmine.

Supporting More Families Through Grief

Grief is a painful reality no parent should have to endure, yet for many families, the loss of a child becomes a heartbreaking chapter of their story.

The Paediatric Palliative Care Service (PPCS) has been standing by these families for years, providing compassionate and holistic care to those in Palliative Care. Whether this loss occurs suddenly or after a long illness, the grief is immeasurable, stretching across emotional, psychological, spiritual, and practical domains.

2024 marked a significant step forward in supporting all families experiencing the death of a child, not only those under the PPCS.

Recognising that every family deserves holistic bereavement care, no matter the circumstances of their child's death, we supported the establishment of the Alongside Grief and Loss Program.

In just 12 months, 24 families received essential bereavement care that they previously would not have received.

THE ALONGSIDE GRIEF AND LOSS PROGRAM

Offering individualised support, meeting families wherever they are in their grief. From professional bereavement counselling to sibling and family-friendly group initiatives, the program provides a comprehensive suite of services. Families also have opportunities to create meaningful memories through gestures such as fingerprint impression jewellery and other keepsakes. The program bridges the gap many families face, linking them to appropriate community resources and assisting with practical needs, including funeral expenses.

“The death of a child is an unimaginable loss that impacts every aspect of a family’s life,” shares Dimi Patrinos, Psychosocial Clinical Lead and Grief and Loss Coordinator. “Through this program, we aim to provide care that not only honours each family’s unique grief but also helps them lean on their strengths and the support around them. This work reinforces our commitment to equity and compassion in bereavement care.”

Since the Alongside Grief and Loss program launch in April 2024, **24 ADDITIONAL FAMILIES** (previously unserved) received bereavement care.

Together in Memory: A Special Gathering for Bereaved Families

The annual Family Gathering event was held in November, welcoming bereaved families to honour and celebrate the lives of their children.

We’re proud to support this special event, providing a meaningful opportunity for connection and reflection.

Set in the serene surroundings of Botanic Park, families up to two years post-bereavement were invited to participate in various activities, including music, a shared book reading, art making and a morning tea. Attendees were encouraged to bring photographs of their children to personalise the event further.

Extended family members, including parents, caregivers, siblings, and grandparents, took part, fostering a warm sense of community. The day also provided a chance to reconnect with care teams and others who share a similar experience of loss.

For the first time, this year’s gathering extended its invitation beyond the Paediatric Palliative Care Service to include families from the Alongside Grief and Loss Program.

Highlighting the event’s importance, Dimi Patrinos, Psychosocial Clinical Lead and Grief and Loss Coordinator, shared, “The Family Gathering event is so valuable for families grieving the loss of a child. It isn’t about the age of the child or the circumstances of their death, it’s about families knowing they are not alone in their grief.”

Surrounded by warmth, understanding and shared memories, more than 120 people from around twenty families came together, finding comfort, connection, and a sense of belonging among others who truly understood.



A Family's Legacy of Support

For some families, the Alongside Grief and Loss Program strikes an even deeper personal chord.

Marty and Michelle Roberts have been tireless advocates for the Foundation since 2006 through their fundraising initiative, Cycle 4 Sam. This community effort honours their son Sam, who passed away just before his fifth birthday in 2005.

Cycle 4 Sam began as a way to channel grief into purpose while celebrating Sam's lasting legacy. Over the years, it has grown into a vibrant movement, rallying the community to raise vital funds for families in need. The reach extended even further this year with their 'Spring Challenge,' where participants took on personal goals. Whether breaking a habit, trying something new, or committing to a fitness challenge, the community came together to make a difference.

"After losing Sam, we came to understand how deeply such a loss affects every part of your life," reflects Marty.

"That's why bereavement care is critical. Families in this situation need both emotional and practical support to cope with this pain. Knowing our fundraising is helping sustain and expand this program is incredibly meaningful to us."



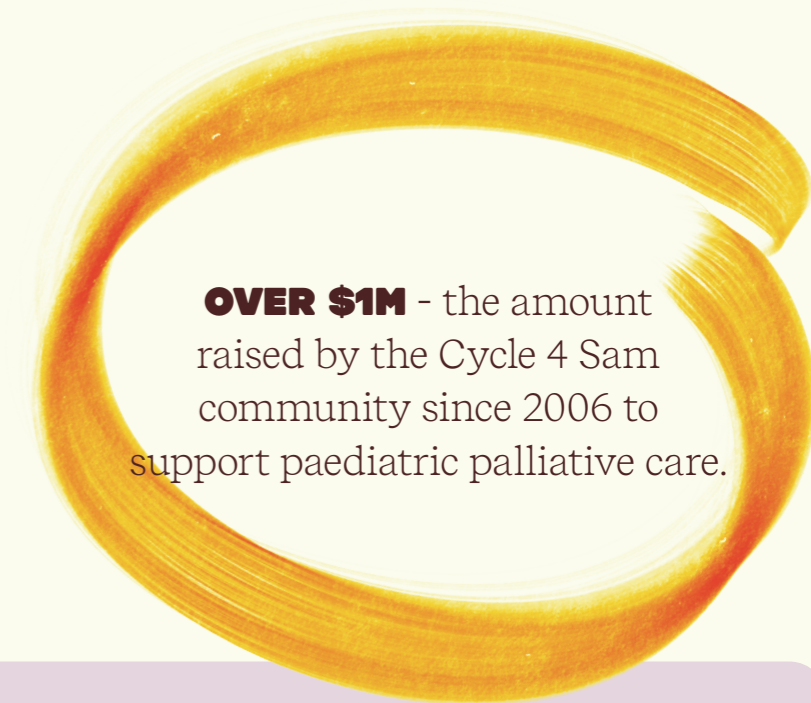
Marty and Michelle Roberts



The Cycle 4 Sam cheer squad

Celebrating a \$1 Million Milestone

This year marked a groundbreaking moment for the Roberts family and Cycle 4 Sam. Through their unwavering dedication, they surpassed the \$1 million fundraising milestone. This monumental achievement highlights not only the Roberts family's generosity but also the power of a united community to create real, lasting change.



OVER \$1M - the amount raised by the Cycle 4 Sam community since 2006 to support paediatric palliative care.

The Ripple Effect of Inspired Giving

The heartfelt commitment of the Roberts family has also inspired others to follow in their footsteps. Russell and Judy Ward (Michelle's parents) are among those deeply moved by the impact of Cycle 4 Sam. The Wards decided to leave a legacy of their own by including a gift in their Will to the Foundation, ensuring programs like Alongside Grief and Loss continue for generations to come.

"When I see everything the Foundation supports from research to family support initiatives and even the incredible beach house I'm filled with pride," shares Judy. "Knowing we can play a part in helping grieving families through this unspeakable heartache feels essential. It's fulfilling to know our contributions will make a difference long after we're gone."

Planned giving, such as the bequest pledged by the Wards, enables sustainable funding for programs that provide hope and healing to families in their darkest times.



Russell and Judy Ward

Creating Bright Futures Through Research

When babies are born preterm, their development faces many challenges. One of these challenges is missing out on placental supply of vital nutrients like Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA), an Omega-3 fatty acid essential for brain development. While DHA is supplied naturally in utero, preterm infants do not receive enough of this vital nutrient at a time when their developing brains need it most.

Associate Professor Jacqueline Gould of SAHMRI highlights the gravity of the problem, stating, “More than half of infants born extremely preterm experience neurobehavioural disabilities, such as learning disorders or behavioural problems.”

Previous research supported by the Foundation showed that while DHA supplementation in very preterm infants doesn't significantly impact behavioural outcomes at age five, it can improve IQ, with an average difference of 3.5 points. Importantly, there were no long-term respiratory or health complications linked to the supplementation, offering early assurance of its safety.

Through our 2024 Bloom Research Program, A/Prof Gould and her team at SAHMRI are now working toward developing guidelines that will allow the adoption of DHA supplementation in very preterm infants in SA and beyond.



Associate Professor Jacqueline Gould

Bloom Research Program funding is vital in translating this evidence into positive changes to clinical care of very preterm infants.

With research such as this often taking up to 17 years to be translated into clinical practice, A/Prof Gould says that funding from the Foundation is pivotal to achieving the final steps toward better care. “It's a really long road from doing the initial steps in research to actually seeing translation into practice, and the Bloom Research Program is really going to shorten that by years, if not decades.”

A Lasting Legacy

Behind every research breakthrough is a story of generosity and often, a deeply personal reason for giving.

For donor Grant Pearce, supporting A/Prof Jacqueline Gould's research into improving neurodevelopment in preterm infants was a way to honour the strength and love of his late mother, Lila Jean Pearce.

Lila was born in the 1920s and made it to the ripe old age of 97. A determined woman who gave birth to six children, yet only one, Grant, survived. Moved by her experience and a provision in her Will to support research into premature birth, Grant made the decision to carry that legacy forward. “Since I found out about that provision, I have become involved with the Foundation in several ways, including making a provision in my own Will and financially contributing to several other projects that the Foundation supports.”

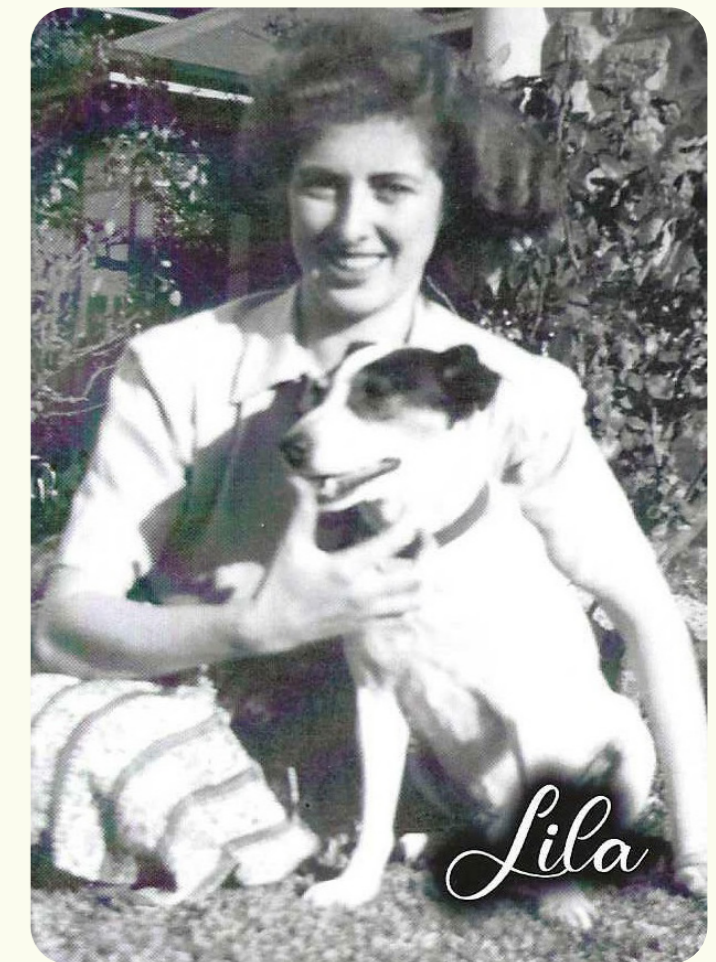
“I don't have children, and I thought that making a donation in memory of my mother would keep her memory alive,” he shares.

Grant's gift is directly supporting A/Prof Gould's work through the Bloom Research Program. The project, which aims to allow the adoption of DHA supplementation into clinical care for extremely preterm infants, deeply resonated with Grant.

After attending a presentation by A/Prof Gould's team, he reflected on its significance: “Here was a research project whose aim is to address issues that preterm babies suffer as a result of being preterm and which could lead to a better life for those children. What could be more worthwhile?”

Grant is contributing to this vital work to ensure that more babies are given the chance not just to survive, but to thrive. “I think that my mother would be very proud that funding is being provided to this special project that aims to see that preterm babies don't just survive but live to aspire to climb their mountain, whatever that mountain might be.”

Through Grant's generosity in memory of Lila Jean Pearce, and others who include a gift in their Will, a brighter future is being created for the tiniest babies.



Lila Jean Pearce

Supporting Healthy Beginnings Through Research

The WCH Foundation's Bloom Research Program, established in 2023 is at the forefront of advancing maternal and paediatric health. It represents an enduring commitment to creating brighter futures for women, children, and families.

The program funds large scale, innovative research projects that aim to improve health outcomes, foster leadership, and promote collaboration across healthcare and academic institutions.

SUPPORTING GAME-CHANGING RESEARCH

In July 2024, following a rigorous and highly competitive application process, five exciting projects were awarded a share of \$4 million. These projects perfectly encapsulate our mission to make a meaningful impact through research innovation.

Restoring Gut Health to Improve Infant Vaccine Responses

Led by Professor David Lynn (Flinders University and SAHMRI) and his research team, this project trials probiotics in infants who have received antibiotics. By restoring beneficial gut bacteria, the study hopes to improve immune responses to vaccines, offering broader protection against potentially life-threatening diseases.

Rapid Diagnosis for Lung Infections in Aboriginal Children

Dr Tom Goddard (WCHN) and his team are pioneering a rapid diagnostic tool for detecting lung infections in Aboriginal children from rural and remote communities. This initiative aims to provide timely treatment, minimise hospitalisation, and reduce risks of permanent lung damage.

Omega-3 DHA for Cognitive Development in Preterm Infants

Dr Jacqueline Gould (SAHMRI) is driving research on the benefits of DHA Omega-3 supplements for preterm babies. After showing improved IQ outcomes in earlier studies, her team is now working to develop guidelines to help integrate this potentially life-changing supplementation into care practices across SA and beyond.

Integrating Aboriginal Knowledge to Improve Healthcare

Cathy Leane (WCHN) and her team are incorporating Aboriginal ways of knowing into the healthcare system. Through yarning circles, the project seeks to improve sexual, reproductive, and perinatal healthcare for Aboriginal women and families, fostering culturally safe and effective care pathways.

Non-Surgical Treatment for Craniosynostosis

Professor Peter Anderson (WCHN) and his team are exploring a targeted, stem cell-based treatment for craniosynostosis, a condition where an infant's skull bones fuse prematurely. This innovative approach seeks to eliminate the need for invasive surgery, improving outcomes for affected children.

DRIVING HEALTH ADVANCEMENT THROUGH RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Channeling funding into carefully selected priority areas means we can offer the greatest potential for meaningful impact. Through expert consultation and focused analysis, this program maximises the returns of South Australia's investment in research, ensuring resources are directed toward tackling the state's most pressing healthcare needs.

The 2025 Bloom Research Program will commit up to \$3.7 million to health and medical research in two critical streams, with projects announced late 2025.

Stream 1 focuses on the prevention, early intervention, and treatment of mental health disorders in children and teenagers, addressing the growing demand for mental health support. Up to \$2 million will be allocated to Stream 1 projects.

Stream 2 supports innovation in treating rare diseases and disorders affecting children and pregnancies. These conditions, impacting less than 1 in 2000 people, require groundbreaking research to improve outcomes. Up to \$1.7 million will support these life-changing efforts.

These streams aim to create transformational change, not only for families across South Australia but also for communities beyond our borders.



Verity Gobbett, Marnie Campbell, Rebecca Smith, Cathy Leane, Susan Daw, Rebecca Graham, Dr James Rice, Jane Scotcher, Dr Tom Goddard, Professor Helen Marshall, Professor Peter Anderson and Dr Chelsea Mauch

Since launching in 2023, the Bloom Research Program has committed more than **\$10 MILLION** to **9 RESEARCH PROJECTS.**

Cocoon Program

Compassionate and coordinated care continues thanks to the Cocoon Program, a pioneering model of care for babies under 12 months both medically vulnerable and in foster care, or at risk of entering it.

The program offers an innovative model of care putting baby at the centre, promoting a more connected care experience for some of our most at-risk infants.

The Cocoon Program is the result of an identified special cohort of babies who are born with child-protection involvement. These babies may have complex psycho-social, developmental and medical needs and can be at high risk of ‘falling through the gaps’ resulting in a compounding of issues that can lead to crisis hospital admissions and missed opportunity for early intervention.

The program aims to address the unique needs of these special babies by providing early identification, assessment and intervention to infants, and swift referrals to connected services, if required. ***This is the only program of this kind in Australia, giving babies the highest possible coordinated health care in those critical early months of their life.***



Kirstie Morgan, Dr Malithi Hauser, family representing Cocoon Program consumers and Verity Gobbett

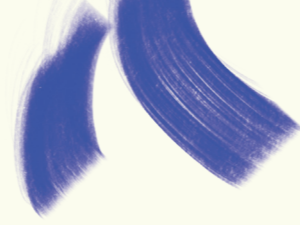
The Cocoon team comprises a specialised Clinical Coordinator, a Paediatrician specialising in the needs of babies, an Infant Mental Health Clinician, a Cultural Worker, and a Senior Physiotherapist. The specialties on this team have been hand selected for both regular care provision and ability to recognise potential health issues. The team may also conduct medical or developmental assessments, as well as assist with referral to other interventions and communication with community services. Due to the proactive nature of the clinic, which includes developmental assessments, babies are referred to early intervention services in a timely manner.

By wrapping compassionate, coordinated care around these infants and their carers, the program has helped to create safer, more supported beginnings for 132 babies since the program launched in 2023.

This vital program is proudly supported by our generous partner, Peter Kittle Toyota, whose commitment to child health and wellbeing is helping make a tangible difference. Peter Kittle Toyota pledged \$200,000 to supporting this program.

Their generous contribution is helping ensure the Cocoon Program continues to deliver early, compassionate, and life-changing care.

Since inception, **THE COCOON PROGRAM** has provided coordinated care **FOR 132 BABIES** at risk of entering, or in out of home care.



Exploring Probiotic Treatments for Infants

With the support of the Foundation, Professor David Lynn, along with his incredible team of collaborators, is leading a groundbreaking study that could reshape how we approach infant health.

With the pilot project recently published in Nature, one of the world's most prestigious journals, this project explores whether probiotics can help improve how infants respond to vaccines after undergoing antibiotic treatment.

This study has brought together experts from across Australia, with Prof Lynn from SAHMRI and Flinders University co-leading with Professor Helen Marshall from the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Prof Lynn explains that infants treated with antibiotics in their first weeks of life often show significantly lower levels of antibodies for multiple vaccines later on, at both seven and fifteen months of age. That's a big concern as these antibodies are crucial in protecting against disease.

To tackle this, the team is conducting a first-of-its-kind human trial in Adelaide. The trial is testing whether giving probiotics to babies treated with antibiotics in their first week of life can improve the way their immune systems respond to vaccines. Over 14 days, newborns will receive either a daily probiotic or a placebo before their first vaccinations.

Prof Lynn says, “When different infants get the same vaccine, some infants will produce lots of antibodies which mediate the protection against those vaccines. Other infants will produce middling levels of antibodies, and some will produce very little antibodies, and will then not be as well protected.”

“What we have observed is that infants, particularly those that get antibiotics in the very early neonatal period, have much lower antibody responses to different vaccines.”

The probiotics being tested are already safely used to protect preterm babies from necrotising enterocolitis (NEC), so there's confidence in their safety. Through blood and stool samples, researchers will examine how these probiotics affect the infants' microbiome and, importantly, their vaccine responses.

LOOKING BEYOND THE TRIAL

The potential impact of this study could stretch far and wide. It could offer solutions for other infants whose microbiomes are disrupted, such as those born via C-section or babies in low-income countries faced with frequent infections and malnutrition.

Prof Lynn also highlights how this research could be relevant far beyond the newborn stage. “What we learn here might connect to long-term child health, especially given past links between early antibiotic exposure and conditions like allergies, asthma, and even obesity,” he explains.



Professor David Lynn

Hospitals United for Sick Kids and Coles Hit the Right Note

In early 2025, we proudly joined forces with Coles and Hospitals United for Sick Kids to support our Music for Wellness Program, an initiative that brings calming, therapeutic music to babies, children, families, and staff in the Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

Throughout February and March, Coles customers across South Australia and the Northern Territory helped raise an incredible \$80,000 by purchasing \$2 donation cards or selected products, including Mum’s Sause and Jam, Swisse Wellness products, Grinders Coffee, and Queen Victoria Tea with a portion of each sale directly supporting the Program. This generous contribution helps ensure this unique music for wellness initiative continues to thrive.



Blip



Ilona Weir



Coles Team

Transforming Intensive Care Through Music

Music for Wellness, a vital aspect of our Arts in Health program, brings calming harp music into the neonatal and paediatric intensive care units.

Performed by professional harpist and certified healthcare musician Ilona, it delivers a moment of peace through gentle, live music.

Clinical research shows the benefits of therapeutic music for premature infants are profound. Simple, slow, and repetitive harp melodies can help regulate heart rates, support healthy weight gain, improve sleep, and even enhance early brain development.

Briana Koenders, whose twins Sophie and Rhys spent time in the neonatal unit, witnessed the impact of the program first-hand.

“Amongst the hustle and bustle of a busy hospital environment, it’s really great to hear calming harp

melodies,” Briana said. “It breaks up the routine noise, lowers our stress, and promotes a sense of comfort. It’s amazing to see their little eyes light up when they first hear the harp, then slowly drift off to sleep.”

The positive effects extend beyond the babies themselves. For parents and families, the experience provides a rare moment of calm, helping to ease the emotional toll that often accompanies a stay in intensive care units.

“The support of the community is incredibly important. The Music for Wellness Program improves the in-hospital experience for patients and families, promoting recovery and ultimately the best outcomes for babies by helping get them home sooner,” explains our CEO, Verity Gobbett.

Thanks to Coles, their suppliers, Hospitals United for Sick Kids, and the generosity of South Australians, the sound continues to echo through the halls of the Women’s and Children’s Hospital.



Briana and Ryan with twins Sophie and Rhys

Infant Development Toys

The Infant Development Team (IDT) at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital provide a holistic, family-centered developmental service to both inpatients and outpatients at the Hospital.

The team consists of a Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and Speech Pathologist who see the most complex and developmentally vulnerable babies; some who have had very lengthy hospital admissions.

Thanks to the generosity of our donor community, we’ve been able to complement the brilliant care of the IDT by providing specially curated Play Bundles for the approximately 200 referrals they receive each year.

Patients of the IDT are provided with a developmental therapy program and the recommendations from this often include specific play activities to support their motor skills, vision, language, play and social development.

Occupational Therapist, Ashleigh Olsen, says, “It can be quite challenging providing recommendations to parents knowing the families will have to go source these resources themselves, and also knowing that the most vulnerable families may not have the capacity to do this.”

In the past, the team have provided families with some handmade resources like picture cards and sensory toys, however these only had a short lifespan.

Now, we have provided the team with funding to source specific therapeutic resources to make an infant play bundle to give to families after their initial consult with the IDT. These resources benefit both the patient and families, and support the patient’s gross motor, fine motor, vision, sensory, social and language development.

Ashleigh says, “We know these Infant Therapy bundles are appreciated and valued by our patients and families.”



Patient under the care of WCHN



Professor David Lynn, Jill Newman, Associate Professor Jacqueline Gould, Charlotte Watson, Dr Malithi Hauser, Verity Gobbett and Dr Chelsea Mauch

Working Together for Healthier Beginnings

In April, we were honoured to co-host our inaugural joint forum with Healthy Development Adelaide. Held at the University of Adelaide and open to the public, the event brought together researchers, clinicians, students, and community members, all united by a shared passion for improving the health and development of our youngest and most vulnerable infants.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EVENING INCLUDED:

- **Advancing Neurodevelopment:** Associate Professor Jacqueline Gould presented powerful findings from her research into Omega-3 DHA supplementation and its role in supporting the neurodevelopment of preterm infants

- **The Power of Music:** Jill Newman, Arts in Health Manager at the Foundation shared insights into the benefits of Music for Wellness, a program bringing sound and connection into clinical care.
- **Understanding Early Immunity:** Professor David Lynn outlined his pioneering research exploring the impact of antibiotics on the developing immune system in early childhood.
- **Holistic Family Support:** Dr Malithi Hauser and Charlotte Watson shared the success of the Cocoon Program, a comprehensive service supporting families facing complex challenges during the perinatal period.

This forum was a wonderful reminder of what can be achieved when researchers, clinicians, and the community work hand in hand for health.



SUPPORTING CARE CLOSER TO HOME

Funding Secured for Community Health and Wellbeing Hub in the North

In January 2025, we were proud to be named a recipient of funding through the Australian Government's Urban Precincts and Partnerships Program (uPPP). The funding marked a major milestone in our plans to establish a transformative Community Health and Wellbeing Hub in Adelaide's northern suburbs, a project designed to deliver lasting impact.

The initiative is being developed in collaboration with a range of value-aligned partners across sectors and will serve as a vital extension of the Women's and Children's Health Network's statewide reach. Together, we share a vision of delivering high-quality, holistic care closer to home for families living in Adelaide's north.

The land for the project was secured thanks to a generous philanthropic donor, whose desire to invest in the future of the northern suburbs has helped make this vision possible. With this critical foundation in place, we are now working towards building an integrated health and wellbeing hub.

Offering a range of co-located health and support services, the facility will have a strong focus on early childhood development, pregnancy and parenting support, and programs that foster social connection. Accommodation for parents of babies in the Special Care Baby Unit at Lyell McEwin Hospital will keep support attachment and bonding in those early weeks.

Importantly, the Hub will offer families the chance to build practical skills that can shape lifelong outcomes.

Designed in response to identified community needs, the Hub will support children and families during some of the most formative moments in their lives.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Australian Government for their contribution to this project," said Verity Gobbett, our CEO. "This milestone is a testament to the commitment of everyone involved and the belief in the power of partnership and collaboration. The Community Health and Wellbeing Hub has the potential to make a profound difference to a region experiencing entrenched disadvantage. We are excited to be one step closer to bringing to life our vision of a vibrant community resource that fosters health, learning, and connection to the people who need it most."

This is just the beginning of an exciting journey, one that holds enormous promise for families in the north and beyond.



Community Health and Wellbeing Hub in Adelaide's North is for illustration purposes only.

A Space to Chill

In March, we were delighted to support the development of the new Chill Zone at Metropolitan Youth Health in Elizabeth.

This thoughtfully developed space provides a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for young people seeking assistance with their health. It caters to individuals, including young parents and those experiencing homelessness, promoting rest, self-care, and growth as vital aspects of wellbeing.

The Chill Zone's vibrant interior is brought to life by a stunning mural designed by contemporary Aboriginal artist Scott Rathman. A proud Eastern Arrernte man, currently residing on Kaurna land, Scott worked closely with young service users through a creative workshop to inspire an artwork rooted in nature and self-care. "Wellbeing is a state of balance, where people feel connected to themselves, others, and nature. It involves caring for physical and emotional health. Rest, self-care and growth are important in your everyday life," Scott explained.



We were honoured to have our CEO, Verity, attend the official opening alongside staff and community members. Together, we are creating spaces where young people feel safe and supported.

Supporting Home Sleep Studies

Thanks to support from our community and a partnership with Cops for Kids, the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) has been able to expand its sleep laboratory service to include home sleep studies. This initiative has been made possible through funding for two new sleep study devices.

The Hospital's sleep laboratory is the only public polysomnography service for children in South Australia and often experiences long waitlists. Home sleep studies allow patients aged 12 and above to undergo testing in the comfort of their own homes, reducing wait times and enabling faster treatment.

This advancement is already having a significant

impact on patients. Dr John Wong, Respiratory and Sleep Consultant at the WCH, shared the story of a teenager who was able to transition off intensive treatment sooner thanks to a home sleep study. ***"If we hadn't had a home sleep study, he might still be on intensive treatment for a year or two," Dr Wong said.***

15-year-old Boohra Singh, one of the first patients to benefit from the service, has seen dramatic improvements in his health. His mother, Raminder, shared, "He's healthy now, sleeps well, and even performs better at school. It's been such a relief for our family."

With early results showing success, this service is already helping families to find answers sooner.

Rapid Diagnosis of Lung Infection in Rural and Remote Regions

With the help of our generous donor community, including a partnership with Hospitals United for Sick Kids, we have been able to invest in the development of a new clinical diagnostic tool which will have a direct impact on clinical care.

The rapid diagnostic tool, in development by Dr Tom Goddard, will help clinicians diagnose and treat lung infections in Aboriginal children living in rural and remote regions more quickly and effectively.

Aboriginal children in rural and remote communities have the world's highest rates of bronchiectasis, a preventable lung condition caused by chronic lung infections.

Dr Goddard is a paediatric respiratory and sleep physician and performs outreach clinics at Alice Springs Hospital and Mount Gambier Hospital, where he sees many children with chronic lung disease.

He says, "We have children that are dying young, often in their teens or twenties, from preventable health conditions. Anything we can do to try and improve outcomes for these children is really important."

Effective treatment of these infections is reliant on an accurate diagnosis. However, it can take weeks to determine the cause of lung infections in these children due to their remoteness, by which time infections have worsened.

Funds awarded through our Bloom Research Program will support the development of the new tool, using DNA sequencing, to allow faster diagnoses and treat lung infections in Aboriginal children living in rural and remote regions, through the team's project titled 'RRR² Rapid Respiratory Response in Rural and Remote Regions - an observational study of bronchiectasis using groundbreaking tools'.

Dr Goddard says, "We're hoping that we can get results back within an hour so that we can make an educated decision on what the best form of treatment is for these patients."

It is hoped that this tool will enable timely treatment, preventing the need for children to be hospitalised at the Women's and Children's Hospital, away from home and family support, and reducing the risk of permanent lung damage.



Dr Tom Goddard



Every year, more than
**300,000 CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES** rely on the Women's
and Children's Hospital.

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

A Warm Start To Life

For newborns, maintaining stable body temperature in the first few hours of life is crucial. Hypothermia in neonates can lead to serious complications and, in some cases, result in admissions to the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU), separating babies from their mothers in those critical early bonding moments.

Midwife Jamie Logan explains the importance of the infant warmer, sharing that “Neonates who are growth restricted, small for gestational age, or born to diabetic mothers are at a higher risk of becoming hypothermic during the postnatal period.” Having this specialised equipment in the delivery suite means these babies can be continuously monitored during skin-to-skin contact with their parents while also receiving radiant heat if necessary.

Thanks to a new radiant overhead heater acquired for the delivery suite, newborns are even better supported in those very first moments.

Already, they’re seeing results, with a 78% success rate for at-risk newborns who use the warmer, avoiding SCBU admission.

“We anticipate that this technology will be invaluable in promoting family-centred care,” says Jamie.

A heartfelt thank you to Shannon and Nicole Fleming, LOT.100, and special guest chefs whose efforts with Collab for a Cause raised over \$70,000, helping make this vital project and others a reality. Helping South Australian babies thrive from the very beginning.



Breastfeeding Space

In July we unveiled a new dedicated breastfeeding room designed to meet the needs of mothers visiting the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Conveniently located near the paediatric outpatient area, this purpose-built space offers a comfortable and private environment, ensuring breastfeeding mothers have access to the support they need.

By removing barriers to breastfeeding, the room fosters an inclusive and welcoming environment for families visiting the hospital.

This project celebrates another significant milestone in our ongoing partnership with BIG W, whose contributions have exceeded \$600,000.



Amelia and baby Lacey



Annabel Comerford

Perineal Care Bundles

Research shows that Asian women can face specific challenges during childbirth, including higher incidence of birth-related tears and perineal infections.

To address this, we've supported the development of culturally safe education materials and perineal/post-birth care bundles.

This initiative aims to ensure that Asian women feel understood, supported and confident in their care, empowering them to have a positive birth and post-natal experience.

Over the past year, more than 500 Asian women planning a birth at the Women's and Children's Hospital have received a specially designed perineal care/post-birth care bundle, including culturally appropriate postpartum care products such as firm underwear, a perineal cleaning bottle, cooling pads and maternity pads.

Women now also have access to educational videos produced in five languages, which help

prepare them for birth, and targeted education is being rolled out for maternity care providers.

This project has been funded by the remarkable fundraising efforts of Adelaide's Vietnamese community, who came together to raise funds in recognition of the care received by so many mothers and babies.



Cooking for Health

Preparing nutritious, appealing meals can be a challenge for families managing inborn errors of metabolism (IEMs). These rare, genetically inherited conditions require individuals to follow strict, lifelong protein-restricted diets.

To ease this burden, we collaborated with parent and author Sasha Cranwell and the Nutrition Department at WCHN to create a resource that's both practical and empowering. Together, they developed a low-protein cookbook, which is now being gifted to families with children managing an IEM diagnosis.

The project draws on Sasha's personal experience with her daughter's diagnosis of Phenylketonuria (PKU) and her love of cooking. Sasha poured compassion and creativity into each recipe, hoping to inspire and assist others on their low-protein journeys.

Senior Clinical Dietician Annabel Comerford shared her gratitude, saying, "We are so grateful to the WCH Foundation for helping us realise this dream of equipping IEM families with this guide to low-protein cooking which is clinically necessary for their child's health."

Thanks to the collective efforts behind this initiative, families now have a valuable tool in improving their child's health while balancing the joys of food and togetherness.

A Family's Mission to Improve Genetic Services

Thanks to the generosity of a devoted community, families like Kate and Tom's will soon experience a more welcoming, thoughtfully designed Women's and Children's genetics department.

When Kate and Tom welcomed their son, James, into the world, they had no idea of the challenges ahead. At birth James was diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition where the brain and skull are significantly smaller than average. Further testing revealed a rare genetic disorder called ASPM-related primary microcephaly (MCPH5), caused by mutations in a key gene for brain development.

With fewer than 200 documented cases worldwide and only three in Australia, the diagnosis came with many unknowns. There is no cure for microcephaly, but early intervention therapies, including speech, physical, and occupational therapy, can help improve quality of life. Additionally, James requires supportive care, such as learning accommodations, seizure management, and physiotherapy for motor skills.

Now two years old, James is thriving in his own ways. He enjoys playing with friends at childcare, and while his speech is delayed, he's starting to form words. "He says 'Dad,' but not 'Mum' yet," Kate shares with a laugh. "We feel lucky because, at the end of the day, James is healthy."

Throughout their experience, the genetics department at the WCH has been a pillar of support. From the early, agonising weeks of waiting for answers to ongoing care and family planning, the department's team has shown unparalleled expertise and compassion. "They've walked every step with us," Kate explains. "They're not just specialists; they genuinely care about our family's future."

Grateful for this support, Tom embarked on a mission to give back. He set an ambitious goal of running an ultra-marathon to raise funds for the genetics department.

Driven by the enthusiastic backing of their local community his original target was surpassed multiple times before finally reaching \$20,000.



Kate, James, Tom and Reigen

The funds raised are being directed to the redevelopment of the genetics department, creating a more welcoming space for families and a better working environment for staff.

Professor Chris Barnett, Head of the Paediatric and Reproductive Genetics Unit says "The Paediatric and Reproductive Genetics Unit is currently working hard to provide better support and care to families in South Australia. We see children and families with rare diseases, congenital abnormalities and learning disabilities as well as hundreds of pregnant couples per year carrying a pregnancy that is possibly affected by a genetic disorder."

"This donation of equipment for our new consulting space is incredibly generous. The addition of a new room specifically for genetic counselling enables us to use this kind donation to buy supportive furniture for this room. We have never had a specific genetic counselling room before, so we are excited. It will also be a comfort room for any families who need it."

Although the road ahead for James is uncertain, his future is filled with love, resilience, and a community who will go above and beyond to support him. "Whatever happens," says Tom, "he'll always have an incredible network of family and friends cheering him on."

Inspired by the outpouring of support and love, Tom will be doing another ultra-marathon in support of the genetics team in September 2025.

More Dogs, More Support: Expanding the Delta Therapy Dog Program

The Delta Therapy Dogs Program continues to lead the way in bringing animal visits to families in hospital. We are proud to have developed the Animal Assisted Therapy program in partnership with Delta Therapy Dogs, and we are proud to have expanded our support of their visits to the Hospital this past year.

The Animal Assisted Therapy Program has grown significantly, allowing us to include more therapy dogs, which means more patients can benefit from this incredible service on their wellness journey.

There is so much that patients stand to gain from interacting with therapy dogs. Patients report reduced stress and anxiety, alongside physiological and social benefits. The joy these dogs bring also improves communication and social interaction, supporting faster recovery and greater comfort during their hospital stay.

Our support of Delta Therapy Dogs extends to patients and families in Newland Ward, Mallee Ward, and the

Paediatric Rehabilitation Service. These visits have become an integral part of patient care, adding a unique and enriching element to the hospital experience.

MAKING AN IMPACT TOGETHER

Our ability to grow and sustain the Delta Therapy Dog Program is made possible through the Lauren Corena Fund and the Bridget Claire McCartan Fund.

The Lauren Corena Fund was established by Mario Corena as a legacy for his daughter Lauren, who spent a large portion of her early adolescence in the Hospital's Boylan Ward (now Mallee Ward) and Adolescent Ward.

The Bridget Claire McCartan Fund was created by Rebecca and Danny McCartan in memory of their daughter, Bridget, who was a passionate burns care nurse at the Hospital and whose legacy of care and kindness continues to inspire.



Cathie and Winnie with a patient under the care of WCHN



Leah Grant

Feeding the Soul: New Mural Brightens Nutrition Department Walls

With support from our Arts In Health Program, a vibrant new mural was unveiled in July in the Nutrition Department at the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH), painted by the talented artist Leah Grant.

This stunning artwork was brought to life to create a welcoming and uplifting space for patients, families, and staff alike.

Leah's site-specific designs bring warmth and colour to the hospital walls, enhancing the environment with a unique touch of creativity. Reflecting on the project, Leah shared, "It's been a wonderful experience painting at the hospital where I gave birth to my two boys."

Working to a thoughtful brief, Leah was tasked with creating a piece that not only introduced colour and inspiration to the waiting room and hallway but also connected deeply with the department's focus areas of healthy food. Leah also carefully considered

the mural's calming effect, intending to offer comfort and serenity to those visiting the space.

Painted entirely by hand using brush and acrylic paints, the mural has already drawn admiration from staff and visitors. Phoebe Webster, Dietitian at the WCH, shares her thoughts on the impact of the new artwork, "Hospitals are not always an uplifting and vibrant place to be, particularly for families. Arts in health provides a much-needed vivacity to our spaces that our families need in times of stress. This mural will provide our space with a new warmth and colour for our staff and patients. We have already had numerous comments on how this mural provides a new life to our space."

We are proud to have supported this initiative, which demonstrates the incredible ways art can enhance health and healing spaces, offering solace to those who need it most.



Supporting Healing Through Art

Yarrow Place is a service of Health and Recovery, and the lead public health agency responding to rape and sexual assault in South Australia. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we were able to facilitate a unique arts project embodying care, self-expression, and community.

Initially, the Yarrow Place team were hoping to enhance the client experience with the purchase of new art works for their foyer, however, our Arts in Health team was able to instead facilitate a collaborative arts initiative that placed clients at the heart of the creative process. Young people were supported to create their own pieces through a series of art workshops led by local artist Louise Flaherty.

The workshops embraced intuitive drawing, encouraging participants to use art as a form of self-care without the pressure of creating a polished 'final' product. One standout activity invited participants to craft artistic representations of significant plants, inspired by the yarrow plant's symbolic connection to healing.

The outcome was truly inspiring. Not only did participants learn techniques to continue using art-making for personal wellness, but their creations also became a permanent and meaningful part of Yarrow Place's environment.

Each participant contributed to the curation process, selecting, framing, and arranging their work. The result is a vibrant collection of authentic, heartfelt art that reflects personal experiences and underscores the therapeutic power of creativity.

This project serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative benefits of integrating art into health and healing practices.

It empowered participants, provided a channel for self-expression, and left Yarrow Place with a lasting testament to the resilience and hope of its community.



Dance Movement Therapy for New Mums



Tanya Voges

This year, our support helped bring Dance Movement Therapy to mothers at Helen Mayo House, a facility that provides inpatient care for parents experiencing significant mental health challenges during the postnatal period.

Mothers experiencing mental health problems can experience difficulties in bonding with their babies and regulating both their own, and their baby's emotions.

Dance Movement Therapy is evidence-based, trauma-informed and strengths-focused. The psychosomatic therapy uses creative movement and arts-based therapeutic interventions for regulation and expression of emotions through motion.

Movements used in these sessions help support self-regulation and co-regulation between mother and baby, fostering optimal emotional and cognitive development in infants. They also serve as a form of nonverbal communication, helping participants connect with themselves and others, and explore important skills like attachment in a creative, supported, and safe space.

Tanya Voges is a Creative Arts Therapist who specialises in Dance Movement Therapy and who runs these group sessions at Helen Mayo House twice a week.

She says, "I've developed this program to meet the needs of parent and infant in an acute perinatal unit, using movement and music to support regulation and connection."

Sessions differ from non-therapeutic dance as there isn't planned choreography or a specific structure needing to be met, they are led by the mood of the group.

Tanya holds a safe space for mums, providing co-regulating movement to songs, so that they can experience regulation and work towards co-regulation with their babies. It is a 'yes' environment where there are no wrong ways of participating.

Early reflections suggest that Dance Movement Therapy is having a positive impact, with staff at Helen Mayo House observing that many mums value having gentle, alternative ways to engage in therapy.

Helping Families When They Need It Most

Every year, hundreds of families face the challenge of their child being hospitalised. Far from home and overwhelmed by immense pressure, families can find themselves experiencing extreme financial hardship. That's where our Family Support Program steps in, providing essential assistance when families need it most.

Over the last 12 months, we've proudly supported more than 150 families through this program.

Working in close collaboration with the Hospital's social work team, we respond compassionately and rapidly to meet families' unique needs. From covering emergency travel costs and arranging nearby accommodation to helping with household bills and groceries, we aim to lighten the load during incredibly tough times.

In October 2024, our work was amplified thanks to a generous \$20,000 donation from Masonic Charities, the philanthropic arm of Freemasons SA & NT. Presented by Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, during the Freemasons' Benevolence Cocktail Function, this incredible contribution has allowed us to deliver tangible, life-changing support for families in crisis.

This donation helped us to provide:

- Accommodation for 8 rural and remote families, enabling them to stay close to their hospitalised child.
- Funeral assistance for 5 grieving families, easing financial stress when they faced unimaginable loss.
- Essential bill and rent support for 5 families and grocery vouchers for 4 families, ensuring food remained on the table and roofs over their heads.
- Ambulance cover for 3 families, offering peace of mind in emergencies.
- Flights for a 3-year-old child, reuniting them with their single mother in Melbourne while their sibling underwent critical cardiac surgery.

- Prescription glasses for a child with Down syndrome from a remote NT community, giving them the gift of sight and independence.
- Specialised equipment for a baby with neurological challenges, ensuring their needs were met in a supportive care environment.
- Urgent home repairs, enabling safe access for a wheelchair-dependent child.

Every dollar of the Freemasons SA & NT donation has been transformed into compassion, care, and dignity for families facing hardship.

"Through the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation's Family Support Program, we're able to directly ease the burden on families facing financial hardship due to their child's health struggles. This reflects precisely what Freemasonry is all about - uplifting and assisting those in need," says MW Bro. William Merrill, Grand Master, Freemasons SA & NT.

Together, we're supporting families when they need it most.



Bill Merrill, Grand Master – Freemasons SA & NT, Jane Scotcher, former CEO WCH Foundation, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, Boyd Sparrow, Grand Secretary - Freemasons SA & NT, Zoe Gray, WCH Foundation and David Booker, Chairman Masonic Charities Trust

Teens Reclaim Their Lives from Chronic Pain



Tracey Smith, Kate Smith, Michaela Cavaiuolo and Michelle Cavaiuolo

At our October Golden Hearts Bequest Society event, supporters heard powerful stories from families living with chronic pain, alongside insights from Dr Nicki Ferencz, Service Lead of the WCHN Paediatric Chronic Pain Service (PCPS).

Chronic pain affects 1 in 5 young Australians, disrupting their ability to live normal, fulfilling lives. For many teens, this pain is more than just physical; it impacts their mental health, education, relationships, and family dynamics. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the PCPS, supported by the Foundation, young people are rediscovering hope and taking back control of their futures.

For over three years chronic headaches ruled Kate's life. Beyond the throbbing pain, she experienced sleepless nights, struggles at school, and growing isolation from friends. "It's so much more than the pain; it impacts everything," Kate reflects. But today, after years of support from PCPS, Kate is about to graduate high school, something she never thought possible. "The program is a lifesaver," she says.

Michaela's story echoes a similar resilience. For over a decade, she battled chronic abdominal pain, missing large chunks of school. "When you say you have a tummy ache, people say, 'Just take a Panadol.' Nobody understands," she explains. Through the PCPS, Michaela not only graduated with flying colours but is now pursuing her dream career as a veterinary nurse.

The WCH Foundation proudly supports two vital initiatives that empower teens like Kate and Michaela:

- **Comfort Ability Program:** A one-day workshop equipping young people and their families with effective tools to manage pain, improve physical function, and enhance their overall wellbeing.
- **Peer Education Program:** Featuring educational videos led by teens who have lived with chronic pain, this initiative creates a sense of understanding and solidarity, helping others feel supported and less alone.

Dr Ferencz highlights that managing chronic pain requires a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach, involving doctors, psychologists, and physiotherapists working as a team. Families value coordinated care that truly supports recovery.

Our community's support makes these life-changing programs possible, giving teens the resources they need to rediscover their potential. Because of these initiatives, Kate can plan for a vibrant future, and Michaela has embraced her passion for helping animals.

Together, we are creating significant change, helping young people living with chronic pain reclaim their lives and futures.



Charlie in his **SPACE COMMANDER SUPERTEE**

Superteas Helping Kids Reach for the Stars

Throughout the year, many children including young patient Charlie, were delighted to receive their Superteas.

Charlie's Space Commander Supertee was accompanied by a personalized control console pillowcase, allowing him and his teddy to imagine flying in their rocket ship bed.

The Supertee is a specially designed medical garment that goes beyond a typical t-shirt. Its side and shoulder openings provide quick, easy access for

clinical procedures, such as accessing or bypassing medical lines, while its vibrant design fosters creativity and comfort during hospital stays.

Through a valued partnership with The Supertee Project and Variety the Children's Charity, we support children's wellbeing by combining functionality with imagination, helping young patients feel empowered and engaged throughout their treatment journey.

Supporting Mothers Through Gestational Diabetes

In July, we proudly supported a project to create new essential fact sheets and educational resources for expectant mothers like Mia, who was diagnosed with gestational diabetes at 20 weeks.

Mia shared her gratitude for the new fact sheets saying, *"They explain things in a way that is easy to understand and follow"*.

These resources are empowering mothers to manage gestational diabetes with confidence.



Mia and Stephanie Saggs



Special
Care Baby
Unit

This sign speaks!
To hear this sign
download the
WCHN Culture app

**Muinyi munt
kangkawa**

Special Care Baby

Place to care for infants and
needing special care and s

THANK YOU

Your generosity, time, and trust have made this year's impact possible.

To support our work and learn how you can partner with us:
Visit wchfoundation.org.au
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Email hello@wchfoundation.org.au





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