

# Concord Connection

The official newsletter of Concord Hospital



2024  
NSW Health  
Awards



Health Research  
Award

Winner

Sydney Local Health District

Oral Insulin



## ANZAC team wins research award

The partnership of research and healthcare at Concord Hospital were pivotal in the ANZAC Research Institute's development of Oral Insulin, according to the institute's Director, Professor Victoria Cogger.

"This is something that was born at Concord Hospital," Victoria said.

"We certainly collaborated across NSW Health and the University of Sydney ... but, really, this whole product was born at Concord Hospital. And to me that's really exciting ...

"I can't reinforce that message enough that when we allow research and healthcare to partner, it can really change people's lives ... and it creates this wonderful feeling of goodwill and generosity amongst colleagues and staff."

Victoria was speaking in the wake of the Oral Insulin Team winning the Health Research Award at the 2024 NSW Health Awards.

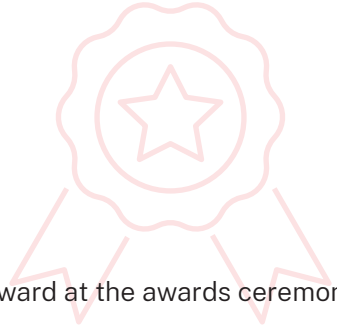


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Sydney  
Local Health District



The team received the award at the awards ceremony held on 24 October.

Victoria said the team was honoured to take out the award. “We were ecstatic,” she said.

“There was some pretty stiff competition ... people get nominated because they're doing wonderful things ... and we were really honoured to receive it.

“It's lovely to have our work recognised in that way and, really, this work has been decades in the making. To see it finally coming to fruition with the possibility that it's actually going to make a real difference in the lives of people living with conditions like diabetes is humbling in many ways.”

Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Deb Willcox AM said she was pleased to see the team's work recognised at the awards.

“I am so proud to see the dedication and excellent work of the Oral Insulin Team at ANZAC Research Institute ... recognised in the NSW Health Awards,” she said.

“I am looking forward to seeing oral insulin become available in the market after clinical trials to empower people living with diabetes.”

It's lovely to have our work recognised in that way and, really, this work has been decades in the making.

Clinical trials for oral insulin are scheduled to begin early in 2025. The ANZAC Research Institute team has developed a novel nanotechnology-based delivery system that means people needing insulin can ingest the drug rather than injecting it.

Victoria said much would depend on the outcome of the clinical trials but said she was hopeful the treatment would be available within a few years.

*Previous: The ANZAC Research Institute's Director, Professor Victoria Cogger, and the Oral Insulin Team accept their award from NSW Health Secretary Susan Pearce.*

## Wise use of water in CSSD upgrade

The recent upgrade of equipment used by the Central Sterilising Supply Department (CSSD) at Concord Hospital is saving thousands of litres of water a day.

CSSD plays a critical role in ensuring patient safety by sterilising reusable medical instruments from facilities across Sydney Local Health District.

Sustainability has been a major focus for the department during these upgrades. George Papadopoulos, Head of Department at CSSD, says this work has had a dramatic impact on the department's water usage.

“With the old sterilisers, we were losing around 600 litres of water per cycle – about 18,000 litres a day, all going down the drain,” he explains. “Now, with our new chiller system, none of that water is wasted.”



The new system recycles water used to cool the sterilisers by connecting it to the hospital's chilled water supply. This innovation saves CSSD thousands of litres of water daily, a significant step forward in reducing the District's environmental footprint.

“The water used in the sterilisers is not for the actual sterilisation process but for cooling the vacuum pump,” says George.

“With the chiller, we can send that water back into the system instead of down the drain. It's a huge difference.

## Message from the General Manager

What an inspiring couple of months we have had at Concord Hospital.

We've seen wonderful recognition for our brilliant people and heard about spectacular fundraising efforts.



A particular highlight was the ANZAC Research Institute's success at the 2024 NSW Health Awards. Winning the Health Research Award is well-earned recognition of the institute's stunning work to develop oral insulin, which will be life-changing for many people living with diabetes.

In another wonderful achievement, the Orthogeriatric Team has again been nominated in the top 10 for the Australian and New Zealand Hip Fracture Registry's Golden Hip Award – a year after taking out the prize.

It was great to hear this year's Bloody Great Night Out surpassed its fundraising target to raise well over \$250,000. Congratulations to the Foundation for A Bloody Great Cause and The Bloody Great Committee for their magnificent support for the Haematology Clinical Research Unit.

We had a reminder of Concord Hospital's rich military history with the recent Remembrance Day ceremony. It was gratifying to have Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Lam attend, especially as he shared his gratitude for his treatment here in 2019.

As we now look forward to the end of the year, I would remind everyone of our lower activity period from Monday 23 December, with a return to full service after 26 January 2025.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to those of you working through the holiday season – our patients and their families will be appreciative of your dedication and professionalism. For those of you who have some time off, I hope you have an enjoyable break and return energised for the new year.

**Anthony Dombkins**  
Acting General Manager

We've gone from 600 litres a cycle to zero, making our process far more sustainable."

CSSD undertook these significant upgrades to enhance sustainability, save resources, and meet the new AS 5369 standard, which sets strict guidelines for reprocessing and sterilising reusable medical devices in healthcare settings. These standards ensure high levels of hygiene and safety by outlining protocols for cleaning, disinfection, and sterilisation, while encouraging sustainable practices such as reducing water waste.

The department serves Concord and other District hospitals and health centres –including Croydon Health Centre, Marrickville Health Centre, and Balmain Hospital. It is responsible for the sterilisation of instruments for 11 operating theatres and other wards and departments, with about 30 sterilisation cycles daily. These high standards are maintained by a dedicated team of 32 staff at Concord and eight at Canterbury.

Every hospital has chillers, so using them to make a difference in water consumption was the right choice

Besides water conservation, the department's upgrades have also prioritised reliability. By connecting sterilisers to essential power and chilled water, CSSD ensures uninterrupted operation. "If power goes down, our sterilising equipment keeps running, which means surgeries won't be delayed due to unavailable sterilised instruments," says George. This focus on reliability is crucial, as he notes: "Without sterile, reusable medical devices, there can be no surgery."

The sustainability measures reflect Sydney Local Health District's dedication to continuing improvement and compliance with updated standards. "It's pretty much a no-brainer," George adds. "Every hospital has chillers, so using them to make a difference in water consumption was the right choice."

*Left: CSSD staff are saving thousands of litres of water every day with their new equipment.*



## Veteran's gratitude for hospital's work



Attending Concord Hospital's Remembrance Day service on Monday 11 November was a special moment for Lieutenant-Colonel (LTCOL) Andrew Lam.

The senior reservist officer says treatment he underwent at Concord in 2019 ensured he could continue to live a normal life and advance in the Army Reserve and in his working life.

LTCOL Lam was one of about 60 people who attended the Remembrance Day service that marked the 106th anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended World War I.

The team here identified very early on that I was a veteran, I was a serving member of the Defence Force

Sydney Local Health District Board Chair Karen Crawshaw PSM and District Chief Executive Deb Willcox AM laid wreaths at the hospital's Tri-Star Badge Memorial during the service, led by Concord chaplains Reverend David Anthonisz and Father Graeme Malone.

Others to lay wreaths included Concord Hospital Director of Medical Services Dr Stewart Condon, Aged Health, Rehabilitation and Chronic Care Executive Clinical Director Associate Professor John Cullen, National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare Medical Director Dr Cameron Korb-Wells and ANZAC Research Institute Director Professor Victoria Cogger.

In his welcome to the ceremony, Rev Anthonisz said the hospital's memorial honoured those who had served Australia in war and was a tangible reminder of Concord Hospital's proud tradition of caring for veterans and their families.

That care was key for LTCOL Lam when he was admitted to Concord in 2019 with a severe case of ulcerative colitis. He expected to be in hospital overnight but 10 weeks later he required extreme medical treatment.

"The team here identified very early on that I was a veteran, I was a serving member of the Defence Force," he said.

"They bent over backwards, they looked after my family, they looked after myself ... I was here during Remembrance Day in 2019, and the nurses did a really good job of hiding all the tubes and all the equipment I had attached to me so I could actually come down here and have the service, with my wife and my three-month-old baby daughter."



LTCOL Lam – who had previously been deployed to Timor-Leste and Iraq – would later undergo J-Pouch surgery to replace his bowel with part of his small intestine. He said the care from surgeon Associate Professor Matt Rickard and the Stomal Therapy Department allowed him to return to military service and to his working life as a police officer.

“It’s definitely given me a new lease on life,” LTCOL Lam said.

“I was able to go back to full duties with the Australian Army but also my full-time job as a serving NSW Police officer. I’ve been able to be promoted in both organisations ... to lieutenant-colonel in the Australian Army and as a detective sergeant in the NSW Police.”

Since his surgery, LTCOL Lam has been deployed with the Army to help with the 2020 bushfires response and to support NSW Health during the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2024 he was part of the Australian Army contingent sent to support the Solomon Islands elections.



“I was healthy enough and fit enough to deploy with the rest of the force element,” he said.

“They didn’t even realise that I’d had the amount of surgery that I’d had, the amount of treatment that I actually did have ... which is a testament to the care that I received here.

“My new bowel is working so well that I’m actually on the man shakes at the moment to control my weight.”

*Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Lam (left) offers a salute after the Remembrance Day service, which drew about 60 people this year (above).*

## GPs gather to learn more about Cancer Centre



Concord Cancer Centre held a General Practice (GP) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) evening on Tuesday 12 November to inform GPs about the centre’s facilities and the breadth of care it offers and to launch the centre’s website.

Concord Hospital Acting General Manager Anthony Dombkins welcomed the 16 GPs and industry partners from across nearby areas who attended the event, which was held on the lower ground level of the Rusty Priest Building.

The evening began with dinner and refreshments and information stalls before guests gathered in the Multidisciplinary Team Room to hear a series of talks from clinicians including respiratory surgeons Dr Elizabeth Veitch and Dr Alice Cottee, radiation oncologist Dr Miriam Boxer, medical oncologist Dr Prunella Blinman and palliative care staff specialist Dr Jared Millican.

Sydney Local Health District Director of Cancer Services and Palliative Care Associate Professor Ilona Cunningham, who was MC on the night, said the event was a great success with very positive feedback from the GPs who attended.

After the formalities concluded at 8.30pm, Ilona led a tour of the Concord Cancer Centre for a group of the GPs.

The website launch was also able to provide insights into referral options for GPs available on the site.



## Leaders join Kokoda Day commemoration



Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Deb Willcox AM and Concord Hospital Acting General Manager Anthony Dombkins have laid wreaths at a special ceremony commemorating Kokoda Day.

The event at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway (KTMW) on Sunday 3 November marked the anniversary of the day in 1942 that the Australian flag was raised over Kokoda after the town was retaken from Japanese forces a day earlier.

Deb and Anthony joined dignitaries including NSW Minister for Veterans David Harris MP, Mayor of the City of Canada Bay Michael Megna and KTMW Chair Jennifer Collins AM.

In his address, KTMW Board Member Major Charlie Lynn OAM told how the Kokoda Day flag raising symbolised the turning of the tide in the Pacific during World War II.

*Above: Deb Willcox, with Superintendent Christine MacDonald, and Anthony Dombkins, with Strathfield Mayor John-Paul Baladi, lay wreaths at the memorial.*

He said the commemoration honoured the self-sacrifice of Australian personnel but also that of the Papuans – the “Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels – who saved countless lives.

May deep appreciation and an enduring thankfulness be our gift to all who served

“Hundreds of Australian soldiers owe their lives to the selfless sacrifice of the carriers who guided them and carried them to safety,” Major Lynn said.

In a prayer at the ceremony, Concord Hospital’s Anglican chaplain Reverend David Anthonisz said: “May deep appreciation and an enduring thankfulness be our gift to all who served and are forever honoured here.”



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## Veterans' Health Week

The National Centre for Veteran's Healthcare (NCVH) team held a series of social activities in October to mark Veterans' Health Week.

With support from the RSL NSW Kirribilli sub-branch, the NCVH secured Department of Veterans' Affairs grants to support the events.

The theme for this year's Veterans' Health Week – held on 13 to 20 October 2024 – was “Keep Connected”, which aimed to promote good health and wellbeing.

Two of the NCVH events were held at Concord Hospital, with the team and clients undertaking activities that fostered teamwork and communication through art and crafts as well as cooking.

For the third event, NCVH and RSL NSW teamed with Saltwater Veterans to provide a day of sailing on the harbour for current and ex-NCVH clients, some of the NCVH team and members of the veteran community.



The day was designed to help create teamwork and social connection through the activity of sailing.

All of the events received positive feedback from those who took part.

*Above: Veterans participate in a cooking class at the NCVH.*

## New app makes it easy to seek help



A new staff wellbeing app conceived and tested at Concord Hospital has been launched across Sydney Local Health District.

The Psychological Resource App – a new tool to improve the mental wellbeing of doctors and staff – was launched in October.

The app combines access to about 30 mental health services and tools into a single directory in your phone, accessible for whenever staff need it.

Sarah Michael, Director of Psychological Wellbeing at MDOK, says it's hoped the app will tackle the barriers staff face when seeking mental health assistance.

“If we're having a bad day at work or an incident happens, we can go into this app,” she said.

The app is the brainchild of Senior Resident Medical Officer Jeffrey Zhou, who found he couldn't easily find the resources he needed when starting as a Concord Hospital resident.

“Sometimes it can be a bit awkward asking for resources when you want them,” Kripa Achan, MDOK Program Manager, said.

Last year, Kripa helped develop Jeffrey's idea by spearheading a Concord working group, consisting of junior medical officers, MDOK, Employee Assistance Program, and many others.

The app's October launch followed its initial release across Concord and Canterbury in 2023.

*Above: Sarah Michael, Director of Psychological Wellbeing at MDOK, shows off the new app.*

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# District celebrates Medical Radiation Practitioners



Sydney Local Health District celebrated World Radiography Day on 8 November.

The day – which marks the anniversary of German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen’s discovery of X-rays in 1895 – is designed to highlight the role Medical Radiation Practitioners play in the patient’s healthcare journey.

Among those across the District celebrating World Radiography Day was Concord Hospital radiographer Ryan Tam, who was honoured in October at the Sydney Local Health District Excellence in Allied Health Awards.

He was named Allied Health Educator of the Year for his work on educating colleagues and improving clinical standards. His work was praised for promoting a culture of continued learning, excellence and evidence-based practice in the department.

Ryan said he was surprised and thrilled to receive his award. “I didn’t even know there was an award for this,” he said.

“It was a totally new thing for me. It is really encouraging. This is going to take some time to process.”

District Director Allied Health Sarah Whitney said this award recognised the excellent contribution to education to improve clinical standards and patient outcomes.

She said the District had more than 200 Medical Radiation Scientists (MRSs) who work in the

Departments of Radiology, Molecular Imaging (PET-CT and General Nuclear Medicine) and Breast Screen services together with our Radiation Therapy colleagues in Lifehouse and at ICON. There are also MRS-Radiography and non-MRS staff working as sonographers outside Radiology in fetal medicine, gynaecology, vascular medicine and cardiology.

Ryan said he believed his Allied Health Award honoured the work of the many people who had supported his efforts to improve protocols and train his colleagues.

“I don’t see this as a personal success; rather, it reflects the success of the collaboration and support of my department and Concord Hospital,” he said.

“All the people that I’ve met, including the radiologists, the orthopaedic team, the ED doctors, the physiotherapist and the radiographers ... it’s great that all the work that we’ve done has been recognised.”

Ryan has worked at Concord for more than 17 years and said he was proud of the work of his Radiography Team and its commitment to its patients and the NSW Health CORE values.

*Above: Concord radiographer Ryan Tam was named the District’s Allied Health Educator of the Year.*



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## Bloody Great Night Out smashes fundraising target

The Haematology Clinical Research Unit at the Concord Cancer Centre welcomed hundreds of patients, carers, staff, supporters and community members to its major annual fundraising event, A Bloody Great Night Out!

Held at Doltone House in Pyrmont, the event raised more than \$250,000.

Dr Nicole Wong Doo, Unit Director, said the funds raised were critical to providing the best treatment opportunities available for patients, who are considered partners in research.

“For many patients, participating in a clinical trial is their only hope for a cure and a better quality of life,” she said.

“Being able to fund more clinical trial nurses and a medical fellow will allow our patients to access millions of dollars’ worth of innovative medicines, long before they are publicly funded.”

The extraordinary night of generosity was made possible by local event sponsors including the Canada Bay Club, Warwick Williams Real Estate, Trevor Lee and Sons, and Forvis Mazars Group.



“We sincerely thank all the local community, businesses and patients and their families and all the medical staff that came along and generously supported our fundraising efforts,” Senior Staff Specialist Professor Judith Trotman said.

The Haematology Clinical Research Unit at the Concord Cancer Centre provides world class treatment and care for people living in the local community and across the state. Patients can access the unit for treatment through referral from their medical specialist.

*Above: The team from the Haematology Clinical Research Unit at the Bloody Great Night Out.*

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## BreastScreen van to visit Concord



A BreastScreen mobile van is based at Concord Hospital until Friday 20 December 2024.

@breastscreennsw and Sydney Local Health District recommend women aged 50 to 74 years participate in screening. If breast cancers can be detected when they are small, treatment is often less invasive, and women have a greater chance of survival.

An appointment at the BreastScreen NSW van is free, takes less than 20 minutes and no doctor’s referral is needed. The mobile screening van is operated by female radiographers who ensure patient comfort during screening.

Visit [book.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au](http://book.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au) or call 13 20 50 to book a free mammogram at the mobile screening van or at any other BreastScreen NSW location.



# Families, friends celebrate Yaralla's big day



Your work has also revealed unknown aspects of my children to me. Our world wouldn't be whole without you

*Above: Educators, parents and children gathered to celebrate Yaralla Child Care Centre's 50th anniversary.*

Concord Hospital staff, friends, families and, of course, children gathered on 24 September to celebrate Yaralla Child Care Centre's 50th anniversary.

Special recognition went to the centre's director, Ann Cass, and all the dedicated staff, past and present, who have contributed to making Yaralla a cherished part of the Concord community

Among the staff celebrating the milestone were serving team members who have been working at the child care centre since as early as 1989, highlighting the centre's deep roots within the community.

Yaralla Child Care Centre cares for 60 children, with a devoted team of 15 staff members, each contributing to the centre's legacy in early childhood education. Over





the years, families have often shared how the staff's commitment and care have enriched their children's lives, creating lasting memories and positive impacts.

One parent who attended the 50th anniversary celebration, So Young Lim, said the Yaralla team's work had a profound effect on their children.

"I deeply appreciate the care and dedication you provide to my children," Ms Lim said.

"It's incredible to see them grow, learn, become more confident, pursue their interests, and make friends in a safe environment. Your work has also revealed unknown aspects of my children to me. Our world wouldn't be whole without you."



## Vale Associate Professor Hugh Carmalt

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Associate Professor Hugh Carmalt on 2 November 2024 after a long illness.

Hugh was a gifted surgeon who was committed to ensuring the best outcomes for patients. After working as a general surgeon, he specialised in breast surgery, going on to become Head of Department Breast/Endocrine Surgery at Concord Hospital and Head of Breast Surgery at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

As a department head, he was dedicated to the supervision and training of students and surgical trainees.

Renowned for his attention to detail, Hugh was a pioneer in the use of multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) for the treatment of cancer, establishing one of Sydney's first MDTs at Concord and his private rooms at Strathfield Private Hospital with colleague Dr David Gillett.

Together, the pair also established an important breast cancer database to monitor the outcomes of more than 10,000 patients.

As the leader of an MDT, Hugh established templates to ensure meetings were run effectively and regularly sought input from all members of the caring team.

Hugh was a surgeon who was adored by his patients and who left a significant stamp on the fabric of Concord Hospital and Sydney Local Health District. He will be missed.

Concord Hospital Acting General Manager Anthony Dombkins extended his gratitude to everyone involved in organising the celebration and acknowledged the staff's invaluable role in the children's early development. His congratulations celebrated the centre's rich history and its vital contribution to Concord Hospital families over the years.

"We are proud of the important work the staff at Yaralla Child Care Centre do in early childhood education," he said.

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# RESEARCH

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## How stress hormone could help shift workers' bones

Important research under way at the ANZAC Research Institute could have lasting benefits for shift workers across the world.

The institute's Bone Biology Team is investigating how shift work can lead to a loss of bone density and an increased risk of fractures and osteoarthritis for the 20 per cent of workers worldwide that do shift work.

Postdoctoral researcher Dr Eugenie Macfarlane said

*Above: Dr Eugenie Macfarlane's work with the ANZAC Research Institute's Bone Biology Team could have profound benefits for shift workers.*

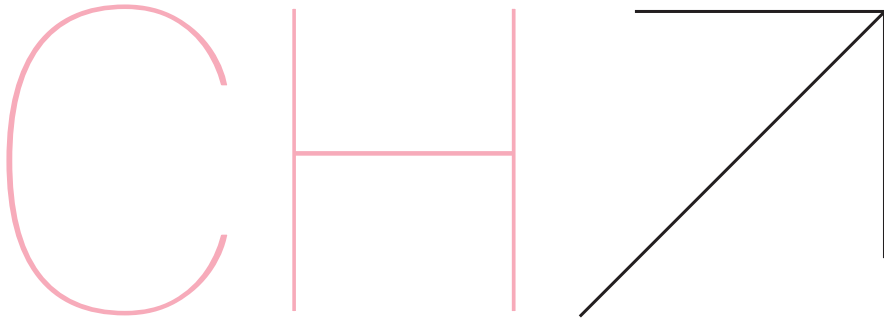
research had shown that nurses who had worked 20 years of shift work had a 37 per cent increased risk of fracture. She said her team's research had found that blocking the stress hormone cortisol prevented the progress of bone loss and joint degeneration.

Although Cortisol is well known as a stress hormone, physiologically it plays an important role in synchronising the body's circadian rhythms.

"Cortisol itself has a normal rhythm – it peaks in the morning when you wake up ... then it troughs as the day goes on, with a second smaller peak in the afternoon," Eugenie said.

"Basically, when you see light it activates the master clock in your brain to produce rhythms in different organs across the body.





“In shift workers, that cortisol rhythm becomes flattened ... So, this is not ideal because the peak in cortisol is thought to kind of reset all your circadian rhythms in the body and reset all the clocks in cells.”

Eugenie said these natural rhythms could hold the key to a treatment that could halt the advance of bone density loss in shift workers.

“Our hypothesis is that if you possibly restore the morning peak in cortisol levels, then that could potentially prevent the effects of bone loss and osteoarthritis,” she said.

“We’re looking at whether restoring that abnormal cortisol rhythm can, I guess, reinstate the skeletal clocks ... What happens in shift work is those clocks all become disorganised ... because they lose that peak, that important signal to tell them it’s the beginning of the day.

“When we’re thinking of a treatment, we’re not thinking about necessarily blocking the cortisol signalling in the bones and joints, we’re thinking that if we actually just restore that peak, then they should be able to still maintain a rhythm in their gene expression in bones and joints.”

Eugenie said any treatment would only involve low doses, meaning the risk of side effects should be lower.

“Corticosteroids, are, commonly used in the clinical setting in high doses,” she said.

... potentially prevent  
the effects of bone  
loss and osteoarthritis

“They are known to have quite extensive side effects – such as fat accrual and bone loss itself – but what we’re looking at here is really a very, very low dose of corticosteroid that’s just going to mimic that normal peak in the cortisol signalling to help with regulating those rhythms.”

## CIAS names new co-chair



The Concord Institute of Academic Surgery (CIAS) has named Professor Lewis Chan as its new co-chair.

Lewis is Head of Urology at Concord Hospital, a Clinical Professor of Surgery at the University of Sydney and a long-time clinical lead at CIAS.

He has an active role in clinical research, particularly bladder dysfunction in ageing, and is a urology investigator for the Concord Health and Ageing in Men Project (CHAMP).



# Staff stars



## Haematologist's Blood work pays off

Concord Hospital Haematologist Dr Ibrahim Tohidi-Esfahani has been named the winner of the inaugural Thrombosis & Haemostasis society of Australia and New Zealand (THANZ) Claire McLintock Medal.

Previously known as the THANZ Medal, the award is for the best scientific presentation in the thrombosis and haemostasis stream at the annual Blood conference. The medal is named after Scottish-New Zealand haematologist and former THANZ president Claire McLintock, who died in late 2022.

We're very proud of the result and very excited that our work ... was recognised in this way

Ibrahim's presentation was based on the findings of his PhD research into procoagulant platelets. "The purpose of my PhD was to try to identify what makes certain platelets become procoagulant, so we can specifically

*Above: Ibrahim Tohidi-Esfahani (right) receives his award from Claire McLintock's husband John Reynolds and daughter Hart, and THANZ President James McFadyen.*

target them, preventing blood clotting but not causing bleeding like current therapies," he said.

After isolating the procoagulant platelet subpopulation, Ibrahim did next-generation sequencing of the RNA content of the platelets. He identified a protein that was important in the formation of the platelets and successfully blocked their formation in a test environment.

Ibrahim said he was thrilled to receive the medal, which was presented to him by Claire McLintock's husband John Reynolds and daughter Hart, and THANZ President James McFadyen.

"There were a lot of good researchers presenting excellent research at the conference," he said.

"So, we're very proud of the result and very excited that our work, done at Concord and Sydney Local Health District, was recognised in this way."

Ibrahim said his research was done with his PhD supervisor Associate Professor Vivien Chen, a senior staff specialist at Concord Hospital, and other research members of the Platelet and Thrombosis Research Laboratory of the Anzac Research Institute, and was supported by the haematology department at Concord Hospital.





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## Excellence in Allied Health Awards

### Dr Cindy Tan takes research award

Concord Hospital Nutritionist Dr Cindy Tan was named Allied Health Researcher of the Year at Sydney Local Health District's 2024 Excellence in Allied Health Awards at Sydney Education in Rozelle on 17 October.

Cindy said she felt privileged to have won the award. "I'm still over the moon and it doesn't feel very real," she said after the awards.

"To be nominated was great. I think that was already a recognition itself."

Cindy was recognised for her commitment to conducting meaningful research to improve patient-centred care, including a special interest in improving the care of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and her efforts to create positive systems changes.

She said her work within the multidisciplinary Cancer Survivorship Team, which was also nominated for the



team award, ensured patients received the best care because of the holistic approach and access to different clinicians.

It also aided her research, she said. "To be in that setting to do research is even better because I have access to all the clinical experts," Cindy said.

"Then I have the research experts on the team as well."

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### Senior Pharmacy Technician Mohammed Shareef honoured

Senior Pharmacy Technician at Concord's Cancer Care Pharmacy Mohammed Shareef was named Allied Health Assistant/Technician/Support person of the Year at the Allied Health Awards.

Mohammed was recognised for his professionalism, versatility, strong work ethic and unwavering commitment to providing safe, patient-centred care. His colleagues said he was an integral team player and his dedication and attention to detail "clearly demonstrates high quality care".

Mohammed said he was honoured to receive the award. "I was really humbled ... humbled and excited," he said.

Mohammed said he spent an average five hours a day working to make 10 to 15 treatments a day for 30 to 35 patients and for clinical trials.

"Receiving this award, I feel like I have been acknowledged for what I'm doing and I'm very thankful to everyone," he said.



The first person in NSW to receive frozen COVID-19 vaccines, Mohammed was responsible for transporting them to the vaccination hub at Sydney Olympic Park.

He said a stressful moment came when he encountered a traffic jam as he tried to make that first delivery, while trying to keep the vaccines at the appropriate temperature. His good local knowledge, however, led him to find a new route to get the vaccines safely to their destination quickly.

## Team of the Quarter

### Mail Centre Team

This small team of only four staff have worked together for more than 25 years. As a tight unit they have to embody the CORE values every day in everything they do. When a problem is encountered, they work together to resolve the issue. The respect they have for each other has created a bond that many look upon and admire.

Congratulations goes to Belgin Sert, Benita Garcia, Yolanda Sagurit and Linda Cheung, our Mail Centre Team. Thank you for everything you do and showing us the power of connection and teamwork.



Staff photo



About 120 people attended the 2024 Concord Ball, hosted by the Concord Hospital Resident Medical Officers' Association, at Doltone House in Pyrmont on 26 October. The night featured music from the band Ectopic Beats and fun awards for those who attended from different areas across the hospital.

It was the second ball since the event returned in 2023 after the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Above: Award winners at the 2024 Concord Ball.*

## Employees of the month

### June



**Angela Kwok**  
*Administration Officer,  
Midwifery Group Practice*

Angela supports the whole practice team in a collaborative manner. Her cheerful nature makes everyone feel at ease. Nothing is ever too much. She is amazing at her job and is always willing to assist, often five steps ahead and going the extra mile to help. She embodies the CORE values in everything she does.

### July



**Bass Nalamphun**  
*Senior Pharmacy Purchasing Officer,  
Pharmacy*

Bass joined the District over 10 years ago and has demonstrated steady career growth having completed further education and training in her field. Her loyalty,

attention to detail, and sense of responsibility are exemplary. She goes above and beyond expectations, often taking the initiative to refine processes and improve on systems for the benefit of the department. Importantly, she is a much-loved and well-respected member of the team.

### August



**Hayley Kirkham**  
*Aged Care Clinical Nurse Consultant,  
Aged Health*

As a Clinical Nurse Consultant Hayley has quietly built extensive collaborations with stakeholders in both Concord and SLHD that ensure her innovations are successful and inclusive of all opinions and expertise. In engaging staff and modelling her gentle and skilled care of the older person, she empowers all staff to provide the best care possible. She supports junior nurses to upskill and collaborates endlessly to manage patients in a holistic and pragmatic way.





## Volunteers in focus

A desire to give back to their community, a sense of camaraderie and the inspiration of a Concord Hospital legend have helped forge important bonds for the group of volunteers that run the hospital's monthly markets.

Many of the women have been volunteering for more than a decade, with the COVID-19 pandemic the only interruption to their work at the hospital.

Yvonne Smith and Bev Newsome both began their volunteering work after they needed treatment at Concord and early interactions with legendary volunteer Peggy Dickinson cemented their commitment.

"I broke my collarbone and came down to the hospital, and I was quite blown away by the way I was treated in emergency," Yvonne said.

Bev said: "I was out walking one day and stepped off the gutter and broke my ankle ... and, same thing. They treated me so well, and I thought, 'I'm only working three days a week ... well, why can't I do this?'"

It was in a lift down to the hospital foyer that Yvonne encountered two volunteers – one of them was Peggy.

"This lady is still volunteering and she's in her 80s? I thought, 'Wow!'" she said.

"So, I straight away found out where the volunteer coordinator was, went over and spoke to her and said, 'When I get better, can I come back as a volunteer?'"

"Peggy was the instigator of it for me. I've never forgotten that. And we got on really, really well. Worked with her many years."

## When I get better, can I come back as a volunteer?

Peggy Dickinson volunteered at Concord Hospital for decades after her husband Ken, a World War II veteran, was treated there after the war. She continued to volunteer until her late-90s and died earlier this year, just shy of her 101st birthday.

Lorraine Thomas said Peggy's dedication to the hospital was a true inspiration.

"She was so amazing and old school, but she used to walk from around the other side of the bay at about five

or so in the morning to be here. We called her our boss," Lorraine said.

While Peggy served as an inspiration for the volunteers, they have also forged some powerful bonds in their work together. Yvonne said many of the volunteers socialised regularly and maintained their bond throughout the pandemic by going out for a coffee or a lunch when restrictions were eased.



Julie Horne said one of the great rewards of her work was the way Concord Hospital staff truly respected the volunteers.

"I like the way the volunteers are valued," she said.

"I was in a line to get some food, and I was talking to the lady next to me. She says, 'What do you do?' I said, 'I'm just a volunteer.' Someone tapped me on the shoulder at the back. She says, 'I'm a doctor here. And you're not just a volunteer. You're part of us.'"

While they combine their talents at the markets once a month, where they have raised tens of thousands of dollars for the hospital, the volunteers' responsibilities don't end there.

"We all do other things besides the markets," said Helen Davis. "Hon Lee and Lorraine and I do wayfinding. Some work in palliative care, making tea and coffee, in the kitchen, Oncology."

Others work in Palliative Care, operate the Courtesy Cart shuttle service that transports patients, prepare treatment packs for dialysis, operate a hospitality trolley in Day Therapy, provide diversional therapy activities in Acute Aged Care and make gloves for the Burns Unit.

*Above: The Concord Hospital market volunteers (from left) Bev Newsome, Tina Stanislas, Yvonne Smith, Hon Lee Chin, Lorraine Thomas, Julie Horne, Helen Davis and Jenny Hallinan.*

## Multi-storey Car Park opens



The new Concord Hospital Multi-storey Car Park opened to staff and visitors on Monday 9 December after weeks of inspections of the finished structure.

Construction work and resurfacing for the Hospital Road roundabout were the last works to be completed before the car park opened.

Work on the car park's main structure finished in May and main contractor Lipman has since been working on installing services and finishing off the building's façade.

The \$32.4 million car park project is part of the project to boost the hospital's car parking facilities that also included construction of the on-grade P3 staff car park.

The car park adds an additional 550 new spaces, taking parking capacity for Concord Hospital to more than 2300 spaces, improving access to healthcare services for the whole community.

The new car park includes 10 accessible spaces, lift access and provision for the later addition of electric vehicle charging stations. Security measures include CCTV coverage and duress points on each level.

## Milestone in Burudyara build

On Monday 4 November, staff from Sydney Local Health District's Mental Health Services, the District executive and Health Infrastructure joined main contractor Built for a topping-out ceremony at the new Concord Forensic Mental Health Unit – Burudyara.

The brief ceremony, which has its origins in ancient Scandinavia, celebrated the structure of the new forensic rehabilitation facility reaching its highest point.

Burudyara will provide low and medium secure mental health beds. The project is a partnership between Health Infrastructure and Sydney Local Health District.

Forensic rehabilitation is a specialist area of the mental health system that provides assessment, care and treatment to people with mental illness who are, or have been, in contact with the criminal justice system.

Representing Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson at the event, Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations the Hon. Mark Buttegieg MLC said the project was an important one to support people who needed it most.



Work to complete Burudyara's façade and fit out will continue early in the new year, with the facility expected to be complete in late 2025.





## Hip team gains new recognition

Congratulations to the Orthogeriatric Team at Concord Hospital. They have been named a finalist in the 2024 Australian and New Zealand Hip Fracture Registry's Golden Hip award. This latest success follows their 2023 win as the best performing hip fracture management service in Australia. The team from Aged Health, Chronic Care and Rehabilitation were also named finalists in 2021 and 2022.



### A look back in time

Red Cross worker Betty Austin serves up a cup of tea for a veteran at Concord Hospital in the early 1950s.



## Events

### 17 December

#### The Pitch

Watch colleagues compete in our District's innovation challenge

Concord Medical Education Centre  
4pm-6pm

### 18 December

#### Staff christmas barbecue

The Green  
11am-2pm

### 18 December

#### Christmas decorations judging

Find out more about Sydney Local Health District's community events at:  
[slhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sydneyconnect/events](https://slhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sydneyconnect/events)

## Get in touch

We would love to hear from you. To provide feedback, suggest stories or submit a staff photo, please contact our Concord Connection working group [SLHD-ConcordConnection@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SLHD-ConcordConnection@health.nsw.gov.au)



# Concord Market Day

9am–2pm on The Green,  
Concord Hospital one Thursday  
each month.

For dates and details visit  
[slhd.health.nsw.gov.au/concord/market-day](http://slhd.health.nsw.gov.au/concord/market-day)

