

WINTER 2022

# Pomegranate



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**Dr Georgina Hayden**  
Physician and phenomenal  
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# Group CEO update

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St John of God Health Care is one of the largest Catholic providers of health care services in Australia. Established in Western Australia in 1895, we are a not-for-profit private health care group, operating 24 facilities comprising more than 3,400 beds and employ more than 15,500 staff across Australia and New Zealand.

**The Board and I have recently returned from a trip to visit our hospitals and services in New South Wales and Victoria, which was a pleasure for all involved.**

We always enjoy meeting our caregivers in person and seeing our Mission in action.

This trip was particularly significant given we had not been able to travel for the duration of the pandemic, and we were keen to visit our caregivers in NSW and Victoria, who were particularly impacted by the extremes of the COVID-19 virus.

Hearing once again about their experiences and seeing how they have continued to provide excellent, person-centred care in the face of some extraordinary circumstances is inspiring.

Dr Georgina Hayden, who features on the cover of our freshly-redesigned Pomegranate, is one of those caregivers who has shown great tenacity and compassion during this time. You can read her story on page 8.



**Dr Shane Kelly**  
Group Chief  
Executive Officer

Our eastern hospitals and services have also been a hive of activity with new developments underway and completed.

St John of God Richmond Hospital has just announced which builder will carry out the transformation of this mental health campus, and St John of God Marillac recently opened two new, technology-enabled homes to enhance the quality of life for our clients with disability.

St John of God Health Care is so much more than our facilities or individual services. It is our people who are the heart and soul of what we do, and how we do it.

I am pleased to share the stories and successes of so many of our caregivers and leaders in this edition. In particular, the stories of our CEOs Paul Dyer, Robyn Sutherland and some of our midwives who each, in their own way, bring the Mission and Values to life each and every day.



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### Cover: Physician and phenomenal

Dr Georgina Hayden with her daughters – Eleanor (13), Hannah (11), Frances (9), Emily (5), and Ava (4 months).

Photo attribution: Sugar Images



Extending our care

# Mental health hospital redevelopment gets underway



**“We are also separating treatment spaces from accommodation spaces so that clients can heal and recover in environments that are conducive to their needs.”**

The \$60 million redevelopment of St John of God Richmond Hospital will deliver contemporary mental health care that builds connection, improves lives and transforms the way care is provided.

It will transform the facility into a modern mental health campus, featuring all single rooms, a wellness centre and indoor pool.

Importantly, the historic Belmont House, will again become a highlight of the new campus.

Site works have started and anticipated to be complete in late 2023. Care and treatment will continue throughout the redevelopment.

St John of God Richmond Hospital Chief Executive Officer Colman O’Driscoll said it was pleasing to be able to appoint the builder, a well-known and experienced construction company, to start this major transformation.

“It is an exciting time to start this redevelopment which will transform our care and the experience for clients and their families, enabling us to better respond to the needs of those seeking mental health care,” he said.

**Image left:** An artist’s impression of the Wellness Deck, a part of the redevelopment at St John of God Richmond Hospital.

“Not only is our capacity increasing but the entire experience will be elevated for clients with private rooms, and an onsite wellness centre featuring gym, indoor pool and fitness studio.

“We are also separating treatment spaces from accommodation spaces so that clients can heal and recover in environments that are conducive to their needs.”

Colman said the hospital’s treatment programs would be updated alongside the redevelopment so they could better connect with clients and integrate care with everyday activities, as well as support mental and physical wellbeing.

“The campus will provide a sanctuary atmosphere that inspires confidence and trust, and promotes empowerment through the delivery of excellent care in an exceptional environment,” he said.

“We want to help people overcome the disconnection and isolation that is so often experienced by those impacted by mental ill-health and assist in reconnecting to family, friends and their communities so that they can realise their potential and live their best life.”

## About the redevelopment

112 private rooms

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Accommodation pavilions separate from treatment spaces to allow patients to heal and recover

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A wellness centre containing gym, indoor pool and massage room

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Refurbishment of some existing buildings including administration facilities

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Preservation of the historic Belmont House, which will become the highlight of the new campus design

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## South West Community Alcohol and Drug Service gets a big vote of confidence

Following a competitive tender process, the South West Community Alcohol and Drug Service (SWCADS) operated by St John of God Social Outreach has been advised it has been successful in re-tendering for service provision in this region for a further five years, with an optional extension for a further two.

This is a big vote of confidence by the WA Mental Health Commission in the service, which has operated for over 20 years, and allows it to provide a new level of certainty for people aged 12 years and over in WA's south west region who need to access support for alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues.

Based at seven locations, the service provides counselling and support for people affected by these issues, including their families and carers, at no cost and in their own community. It also provides prevention activities across the south west region.

St John of God Social Outreach Chief Executive Officer Susan Cantwell said that, as a not-for-profit organisation, St John of God Health Care had a long history of providing hospital and community services in the south west region.

"We are proud to be part of the fabric of Bunbury and greater south west community in WA, and are delighted to be continuing to support people with AOD issues," Sue said.

"We've operated services under this contract for many years and the renewal means we can continue to build on our existing services and provide ongoing, accessible and high-quality care."

**"We are proud to be part of the fabric of Bunbury and greater south west community in WA, and are delighted to be continuing to support people with AOD issues."**

# Cutting edge technology for WA patients



Cancer patients in Western Australia now have access to ground-breaking treatment, with the official 'go live' of the Elekta Unity MR-Linac machine at St John of God Murdoch Hospital's radiation oncology facility.

The radiation therapy machine is the first of its kind in WA. It combines MRI diagnostics with highly targeted radiation therapy, enabling oncologists to visualise cancerous tissue during treatment and allowing for adjustment in real time, to account for movement in the tumour and surrounding healthy tissue.

The end result means patients will receive more targeted radiation treatment, while better protecting other organs and potentially reducing the amount of treatment required.

St John of God Murdoch Hospital Chief Executive Officer Ben Edwards said the new machine was a game changer for cancer patients in WA.

"Improving patient outcomes and the patient experience is what we are all here to do, and this machine is just another way we can achieve this."

## About the GenesisCare radiation oncology facility

In December 2021, St John of God Murdoch Hospital officially became home to the first private, integrated, hospital-based radiation oncology facility in the southern metropolitan area. The GenesisCare Facility offers comprehensive and coordinated cancer care including diagnostics, treatment, nuclear medicine and theranostics services, tailored to each individual's needs.

The integrated facility ensures patients are supported at all stages of their journey, managed by a multidisciplinary team of cancer-specific experts.

**"This new treatment technology is a game-changer for our cancer patients, and I am thrilled to be offering it at the new on-site radiation oncology centre."**

## The MR-Linac brings:

**Accurate targeting** – Real-time magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) allows the MR-Linac to show the exact position and shape of the tumour during treatment, so it can target the tumour more precisely

**Greater control and precision** – If a tumour moves slightly, treatment will pause until it comes back into position

**Likely reduced side effects** – Accuracy of the technology means the radiation beam is less likely to damage healthy tissue than conventional radiation therapy. Side effects occur when healthy tissue is damaged.

**Fewer treatments** – With conventional radiotherapy, the average number of treatments is 37, but with the MR-Linac, this can potentially decrease to just five treatments.

**Image above:** The MR Linac machine with Dr Hendrick Tan, Louise Hogan and Tommy Liang, and the first patient to use the machine John Beresford.

# New purpose-built, technology-enabled homes

## Open for people with disability

St John of God Marillac, a NDIS specialist disability accommodation provider, has opened two new purpose-built homes for people with disability which include a range of assistive technologies to enhance clients' quality of life.

The two new homes, in Mooroolbark, east of Melbourne, are a part of an \$11 million investment by the organisation, which is a division of St John of God Health Care, in specialist disability housing which includes 10 new homes being built across five parcels of land in Melbourne.

St John of God Health Care Group Director of Community Services Lisa Evans said the new homes brought much needed, modern accommodation options for people with disability.

"These homes have been built to a fully accessible specialist disability accommodation standard set by the NDIS, so the design features and size of the communal spaces such as the kitchen and bathrooms, as well as the bedrooms, are easy to move around in," she said.

"We have also overlaid the design with a host of assistive technology which we know, from previous builds, improves the quality of life and independence of the people with disability."

Technologies include a predictive analytical platform to provide data insights, notifications and alerts, allowing clients to be independent while caregivers can monitor their safety, wellbeing and the effectiveness of support.

The new homes have been shaped by quantitative research conducted on a five-bedroom technology-enabled home the organisation built in 2019 in Brighton East, south of Melbourne.

This home was designed for five people with complex intellectual disabilities. As part of the build, Deakin University was asked to conduct research to determine how technology in the home impacted the lives of the clients and caregivers.

The findings from that research demonstrated that assistive technology and house design allowed clients to live a more independent lifestyle and have greater autonomy over their own lives and improved quality of life.

It also showed that caregivers experienced a greater sense of job satisfaction, with one caregiver saying, "It was just a house before, but now it's really a home."

"Deciding to find a specialty disability accommodation option for a child with a disability and entrust somebody else with their care is without a doubt the biggest thing a parent will ever do in their lifetime," Lisa said.

"We take that trust very seriously and really understand that partnership. We have built these homes so that they are welcoming, and that there is the option of having some private guest space, but also shared living areas so that clients and their loved ones can spend time together and feel part of the bigger family."

St John of God Marillac's next two new specialist disability accommodation homes, located west of Melbourne, are expected to be finished in 2023.

**"We have also overlaid the design with a host of assistive technology which we know, from previous builds, improves the quality of life and independence of the people with disability."**

**Image right:** One of the new homes built by St John of God Marillac.



# Physician and phenomenal

Leading a 24/7 emergency department, whilst being pregnant and living through a pandemic in Geelong, Victoria.

The experience of COVID-19 from St John of God Geelong Hospital's Dr Georgina Hayden.



**“The challenge of COVID-19 at the start was the unknowns. We didn’t know much about the virus, how it was going to present, or who it would present in and we were rapidly learning treatment options.”**

**Image left:** Dr Georgina Hayden and her daughters Eleanor (13), Hannah (11), Frances (9), Emily (5), and Ava (5 months).



In February 2020, Dr Georgina Hayden was celebrating the extended opening hours of Geelong’s only private Emergency Department to 24/7 with her colleagues.

There had been a handful of cases of COVID-19 in Australia at this point but it had not yet been declared a pandemic. That would change only weeks later.

Dr Hayden, who is St John of God Geelong Hospital’s Director of Emergency Medicine, said opening the Emergency Department 24/7 was a massive change for the hospital’s clinicians and nursing caregivers who now needed to be prepared for whatever walked through the door any time of the day or night.

And that very quickly included COVID-19.

“To put it in context, our hours were initially limited to 8am to 10pm but we were finding the community wanted more access to our care. Some were telling us they would have chosen our hospital if the ambulance was able to take them there in the early hours

of the morning, and some were waiting until we opened in the morning while they were desperately unwell,” she said.

“So in September 2019 we announced the Emergency Department would open 24/7 and that took effect in early 2020.

“At that stage, we were focused on getting our visiting medical officers (VMOs), nurses and other service providers used to the new operating model and employing more doctors and nurses to cover the night shift, and then, suddenly, the borders shut to everyone.”

The recruitment obstacles, which have continued for all health care providers across Australia, were just the start of the issues Dr Hayden and her team faced when the pandemic broke out in Australia.

“The challenge of COVID-19 at the start was the unknowns. We didn’t know much about the virus, how it was going to present, or who it would present in and we were rapidly learning treatment options,” she said.

“We were pulling together what we needed and how we, as a region, would respond. What I particularly liked is that as a region, Geelong came together – St John of God Geelong Hospital, Barwon Health, and Epworth – to work out how we were going to deal with this virus, what our bed capacity was, and other resources we would need.

“Of course it wasn’t always smooth, but it was a really strong response.”

In addition to the unknowns regarding the virus itself, the fear and worries that the hospital caregivers were experiencing was all consuming, particularly in the early days.

“When COVID-19 first hit caregiver anxiety was huge,” Georgina said.

## Recognising excellence

**“I feel that, especially in emergency medicine, it is very much a team environment. Whether you are a registrar, consultant or a junior doctor you pick up the next patient waiting to be seen and you do your best with the support from your colleagues to care for that patient and their loved ones.”**

“I worked really closely with our nurse unit manager and we felt we were on the same page with our communications, but the nature of this pandemic meant that what we were sharing in the morning from the authorities had often changed by the afternoon. We needed to share information promptly without overwhelming our teams.

“We were lucky we did not have any workplace infections in the first year of the pandemic but we advocated strongly for improved ventilation in the department as well as the construction of a COVID-19 zone which was a welcome move to keep both the patients and caregivers safe.

“We were also counting boxes of gowns and working out how much hand sanitiser we would need. As part of our huddle we were giving stock updates making sure we would have enough gowns over the weekend shifts. Things I had never had to directly address in such a way before.

“The nature of working in a small region meant that all of our caregivers work elsewhere, so the rumours that they heard from their other services in relation to supplies were feeding anxiety into ours, but credit to our executive and stores, their messaging was very consistent – we have enough equipment, we just have to ask.”

Not one to shy away from a challenge, in the middle of 2021 Georgina fell pregnant with daughter, Ava, who was born early in 2022.

This meant she found herself, a mother to four young daughters already, pregnant, working in a busy emergency department in the middle of a pandemic.

Georgina said she focused on the positives.

“I was grateful that I was pregnant in 2021 as I was double vaccinated by that point which was a great reassurance and I got my third dose as soon as I could,” she said.

“I also had the benefit of reflecting on the prior 12 months and seeing women who had been pregnant and given birth to healthy babies, and knowing that there were no major links with fetal or congenital abnormalities which are the things that would have worried me.

“But no doubt it was tiring. Working long hours in a N95 mask, I found I got short of breath with a big baby and a big belly.

“I did take some precautions to avoid some suspected COVID-19 cases in my last trimester and my team were very supportive and I am grateful they took on that extra load and risk for me.”

Georgina also experienced the challenges of giving birth in the middle of a pandemic that have affected all other women who normally enjoy this time with family and friends.

“It was just my partner and I at the hospital with no other visitors allowed,” she said.

“Then when we got home we just locked down a little bit as a family to reduce our risk.”

Georgina’s experience is exceptionally rare. As a woman, it is still relatively uncommon to lead an Emergency Department and then continue to take on that challenge while raising a family.

When Georgina first took on the role of St John of God Geelong Hospital Director of Emergency Medicine in 2015, she was the only female in the region at such a level.

In 2020 she started her Masters of Business Administration at Deakin University and in mid-2021 took on her first Board role at Colac Area Health.

“One of the best things that has come out of COVID-19 for me in a professional sense has been the creation of a women in leadership within emergency medicine group which we have used to share information, and issues at the same time as discussing difficulties in juggling things like parenting. It has been so supportive,” she said.



## Promoting our opportunities for international medical students

St John of God Health Care hosted its first information evening for Monash University Malaysia medical students this year to highlight the benefits of working with us in Australia.

Monash University Malaysia's medical course is equivalent to that offered at Monash's Australian campus and the qualification allows students to practice in Australia, under provisional registration, once they have graduated.

**This means we can recruit doctors from this cohort to provide high quality care to our patients where local recruitment has been exhausted.**

St John of God Health Care Director of Workforce Hospitals Elizabeth Spaul said the information evening was a great opportunity to broaden our potential reach when looking for new doctors.

"It is an exciting time to be working with Monash University in Malaysia and we hope this is the start of a long running strategy to welcome international medical graduates to our organisation," she said.

"While our primary focus always has been and will remain on providing locally-trained doctors with opportunities, the demand on health care is such that from time-to-time we have positions available for international students.

"In addition to this international information session, our medical workforce teams have also been presenting to locally-trained medical students and junior doctors to show them the benefits of working with us and attract the best people to join our teams."

# Supporting caregivers to continue their careers

**St John of God Health Care has launched a range of initiatives to support caregivers to advance their careers and help address essential skills shortages.**

The initiatives are focused on supporting the training of midwives which will help to increase the number of people working in this highly-specialised field.

**The initiatives are:**

- Midwifery scholarship – providing financial support to caregivers within St John of God Health Care to complete their midwifery course.
- Student midwife opportunities – supporting registered nurses to complete their necessary midwifery education and training with us through paid, part-time employment. This is available to existing caregivers or those who do not currently work with us.
- Re-entry to nursing and midwifery practice – providing opportunities to nurses and midwives who are coming back into the workforce to complete their supervised practice hours needed or provide financial

support for a course required, to become registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, with employment opportunities within St John of God Health Care on successful completion. This is available to existing caregivers or those who do not currently work with us.

- Clinical and Research Fellowship – providing financial support and flexible work arrangements for caregivers within St John of God Health Care to complete further study (a Masters of Philosophy (by research) at the University of Notre Dame) in nursing or midwifery, or allied health fields.
- St John of God Health Care Group Director Workforce Carla Bonev said these new initiatives were developed to take away some of the barriers that might otherwise prevent clinical caregivers from undertaking further study.

“We want our caregivers to know they are valued and that they have a significant contribution to make to patient care, not only today but in to the future,” she said.

“We are proud that we are now able to support our caregivers in these ways, and that we have been able to offer support wherever someone might be on their career path whether that is in the early stages, transitioning to a new career pathway such as from nursing to midwifery, or specialising their skills and knowledge as an experienced clinician.

**“Additionally, these scholarships and initiatives will help increase the capacity of our workforce, particularly in areas of high demand such as midwifery and nursing, which will help reduce the overall pressure on our caregivers.”**

**Image right:** St John of God Health Care has announced a range of new initiatives to support caregivers continue their careers.



# Meet our midwives

Three of our midwives share their experiences of working with us and throughout the pandemic, to highlight what it is like working in a specialty that is facing significant demand.



Image above: Rebecca Finlay

## Rebecca's career path to becoming a midwife

In the 20 years since Clinical Nurse Midwife Rebecca Finlay joined St John of God Health Care, her career has gone from caring for patients with cancer, to now looking after our youngest patients and their mums.

Rebecca first joined the organisation as a graduate registered nurse finding her place in oncology before choosing to continue her career by studying midwifery.

"I feel great satisfaction in my work especially when we have a very unwell patient in the antenatal period, and they go on to have a safe delivery of a healthy baby," she said.

Rebecca said she loved being a midwife because of the variety.

"I'm constantly learning and being challenged," she said.

"It's a privilege to be a part of caring for a new little family. I love supporting the patient and partner and giving them the confidence to care for their baby and stay in their little joy filled bubble."

Rebecca said the experience of working in health care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in Perth was quite different to those experiences for other nurses and midwives.

"We have been so fortunate in Western Australia to have had very little exposure to COVID with such a small percentage of hospitalisations compared with the east coast of Australia, and internationally," she said.

"Our issues have been around a shortage of health care workers due to closed borders.

"When we started wearing the N95 masks and shields, it was hard initially to adjust, but we were all very aware that our colleagues worldwide had been wearing them and full PPE for months and years longer than us.

"On our hardest days, we are there for each other, we keep each other going. There is a unity among the staff as we've had to navigate together the ever changing COVID circumstances."

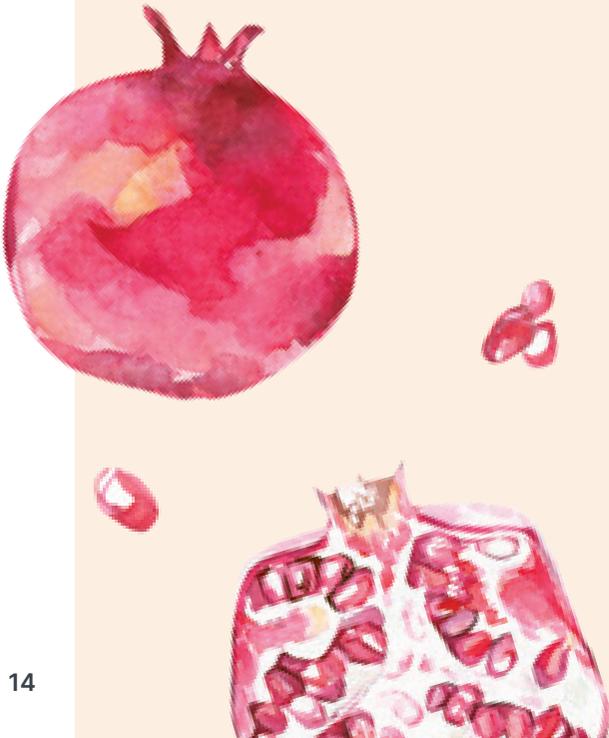




Image above: Helen Tremble

### Our midwife Helen found her new home after moving from Scotland to Perth, Western Australia

When Registered Midwife Helen Tremble was looking for opportunities to move from Scotland to Australia with her young family she found her dream role with St John of God Health Care.

“I had two young children and I decided, along with my partner, that Perth was going to be the best choice for a young family,” she said.

“It is a family friendly city with beautiful beaches on your doorstep. St John of God Subiaco Hospital was the biggest private hospital in Western Australia offering good salary, flexible hours and good opportunities to further my career.”

Helen said that once she moved to Australia in 2007 she found her work life balance was exactly what she had hoped.

“While working at Subiaco I have changed my working hours on a few occasions to suit my family needs and it was never an issue,” she said.

“The hospital has also given me the opportunity to participate in external study days, paying for the courses I wanted to study.

“This includes a course that I recently completed to become a mental health first aider, to help me recognise when one of my colleagues may be struggling with their mental health. This is extremely important in this time of COVID-19 and all the uncertainty surrounding it.”



Image above: Laura Crouch

### Supporting Laura to become a midwife

Registered Midwife Laura Crouch recently completed the St John of God Health Care Graduate Program to transition from nursing to midwifery, and says she has found her new passion.

After starting her career as a nurse and having her own children, Laura made the decision to follow her passion and become a midwife which is a role she describes as “a teacher, clinician and nurturer all in one”.

She completed the St John of God Health Care Graduate Program last year at St John of God Subiaco Hospital where she has stayed on, providing antenatal and postnatal care to women and families.

“As a midwife, I think it really is an honour to share the most vulnerable and memorable time of a family’s life and, for the most part, provide the happier side of health care,” Laura said.

Laura said the support she received during her graduate program made her career transition to becoming a midwife a highlight.

“I was given so much support and education and felt comfortable to ask all of the educators whatever I needed to transition appropriately from a nurse to a midwife,” she said.

“This nice thing about working in St John of God Health Care’s private maternity ward is that our families get longer stays and have the option for dads to stay, which really allows us, as midwives, to provide exceptional family centred care.”



# Major milestone comes with perfect praise

Continuing to provide safe, high quality care to our communities.

Every four years, St John of God Healthcare at Home services, like all of our hospital services, are accredited to ensure we continue to provide safe, high quality care to our communities.

This important process, whereby all aspects of our service are assessed against the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards, comes with the ultimate privilege and responsibility - to be allowed to provide safe, high quality care.

Thankfully, this process is usually a positive experience for all involved and provides a great opportunity to our hospitals and services to showcase their quality improvement initiatives and outcomes of care.

However, when it comes to St John of God Healthcare at Home's recent assessment, praise and acknowledgment is warranted.

Not only did the service meet all accreditation standards, the assessors commented the care was "the best we have seen in two years".

St John of God Healthcare at Home Chief Executive Officer Robyn Sutherland said the result was even more remarkable given it was the first time the service had been assessed against the National Safety and Quality Standards Version 2 (previously accredited against EQUIP) standards.

The survey was also undertaken across Victoria and WA services during a period of significant COVID-19 restrictions, so all patient visits during the accreditation period were virtual.

"I am so proud of all of our caregivers and the support we received from the wider organisation in achieving such a positive result," she said.

"As a service, we have gone through a huge amount of change over the past two to three years and at the heart of all of these changes has been ensuring we respond to patient and community expectations and consistently provide high quality, safe care.

**"This result shows how well we are doing in this endeavour and I am so excited for the future of the service and our caregivers."**

St John of God Healthcare at Home was renamed and relaunched in 2019 after it was identified as a key strategic enabler for St John of God Health Care to extend its care beyond the traditional hospital walls.

The service has now expanded its breadth of service and geographic support.

**Image right:** St John of God Healthcare at Home received high praise through its accreditation process.

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**St John of God Healthcare at Home provides:**

Hospital care at home to help patients recover after a hospital stay, wound and stomal therapy consultancy and care, as well as personal care

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Allied health services and rehabilitation at home including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietitian support and speech pathology

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Postnatal care at home including visits from midwives and lactation consultants and virtual consultations

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Oncology and infusions at home, including providing chemotherapy, immunotherapy, medical infusions and chemotherapy support services and care.

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# A leader of our own

**Paul Dyer is the newly appointed  
CEO of St John of God Midland Public  
and Private Hospitals.**

This role caps a career that started in nursing and has seen him work in five St John of God Health Care hospitals across three states of Australia in his 23 years with the organisation.



**Image left:** St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals CEO Paul Dyer

**Image right:** Paul Dyer at St John of God Burwood Hospital in 2010



**“I have always felt well supported by the organisation and I have been very blessed to have had a lot of leadership development opportunities come my way.”**

Ahead of taking on the new role he shares why he has stayed with the organisation for more than 20 years and the opportunities he took to move from the hospital floor to senior leadership.

“I have always been impressed with the quality of the senior leadership with St John of God Health Care and there is no doubt that inspired me to take on leadership roles over the years,” Paul said.

“I have always felt well supported by the organisation and I have been very blessed to have had a lot of leadership development opportunities come my way.”

It is the last point that Paul explains has enabled him to stay with the organisation while developing his career as a leader taking up opportunities across either side of the country.

His career in nursing started in 1991 when he completed his graduate year at Bendigo Hospital after graduating from Latrobe University.

As a nurse in the early 1990s, and as amazing as it sounds today, he struggled to find work in Bendigo, so he moved to Melbourne to get experience as a nurse in some busy tertiary hospitals.

Like so many country kids do, he returned to his home town to start a family and in 1999 he joined St John of God Bendigo Hospital as a casual nurse before moving into a nurse unit manager role.

“In 2003, I remember Michael Hogan being appointed CEO of the hospital. I don’t think I realised it at the time, but Michael became a mentor to me in my early years in leadership positions at Bendigo,” Paul said.

Keen to further develop his leadership, Paul jumped at any development opportunities on offer. He participated in the original St John of God Health Care mentorship program and was paired with former Group Director of Nursing, Kate Birrell for the year long program.

## Celebrating our people

“Kate was a great mentor to me and had a big impact on my development and my career,” Paul said.

In that time, St John of God Health Care also ran a leadership development course called the Executive Development Program. This was an experiential leadership course for caregivers identified as potential senior leaders within the organisation. Over ten months, participants spent time with a variety of senior leaders in the organisation, learning from their experiences and making connections.

“The program exposed me to some amazing leaders within our organisation. I also got to meet other up and coming leaders at the time,” Paul said.

Inspired to take on more challenges, Paul applied for the Director of Nursing position at St John of God Geraldton Hospital but was unsuccessful. Undeterred, he applied for a similar position at St John of God Frankston Rehabilitation Hospital, but again, was unsuccessful.

“I remember being called to the group office in Melbourne to hear the bad news about the Frankston job but was then offered the Director of Nursing position at St John of God Burwood Hospital in Sydney by Kate Birrell the same day,” Paul said.

**“Genuinely, honestly and openly engaging with people, and bringing them along the journey with you, and inspiring them and giving them energy, that’s what will make you successful. It’s authentic, transparent, visible leadership that makes a difference.”**

Determined to take up any opportunity to prove his leadership skills, and with a family eager for adventure, Paul and his wife packed up their three children and promptly moved to Sydney.

After 18 months in the Burwood role, two CEO positions became available. Paul was given the choice to stay in Sydney to lead St John of God Burwood Hospital or move to Geraldton to take up the CEO role he had previously been denied.

He chose the latter.

“I really enjoyed Burwood but, to be honest, I had never worked in a psychiatric hospital before and I strongly felt the desire to be back in a medical and surgical space. Sydney was also hideously expensive and the traffic was a nightmare, especially with a young family,” he said.

In Geraldton, Paul threw himself into the community, volunteering for community groups and chairing the board of a local not for profit organisation. After five years leading that hospital Paul and family felt the pull of the big smoke and with another opportunity at our St John of God Midland Private Hospital, Paul and family again packed up their bags and moved to Perth.

Two years after taking on the Midland private role, Paul was appointed to lead St John of God Mt Lawley Hospital.

He said his three years at Mt Lawley had been the most rewarding of his career to date.

Speaking with Paul, his passion, energy and enthusiasm for the hospital is undeniable.

“I think the biggest thing I have been able to bring is a sense of optimism around the hospital,” he said.

“When I got here, many of the caregivers thought St John of God Health Care was going to sell the hospital and move on. I think one of the most meaningful things I have done here is to get people to believe in this hospital again.

That it is actually a great hospital.

“It not as big as some of our other hospitals in Perth but the services it delivers, particularly its rehabilitation services, are just as important.

“I think that has made a big difference in the way our workplace feels and looks. Personally, I have found positively impacting on workplace culture really satisfying.”

Now charged with leading St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals, the challenge will be different for Paul.

He is taking over from his good friend, and former boss, Michael Hogan who has returned to St John of God Bendigo Hospital as CEO to be closer to his family.

“Managing demand at the public hospital is the biggest issue we face,” Paul said.

“The obstetric demand is huge in that region and the Emergency Department is regularly seeing more than 200 presentations each day which is a real challenge with constrained inpatient capacity and staffing challenges.

“So working with the State and Federal Governments to ensure we can service the community, and have the necessary infrastructure and equipment, in addition to staff mix, will be a big focus for me.

“There is also opportunity to grow the private services at the hospital which I am also looking forward to.”

There will be no surprises in how Paul will step up to this challenge.

“Ultimately, being a good leader in health care is all about building relationships and trust and caring for and supporting your teams,” he said.

“Genuinely, honestly and openly engaging with people, and bringing them along the journey with you, and inspiring them and giving them energy, that’s what will make you successful. It’s authentic, transparent, visible leadership that makes a difference.”



# JP Rebola receives 40under40 award

St John of God Health Care's Chief Procurement and Supply Chain Officer, JP Rebola, was named one of WA's best emerging leaders as a 2022 40under40 Award recipient on Friday night.

JP is the 40under40 Awards 'Intrapreneur' category winner, recognising his innovation and entrepreneurship within a large organisation.

JP has been with St John of God Health Care since 2018, working hard to ensure hospitals and services have the equipment they need to help keep our caregivers and patients safe.

**His work was particularly important during the pandemic when use of personal protective equipment (PPE) surged.**

**Image above:** St John of God Health Care Chief Procurement & Supply Logistics Officer JP Rebola

"I am immensely proud of my team's ability to adapt an ever-changing supply landscape and communicate effectively with divisions ensuring our caregivers are never at put at risk due to a lack of PPE," JP said.

"We leveraged our group-wide scale and strong relationships with existing suppliers to ensure adequate supply for our needs. Once supply arrived for hospitals, we were busy coordinating and managing distribution to where it was needed most.

"Securing the right quantity and quality of PPE supply remains a challenge as the threat of COVID-19 fluctuates across the country. Despite the challenges, we are so proud that we could - and continue to - make a difference to our caregivers and patients throughout this once-in-a-century pandemic."



## Fond farewell to health care stalwart

After a long and distinguished career, St John of God Healthcare at Home Chief Executive Officer Robyn Sutherland will retire on 1 July 2022.

Robyn started her service with the organisation more than 20 years' ago as Director of Nursing at St John of God Murdoch Hospital.

She then played an instrumental role in winning the bid for the contract at St John of God Midland Public Hospital, including developing the clinical services component, in this significant milestone for the organisation which commenced a new era for St John of God Health Care as a provider of public health care.

Robyn then moved on to kick off the organisation's internal strategy capability, before becoming Chief Executive Officer of St John of God Healthcare at Home.

"In this role, Robyn has worked hard to successfully build our home nursing and ambulatory services. Working closely alongside our hospitals she has led the development of a range of new services including oncology and infusions, palliative care and rehabilitation in the home as well as piloting home monitoring options," Group Director Community Services Lisa Evans said.

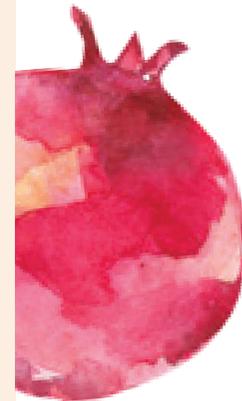
"This has been a substantial job and as CEO Robyn has steered the team through the challenging COVID-19 period and most notably led the service through their successful accreditation against the NSQHS standards in February."

Lisa thanked Robyn for her contribution to the organisation and wished her well for her next adventures, which will most certainly see her spend more time with her first grandson.

"While on a personal level, I am sorry to see her leave the organisation, her contribution to this organisation has been exceptional and her retirement is well-deserved," Lisa said.

**"Her work ethic is impeccable and she has been a delight to work with, and an outstanding CEO, clinician and colleague."**

**Image above:** St John of God Healthcare at Home CEO Robyn Sutherland.



# 30 years assisting the Sisters of St John of God

**This year marks 30 years since Sandy Busio joined the Sisters of St John of God in a role that has evolved over time to become all-encompassing and given her a firsthand view of the changes to our hospitals, services and organisation.**

Sandy is the Regional Executive Officer and Company Secretary to the Sisters of St John of God in Australia, a role that has evolved from her first appointment with the Sisters in 1992 as an executive assistant.

“When I first started, the St John of God Health Care System, as it was then known, had been in existence as an entity for less than three years and the Sisters’ involvement with the organisation’s hospitals and services was still very strong,” she said.

“The Trustees were the Sisters appointed to the Province Leadership Team as well as two additional Sisters appointed directly. Additionally, only Sisters were appointed to Director of Mission roles.”

That following decade was incredibly busy as the Sisters pushed forward with their planning to ensure their Ministry would continue into the future.

In 1994 the Sisters established the St John of God Foundation, which many years later was transferred to St John of God Health Care.

Then in 2000 we welcomed the first two lay Trustees to the organisation, and the Trustees were tasked with identifying options to ensure that St John of God Health Care continued to thrive when the Sisters themselves were no longer able to be directly involved.

This resulted in the establishment in 2004 of St John of God Australia Ltd, a civil and canon law entity established at the request of the Sisters, to assume responsibility for St John of God Health Care Inc.

In 2010 Sandy’s role was split to enable her to focus solely on supporting the Sisters of St John of God while another caregiver was appointed to support the work of the Trustees.

While this has meant that Sandy’s work and focus has taken her further away from St John of God Health Care it has allowed her to deepen her relationships with the Sisters which has become particularly important as the Sisters age, become frail and pass away.

“When I first started there were close to 300 Sisters scattered across Australia, now there are less than 60, with the majority located in Perth. We have seen the diminishment of branch houses with many of the Sisters coming back to the mother house here in Subiaco,” Sandy said.



“Although in many ways this is a time of loss for the Sisters it is amazing to see their acceptance of change to a life that is enormously different for them nowadays.

“I feel a sense of responsibility towards these wonderful women, who have been so supportive of me over the years. I want to continue to support them and assist them to achieve their ongoing goals.”

Sandy said the Sisters’ achievements over the time she has worked with them have been incredible and showed their strength and resilience.

“The Sisters foresight and lack of fear has been extraordinary,” she said.

“Their commitment to trust in God, in each other and in human nature has enabled them to achieve so many things that have lasting impacts.”

One such lasting legacy is the Sister Bridget Clancy Scholarship for the Empowerment of Women through Education sponsored by the Sisters of St John of God, which has enabled 36 St John of God Health Care caregivers to undertake study to extend their careers.

The scholarship was provided by the Sisters in celebration of their 150 years since foundation, and is named after Sister Bridget Clancy to recognise her critical role as one of the founding Sisters.

**Image above:** Sisters of St John of God Inc Regional Executive Officer/ Company Secretary Sandy Busio

# Making noise about women's pelvic pain

St John of God Geelong Hospital Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Dr Marilla Druitt has focused much of her recent career on helping women experiencing endometriosis, and is now helping to drive calls for more research and better access to care.

The chronic condition, which estimates suggests one in nine Australian women have been diagnosed with, has a varying range of symptoms including severe period and pelvic pain, sub-fertility and in some cases it may not have any obvious symptoms but discovered as a part of treatment for another condition.

Marilla laments that as the condition only affects women there has been less research and lower rebates to help make care affordable.

This led her to become part of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' Endometriosis Expert Working Group to write the Australian Endometriosis Guidelines.

"The national guidelines for endometriosis were long overdue and we hope they will lead to earlier diagnosis, or at least add to the amount of noise about this condition which will then help to drive improvement in clinical care and research which is vastly underfunded at present," she said.

"Women often wait years for a diagnosis, for some this does not matter if their symptoms are well treated, but the guidelines send the message that pelvic pain that interferes with a woman's life is not acceptable."

Marilla said some of the important research currently underway includes finding a non-invasive way to diagnose the condition, with the current gold standard being a laparoscopy.

Ultrasound imaging for planning surgery to treat the condition is also available.

"Based on work especially in Brazil more than 15 years ago, experts in ultrasound can see large amounts or nodules of endometriosis, and this can help us to plan how long an operation may take, and whether a bowel surgeon should be involved from the beginning," Marilla said.

"Access to these experts currently in Australia is limited, but women should know they exist as this is rarely an acute need.



**"MRI is also great for endometriosis, but somewhat outrageously, this is not MBS funded for women with pelvic pain."**

**Image left:** St John of God Geelong Hospital Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Dr Marilla Druitt

# Research into preventing pain after breast cancer surgery receives grant

Marilla said that the inequity in the care and support available for women experiencing this condition has spurred her interest, and led to her working with Deakin University in a randomised controlled trial – the HAPPI Study – which is looking at the effectiveness of interventions yoga and group cognitive behaviour therapy versus traditional care.

“Any condition that only affects women (and occasionally trans men) usually suffers from less research, lower rebates to access affordable care, and endometriosis and pelvic pain are no exception,” she said.

“I have always been interested in social justice and so me and endometriosis and pelvic pain was a good fit.”

Closer to home, at St John of God Geelong Hospital, Marilla works with bowel surgeons and fertility specialists to support women with endometriosis to improve their quality of life.

“Having our pain nurse, Patsy Holland, onsite has been wonderful for inpatient care and for staff upskilling. She helps with difficult to manage pain, provides an interface with rehab and other services, and this addition to interdisciplinary care is the gold standard for pain management.”

The interdisciplinary approach, involving physiotherapy, dietitians, mental health experts and promoting the benefits of exercise, is something that Marilla consistently reiterates to her patients.

**A Western Australian based clinical trial aimed at improving the quality of life for women with breast cancer will benefit from a new \$4.3 million grant from the Australian Government – the largest grant awarded as part of the Medical Research Future Fund’s \$21.8 million investment.**

The grant to the Long-term Outcomes of Lidocaine Infusions for persistent Postoperative Pain (LOLIPOP) trial is the single biggest amount of funding awarded in the latest grant awards.

Led by St John of God Subiaco Hospital Anaesthetist and Clinical Research Professor Tomás Corcoran, the trial will investigate whether chronic pain can be prevented by giving a local anaesthetic, lidocaine, intravenously during and up to 24 hours after breast cancer surgery.

It is estimated that nearly 50 per cent of breast cancer patients experience some chronic pain after surgery, and there is currently no known preventative treatment available.

The five year trial will also use a new approach in examining a person’s genes to determine whether their genetic makeup alters their response to lidocaine.

The trial is being coordinated through the Australian and New Zealand College of The Anaesthetists (ANZCA) Clinical Trials Network, based at Monash University in Melbourne.

Preventing the occurrence of chronic pain after surgery is considered the ‘holy grail’ because treating such pain, once established, can be very difficult.

“For many women, the findings of this research could potentially be life changing,” Prof Corcoran said.

“Women affected by breast cancer are often in the prime of their life and the impact of chronic, sustained pain can be significant. It can severely affect quality of living, personal relationships, ability to work, and mental health.

“By exploring the prevention of post-surgery pain, our hope is that we can improve the outcomes for these patients, and ensure that they can comfortably return to their usual life as soon as possible following breast cancer surgery.

“We are very fortunate to have secured the funding and we are incredibly grateful to the Australian Government for its support of innovative and practical trials examining important questions that impact large numbers of surgical patients.”

St John of God Subiaco Hospital will be the only private hospital in Western Australia to invite patients to participate in the trial, which is due to commence this year.

# Using research to strive for allied health excellence

## A growing emphasis on the importance of allied health services.

A growing emphasis on the importance of allied health services across St John of God Health Care has led to a range of research initiatives focused on improving patient and client care and experience.

Importantly in 2021, St John of God Health Care developed its Allied Health Research Framework 2021 – 2026 to enable our clinicians to foster and build a sustainable research culture within our allied health services.

This framework sets out the key focus areas for allied health research, and ensures the work will benefit patients and caregivers including through implementation and translation of research into practice.

**“The importance of undertaking research to improve patient and client care cannot be understated across all health care fields, this is particularly true in allied health where there are plenty of opportunities to add to the growing body of research.”**

St John of God Health Care Allied Health Group Manager Rachel Resuggan said creating this framework was a key step to enabling research projects to be undertaken in support of our overall strategic goal.

“The importance of undertaking research to improve patient and client care cannot be understated across all health care fields, this is particularly true in allied health where there are plenty of opportunities to add to the growing body of research,” she said.

“Some of the research projects we expect to be undertaking will look at areas such as the use of outcome measures within rehabilitation, the benefits of standardised rehabilitation programs to drive excellence in rehabilitation and benefits of rehabilitation in the home services.

“These will all go towards our organisational goal of becoming the best performing health care provider in Australia.”

Two allied health research leads have been appointed to the organisation to assist in guiding our projects going forward.

Dr Sangeeta Rathi, a senior physiotherapist at St John of God Bendigo Hospital and experienced allied health researcher, has been appointed as the new Group Allied Health and Rehabilitation Research Lead.

Dr Dave Parsons, an occupational therapist, hand therapist and research fellow at Curtin University, has been appointed the St John of God Midland Hospital Allied Health Research Lead which is a collaboration with Curtin University.

“Both Sangeeta and Dave bring a wealth of clinical and research experience to our teams and their insights and knowledge will be invaluable to not only guide the development of our research program, but also provide the hands-on support our clinicians need to get started and carry out research,” Rachel said.

“Furthermore, their understanding of clinical practice paired with their deep understanding of our strategic goals will enable them to support our caregivers to translate research findings into practice.”



**Image one:** St John of God Midland Hospital Allied Health Research Lead Dr Dave Parsons

**Image two:** St John of God Health Care Group Allied Health and Rehabilitation Research Lead Dr Sangeeta Rath



### Key focus areas of the St John of God Health Care Research Framework

To support strategic decision making, associated funding and workforce strategies by group services, hospital leaders and allied health services.

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Ensure purposeful collaborative relationships with industry partners, higher education providers and consumers to enable integration of research and practice.

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Facilitate increased engagement in allied health research, build greater research capacity and ensures processes that allows translation of research into everyday practice as St John of God Health Care strives for clinical excellence.

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Create alternative career pathways for allied health caregivers that incorporate research

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Promote research excellence and innovation as drivers of better health care and health outcomes.

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# Father Liam recognised for bravery to save surfer

Father Liam, along with other rescuers,  
recently received the WA Bravery Award  
from the Governor General.



**“We later found out that the shark just missed his main artery. You might call that luck but I like to think it was providence.”**

**Image left:** Fr Liam Ryan

**Image above:** Phil Mummert with his board after being attacked by a shark



You would not expect a Catholic priest to surf, let alone rescue someone bitten by a shark 100 metres offshore and receive a national bravery award, but that is exactly what happened for St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals Catholic Chaplain Father Liam Ryan.

Father Liam received the award for displaying considerable bravery during the rescue of 28 year old surfer Phil Mummert, following a shark attack at Bunker Bay, Western Australia, in 2020.

He said he felt honoured and grateful for receiving the award but really acted on instinct.

“I was holidaying down south with my best mate and his family, and we decided to go for a quick surf at Bunker Bay,” Father Liam explained.

“We had not been in the water long and were paddling back out to catch our second wave, when I noticed the dorsal fin of a five-metre Great White Shark surfacing next to a surfer.

“The shark lunged at the surfer, biting into his surfboard and lower leg, tipping the surfer into the water.

“It was very surreal, the surfer was floating in the water and surrounded by lots of tiny bits of his surfboard.”

Phil was able to shove half of his broken surfboard into the shark’s open mouth. The shark continued to circle with the injured man fending it off.

Father Liam said after initially screaming for help, it dawned on him that he and his two mates were the ones who needed to provide the help,

“As we approached Phil, we could see that the shark had bitten his leg very badly and we paddled as fast as possible the 100 metres back to shore, while he lay injured and bleeding on a longboard,” he said.

“Others came and helped us on the beach and provided support until a rescue helicopter arrived an hour later and took him to Bunbury Hospital.

“We later found out that the shark just missed his main artery. You might call that luck but I like to think it was providence.

“Two years on, we have all since become close friends and regularly catch up.”

All three rescuers received the Bravery Award.

Father Liam is based at Saint Brigid’s Church in Midland.

# International health team asks Timor-Leste:

“How can we support you?”

Putting our Values of Justice, Hospitality and Respect into practice in an international health setting often means fostering the relationships at a national level to influence improved patient care on a local level.

The St John of God Social Outreach International Health team in Timor-Leste did just that recently by hosting a consultative workshop for the Southeast Asian country's senior health officials, including its Minister for Health.

The theme for the engagement was “How can St John of God International Health help you to improve patient care?” and health directors travelled from all five of Timor-Leste's Municipal Referral Hospitals to provide local input, an occasion so rare it made the nation's evening news!



The workshop was originally designed to provide the minister with the results of an external evaluation of our international health programs, which noted the team's impact in training and raising the profile of Timorese health leaders and included an overview of current projects and models of support.

However, it rapidly evolved to become a joyous exchange of information and ideas among a group that doesn't often have the opportunity to align health care priorities in a consultative manner and on a national level.



**The result was a clearer direction for health care in Timor-Leste and a strategic future that puts patient-centred care at its heart.**

The engagement was also important to inform the international health team's strategic focus for the next three years, which will largely be centred around supporting Timorese locals into health leadership roles, as well as to support their growth in clinical capability.

The Minister of Health also commended the team's existing Health Management Program on the day (requesting its expansion to an even wider range of hospital employees) and signed an extension of the Memorandum of Understanding between St John of God Health Care and the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health.

Each year, a percentage of eligible revenue from St John of God Health Care Hospitals is used to fund St John of God Social Outreach International Health programs, which are also supported by Santos and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



**All images:** St John of God Social Outreach team supported Timorese health leaders at a recent workshop



# Mandorla Art Award awarded to Broome artist

The 2022 Mandorla Art Award major prize was awarded to Broome artist Claire Beausein for her magnificent piece stitching more than 600 silkworm cocoons together.

The \$25,000 main prize, which is a prestigious art award and the most significant thematic Christian art prize in Australia, is sponsored by St John of God Health Care as a part of our focus on the benefits of arts and health.

The winning work, *Chalice*, features wild cocoons, picked in Indonesia, stitched together with silk thread and hung with museum pins on cotton rag paper, bringing to life the artist theme of metamorphosis.

In awarding the piece first prize, the judges described it as evoking “images of shedding one’s skin in order to grow, of ceremonial scrolls, cloaks, and other religious ephemera, but the artist’s lightness of hand lends the work a magical quality, as if silkworms themselves had made it. Exquisitely made, *Chalice* floats off the background, shimmering with golden, dappled light and shadow, inviting us to imagine.”

St John of God Health Care Board Chair Hon Kerry Sanderson AC CVO congratulated Claire on the piece and winning the major award.

“Sponsoring this major award is a part of our commitment to caring for all aspects of patient and client wellbeing,” she said.

“Our service delivery continues to be modelled on the healing Mission of Jesus Christ which means offering compassion, hope and healing to all in our care and to all who choose to work with us.

“Art in the health care environment offers us the opportunity to engage with our patients and clients in new and creative ways and inspire hope.

“Some of the ways we use art in our care is through musical performances in waiting areas, music therapy in rehabilitation wards, art therapy in our mental health or acute settings or the enhanced environment that has come from art exhibits and displays in our foyers.”

A selection of works from the Mandorla Art Award will be exhibited at New Norcia and will then be installed at St John of God Subiaco and Murdoch Hospitals.

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**The Anglican Diocese Highly commended prize of \$5,000 was awarded to Angela Stewart.**

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**The Catholic Archdiocese of Perth prize of \$5000 was presented to Susan Roux**

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**The Patricia Toohey Painting Award of \$5000 went to Michael Iwanoff**

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**Image right:** The winning Mandorla Art Award piece, *Chalice*, by Clair Beausein



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