

Better and
fairer care.
Always.



ST VINCENT'S
Better and fairer care. Always.
UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

Annual Report 2024



Better and
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Acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land:
St Vincent's recognises the Traditional Owners/Custodians of the land on which its many sites are located. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and welcome all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to our places of care.

Who we are

St Vincent's has been a leader in Australia's health and aged care landscape for more than 165 years.

What started with five Sisters of Charity who arrived in the colony of New South Wales in 1838 – and opened our first hospital in 1857 – is now a unique not-for-profit social enterprise that operates two major inner-city health networks in Melbourne and Sydney, 10 private hospitals, 26 aged care facilities, and a range of virtual and home care options across three states.

St Vincent's now comprises a team of over 30,000 people including employees, visiting medical officers (VMOs) and volunteers working from regional Queensland to Melbourne's western suburbs.

Each year across its services, St Vincent's has close to 2 million connections with patients and residents, including 1,300,000 outpatient appointments, 330,000 admissions, and 138,000 Emergency Department (ED) presentations.

Our integrated health innovation precincts in Sydney and Melbourne host globally-renowned medical institutes, all founded

by St Vincent's, including the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, the Garvan Medical Research Institute, the St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research, the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, the St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research, and the Nursing Research Institute.

Our services, clinicians and researchers have been behind some of Australia's most important medical breakthroughs. With more than 5,700 hospital, residential aged care and virtual beds, our public health networks are major referral centres for rural and regional communities. We provide specialised emergency and trauma services in inner-city Sydney and Melbourne, along with smaller EDs in metropolitan and regional centres. And we are known for our surgical capacity in all three states providing world-class services in heart and lung transplantation, orthopaedics, neurosurgery, cardiothoracics and cancer care. We are national leaders in palliative care, diabetes, genomic medicine, aged care and bio-medical engineering.

Underpinning everything we do is our mission to provide care, first and foremost, to people who are experiencing social inequality. Today, St Vincent's is a leading provider of services to people experiencing homelessness, people with alcohol and other drug dependence, people living with mental illness, First Nations peoples, and correctional health patients.

The St Vincent's promise to its people, patients, residents, partners, and the broader community is to provide better and fairer care, always.

It's the bar we set ourselves to make sure we are always delivering the care Australians need.

2 major public hospital networks

10 private hospitals

26 aged care facilities

6 co-located research institutes

3,172 hospital and virtual beds

2,537 residential aged care beds

30,000 people

2 million connections with patients and residents

Our mission

We express God's love through the healing ministry of Jesus. We are especially committed to people who are poor or vulnerable.

Our vision

Every person, whoever and wherever they are, is served with excellent and compassionate care, by a better and fairer health and aged care system.

Our values



Compassion

Our care is an act of love. We are present to and accompany people as they are, and as they need.



Justice

Our pursuit of what is right and just empowers us to speak and act with courage on behalf of those in need.



Integrity

Our actions and decisions are transparent and aligned with our values.



Excellence

Our services are safe and evidence-based, and we continually seek to improve in everything we do.

Key performance highlights

Preventable admissions

Older Australians make up **almost half of all potentially preventable hospitalisations**, with people living with dementia at significantly greater risk. St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's newly implemented **Geriatrician in the Emergency Department (GED) program prevents hospitalisations among elderly people** by fast-tracking their care in the emergency department through early geriatrician assessment. It was found to enable **61 per cent of older emergency presenters** – who were initially planned for acute admission – to return home with supports of bed substitution, sub-acute, home, and community programs.



New partnership

In April 2024, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne was announced by the Premier of Victoria as a **partner in a new consortium chosen to operate the North Richmond Medically Supervised Injecting Room**. As the tertiary hospital partner, we will provide our expertise in addiction medicine and support pathways to **care for vulnerable patients** who may not otherwise engage with a health service.

Our updated strategy

St Vincent's launched its refreshed organisational strategy which is built on taking a 'One St Vincent's' approach to the opportunities and challenges in our sector: harnessing our collective expertise, and operating more efficiently and effectively. We used the launch of our updated strategy to reintroduce ourselves to our trusted partners and the broader community with an updated look and a new way to describe St Vincent's: Better and fairer care. Always. This has seen us significantly grow our audiences and engagement across all platforms and channels.



Health equity funding

The St Vincent's Health Equity Program committed **\$1.1 million to support 14 health and aged care projects** benefitting socially complex and disadvantaged groups. Projects included funding for a dedicated mobile podiatry service for homeless people in inner Sydney; research into the shackling of prisoners receiving palliative care; and the funding of a community nurse to support women and children fleeing domestic violence in Brisbane.

Electronic Medical Record progress

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne began vendor selection and project planning for the introduction of its **\$35.7 million Electronic Medical Record (EMR)** platform, funded by the Victorian Government. Meanwhile, the rollout of the Meditech EMR platform across all 10 St Vincent's private hospitals continued.



Increased employee engagement

The St Vincent's annual employee survey recorded **increased levels of engagement across the entire organisation**. We lifted participation in the survey by 5 per cent and our engagement overall rose from **68 per cent to 71 per cent nationally**. Importantly, we asked 28 questions and our scores improved in every single category, including employee and patient safety, employee pride, and trust in leadership.

Key performance highlights



Diversity recognition

St Vincent's Hospital Sydney was recognised as **Service Provider of the Year** by ACONS's Pride in Health and Wellbeing Index. This award recognises **St Vincent's ongoing commitment towards improving sexuality and gender diversity inclusion** across its health service.



Cyber security

After experiencing a cyber-attack in December 2023, **St Vincent's successfully completed its forensic investigation in January 2024** concluding there was no evidence that sensitive personal information had been stolen from its network or that any data had been posted on the dark web. Australia's National Cyber Security Coordinator described St Vincent's as an **"exemplar in collaboration...working around the clock with us to manage and limit the consequences of this incident."**

Australians of the Year

The co-directors of the Melanoma Institute of Australia, **Professor Georgina Long AO** and **Professor Richard Scolyer AO**, were named Australians of the Year for their work saving thousands of lives by developing an immunotherapy approach to treating melanoma. Professor Long has had a decade-long presence at St Vincent's Mater Hospital Sydney, particularly in setting up the melanoma clinical trials program at the hospital's Patricia Ritchie Centre for Cancer Care and Research. Many of the critical trials that have been initiated by Professors Long and Scolyer take place at the Patricia Ritchie Centre and on the Mater's McAuley Ward.



Key performance highlights

Hospitals' full accreditation

All six St Vincent's hospitals assessed under the **Short Notice Assessment Process (SNAP)** – a new testing framework introduced under the **National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS)** standards – achieved full accreditation with minimal or no recommendations. SNAP can occur at any time within a hospital's three-year accreditation cycle with only 24 hours' notice. Meanwhile, our combined Net Promoter Score across our hospitals – a recognised measure of patient satisfaction – **reached 81 against a target of 80 (a score above 70 in healthcare is commonly regarded as exceptional)**, exceeding international benchmarks.



New construction

Capital activity continued across St Vincent's with the new **\$180m St Vincent's Private Hospital Fitzroy tower** beginning to offer expanded health services – with a grand opening scheduled for 2025 – and the **\$206m Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery**, also located at our Fitzroy campus, scheduled for completion in mid-2025. Other projects include the **\$140m Brenan Place health and life sciences development** under construction at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne – a project between superannuation giant HESTA and property fund manager ISPT – and the St Vincent's Mater Hospital Sydney's new **\$43m palliative care centre**, both scheduled for completion in 2026.



Reduction in hospital-acquired complications

St Vincent's hospitals achieved a **12 per cent reduction in hospital-acquired complications (HACs)** nationally during the year. A HAC refers to a complication that takes place during a patient's stay which is unrelated to their admission and includes healthcare-related injuries or infections. For St Vincent's private hospitals, this equates to a **37 per cent reduction in complications over the last four years**.

Launched our new Nurse and Facility Leaders Program

We delivered our **first Nurse and Facility Leaders Program**, gathering more than 250 frontline leaders, across our hospitals and aged care facilities, in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. The focus of the program included leadership development, strategy co-creation, and the building of technical capabilities such as financial skills.

Transplant anniversary

The **40th anniversary of Australia's then youngest successful heart transplant** – carried out by Dr Victor Chang at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney – was celebrated at a gala event attended by the **Prime Minister Anthony Albanese**. To mark the occasion, St Vincent's announced it would host **Australia's largest ever National Heart Health Summit in 2025** along with establishing a National Heart Health Alliance. St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne also celebrated the **10th anniversary of its Heart Centre** during the year.



Key performance highlights

Groundbreaking TV documentary

The SBS documentary TV series *The Hospital: In the Deep End*, featuring food author **Melissa Leong**, actor **Samuel Johnson**, and TV host **Costa Georgiadis** aired nationally in June 2024. The three-part series was based at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney and captured the three stars working at the healthcare coalface alongside St Vincent's team members and their patients.



#1 with Medibank customers

St Vincent's private hospitals were **ranked first in Australia by Medibank customers for the fourth year running** as part of the health insurer's annual patient experience survey. St Vincent's private hospitals were **ranked first** by Medibank's overnight patient customers - against 12 other hospital groups - in six of the nine categories surveyed, and **didn't finish lower than third** in the three other categories.

Extraordinary volunteer

A media story about a **92-year-old St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane volunteer, Colin Apelt, went viral internationally**, showcasing the work of our 1,000 volunteers nationally. Colin manages a drinks trolley in the hospital's palliative care unit but it's his personal warmth and gentle manner that resonates with patients. Colin's story was viewed, shared and commented on by millions of people worldwide.



Successful negotiations

We successfully reached **new agreements with multiple private health funds** - including Medibank, HCF, Australian Health Services Alliance, and nib - which appropriately **recognised the rising costs** of providing private hospital care while **guaranteeing policyholders' continued access to our excellent healthcare**.

St Vincent's Care's occupancy result

In an extremely challenging environment, occupancy at St Vincent's Care residential and independent living sites **has been running at all-time highs**.

CEO, Chair and Trustee message

Founded on the mission of the Sisters of Charity, St Vincent's has been providing care to Australians for more than 165 years.

We now offer our famous compassionate and excellent care from regional Queensland to the western suburbs of Melbourne – from high-tech research laboratories to inner city streets; across our nation's three largest metropolitan centres to rural, regional, and remote corners of Australia.

Today the challenge to continue that mission is as formidable as when the Sisters established our first hospital in 1857.

While St Vincent's may be one of the oldest and most respected names in Australian health and aged care, we are not immune to the impacts of a sector in significant transition.

As with climate change, the predicted demographic, technological and financial trends that will upend Australia's health and aged care sector for decades to come are no longer academic. Our ageing population, increasing rates of chronic illness, burgeoning health and aged care costs, and people's changing preferences for receiving their care are already heavily influencing our sector.

Even though Australia's health and aged care system is one of the best in the world, the impact of these factors are showing up across the nation in the form of ambulance ramping, bed block, elective surgery delays, and a shortage of skilled clinicians.

Our health and aged care system, which has served us so well since the birth of Medicare 40 years ago, is on a path to becoming unsustainable in its current form.

Australian governments and policymakers are doing their best to grapple with these events, but the scale of the challenge is vast.

Last year's Intergenerational Report shows that the Federal Government will need to find an extra \$140 billion annually within 40 years' time – half of all Commonwealth spending – to cover only five areas of expenditure, with health and aged care topping the list.

Of course, these pressures aren't solely reflected in the public hospital system.

Access to primary care, particularly for low-income Australians and people living in rural and regional areas, has become more challenging.

Estimates suggest that more than 60 per cent of Australian residential aged care providers are operating at a loss.

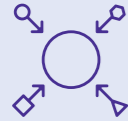
And more than 70 Australian private hospitals and health services have closed in the last five years, causing the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler to announce an urgent review. In July 2024, for the first time in our history, St Vincent's gave notice to a private health fund that we would end our contract unless a new fairer funding agreement was reached – a matter that was resolved soon after.

As a microcosm of Australia's health and aged care sector, St Vincent's is arguably more exposed to these tectonic shifts than many of its peer organisations.

In response, we have focused on stabilising our balance sheet and addressing our most urgent challenges. Key areas of progress and focus have included our underlying performance and operational efficiency in public and private hospitals; rebuilding our relationships with health funds, including conducting bolder negotiations when these have been necessary; building foundational capabilities in our digital and technology services through network modernisation, payroll, and cyber remediation; and providing better support for our people through leadership development and new ways of working as they experience the transformation of their sector.

We are proud of the heritage, stories, and strong identities of our individual hospitals and aged care sites. But given the rapid transformation taking place in our sector, we must keep evolving if we are to thrive and grow our impact.

Our six key arenas



Health equity

Providing unique care for underserved populations, addressing inequity and social determinants.



Chronic care platforms

Creating accessible, holistic and lifelong care platforms for preventing and managing chronic conditions.



Healthy ageing

Building better care pathways and residences for older people, integrating health, social and care needs.



Virtual and at-home care

Advancing virtual/at-home care, with hospitals as hubs, serving local, state and national needs.



Research and innovation

Conducting globally-renowned research and innovation, catalysed by cross-sector collaboration on precincts.



Health leadership

Being the best leaders in health and aged care in Australia, supported by outstanding training and development.

In parallel, we have improved our understanding of our businesses and overall portfolio through new budget processes, financial reporting, and Board 'deep dives' for each major organisational area.

But our special place in the health and aged care system also uniquely positions St Vincent's to be at the forefront of the changes taking place around us.

To take advantage of these opportunities, and to withstand the increasing turbulence in our sector, St Vincent's began creating a new vision and a refreshed strategy in 2023 - which we launched in early 2024 - to both adapt to, and help shape, Australia's health and aged care future.

Our vision is that every person, wherever and wherever they are, is served with excellent and compassionate care, by a better and fairer health and aged care system.

It's a strategy that also recognises our responsibility to transform St Vincent's and our health and aged care system while minimising our impact on the natural environment, advocating for social justice, and delivering on our abiding mission: to deliver the very best treatment and care to underserved and disadvantaged populations.

We will make unique contributions towards our vision in six key arenas:

- **Health equity** - providing unique care for underserved populations, addressing inequity and social determinants;
- **Chronic care platforms** - creating accessible, holistic and lifelong care platforms for preventing and managing chronic conditions;
- **Healthy ageing** - building better care pathways and residences for older people, integrating health, social and care needs;
- **Virtual and at-home care** - advancing virtual/at-home care, with hospitals as hubs, serving local, state and national needs;
- **Research and innovation** - conducting globally-renowned research and innovation, catalysed by cross-sector collaboration on precincts; and
- **Health leadership** - being the best leaders in health and aged care in Australia, supported by outstanding training and development.

And we will achieve our vision by prioritising our efforts in three main areas:

- **Enhance our Impact** | Continuously improve our care, enhancing positive impacts for our patients, people, and planet;
- **Connect Care** | Work together, building 'One St Vincent's' capabilities and services to create the future of connected health and aged care; and
- **Transform the System** | Work with partners to shape a better and fairer health and aged care system.

In the rapidly changing environment in which we work, many of the challenges we face can only be addressed with our facilities and 30,000 team members working more closely together. We are proud of the heritage, stories, and strong identities of our individual hospitals and aged care sites. But given the rapid transformation taking place in our sector, we must keep evolving if we are to thrive and grow our impact.

As such, our strategy is built on taking a 'One St Vincent's' approach to the world around us: harnessing our collective expertise and operating more efficiently and effectively.

We've also used the opportunity of our strategy refresh to reintroduce ourselves, both to our trusted partners and the broader community. It's why we came up with a new way to describe St Vincent's: Better and fairer care. Always.

Increasingly, the next financial year will require us to make further, bolder moves in where and how we deliver care across our organisation. The decisions we make will reflect the ambition of our mission while sustainably safeguarding our organisation's future.

Our broader health and age care system will need to hasten its reform as well, and the only way we will achieve that is through partnership. It's why St Vincent's champions the building of partnerships with its stakeholders as part of its refreshed strategy - whether they're governments, policymakers, health funds, universities, research bodies, or other service providers. Because we know partnerships are the only way to successfully contribute and magnify our expertise and know-how to shape reform for the better.

None of the effort described above is possible without the contributions of our dedicated team members and volunteers. We are grateful for all they do - often above and beyond what is asked of them - and particularly their work supporting people experiencing disadvantage.

Across the entire St Vincent's organisation, we carry the values, vision, and courage of the Venerable Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity to guide us as we embark upon the next year's challenges.



Richard Haddock

Mr Richard Haddock AO

Chair
Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries



Paul McClintock

Mr Paul McClintock AO

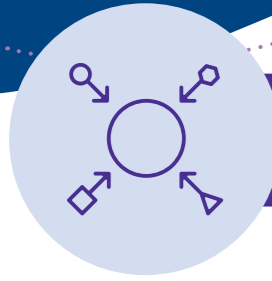
Chair
St Vincent's Health Australia Group of Companies



Chris Blake

Mr Chris Blake

CEO
St Vincent's



Health equity

The Sisters of Charity gave St Vincent's a mission: to provide care, first and foremost, to the most disadvantaged and marginalised members of our community.

Their courage and compassion have been hallmarks of St Vincent's since we began and have been at the heart of many of our proudest achievements, including opening Australia's first program for treating and studying alcohol dependence, Australia's first methadone clinic, the first needle exchange, first HIV/AIDS ward, and first homeless health residential unit.

One of the characteristics of Australia's rapidly changing health and aged care system is that underserved communities who lack access to the key social determinants of health – including income, employment, housing, and location – are finding it more and more difficult to access the health and aged care services that are fundamental to a fair society. This leads to poorer health outcomes and exacerbates social inequalities. Poor health can both cause, and be caused by, socio-economic disadvantage, creating a vicious cycle for these at-risk groups. The St Vincent's vision is for a health and aged care system that prioritises closing this gap, ensuring that every person has the chance to live a healthy life, regardless of background or location.

One of the principal ways St Vincent's demonstrates its commitment to its mission and vision is by self-funding – independent of governments – services and research for the benefit of disadvantaged groups through its Health Equity Program (HEP), now in its tenth year.

During its lifespan, the HEP has distributed just over \$30 million to almost 260 projects to facilitate research, service innovation, and advocacy across St Vincent's. In 2024, the HEP supported 14 projects through \$1.1 million worth of grants including:

- **Funding for a dedicated mobile podiatry service.** It's well known that people experiencing homelessness – and particularly rough sleepers – have worse foot health than the wider population. This is due to a range of contributing factors including drug and alcohol misuse, higher rates of diabetes, and difficulty in maintaining good hygiene. HEP funding provides dedicated podiatry care to vulnerable people via St Vincent's Hospital Sydney's mobile health outreach service alongside a weekly walk-in clinic at the campus. The service – Taking Footcare to the Streets – not only addresses foot-related health issues but also sources appropriate footwear for participants.
- **Clinical Nurse Partnerships – Micah Projects' Domestic Violence Project.** St Vincent's has a long history of partnership with the Brisbane-based homeless and community service organisation, Micah Projects. Based on the success of St Vincent's previously funding nurses integrated within the Micah Projects' homelessness teams, the HEP funded a dedicated domestic violence community nurse to ensure women and children are having their health needs assessed when accessing Micah's services. The new role offered women and children living in short-term crisis accommodation immediate health assessments, direct nursing care, and care coordination and support navigating through the health system. At time of writing, 328 women had used the service, one quarter who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- **Research into the shackling of palliative prisoners.** The HEP funded research into the use of shackles to restrain prisoners while receiving palliative care in non-secure Australian healthcare environments. The ensuing Medical Journal of Australia-published paper became a platform for public advocacy by St Vincent's, led by Professor Jennifer Philip and Dr Stacey Panozzo. On behalf of St Vincent's, the two palliative care clinicians called for states and territories that still practiced shackling during end-of-life care to overhaul their processes. Said Professor Philip: "For those patients from correctional settings who are at end-of-life and are too sick to get out of bed or may be unconscious, we should not be deferring all clinical decisions and best practice to prison policy."

In recognition of the importance of health equity to our organisation, St Vincent's has also developed an online resource centre to internally profile and increase visibility for HEP-funded projects and outcomes.

The purpose-driven commitment of St Vincent's to disadvantaged and socially complex populations was expressed in a range of other actions and decision-making throughout the year.

One of the principal ways St Vincent's demonstrates its commitment to its mission and vision is by self-funding – independent of governments – services and research for the benefit of disadvantaged groups through its Health Equity Program (HEP), now in its tenth year.



Sister Cla

We acknowledge the First Nations
We pay our respect to Elders pas

Homelessness

Reflecting the historic expertise of St Vincent's in providing healthcare for people experiencing homelessness, our Sydney hospital – working in partnership with the University of Sydney, the City of Sydney, and others – trialled the city's first ever pop-up cooling hub, offering respite from extreme heat for people experiencing social disadvantage. The hub, which was opened in a central inner-city park, provided shelter as well as cooling fans, spray mists, water and a place to rest or sleep. Reflecting the physical risks of oppressive and relentless heat, health checks and ongoing medical observation were also available.

In Melbourne, St Vincent's conducted an analysis of its Better Health and Housing Program, which began life during the COVID pandemic as a 15-bed accommodation and health service to keep some of the city's most vulnerable safe from the virus, and has now been expanded to become a 20-bed integrated health and housing service. This service is a partnership between St Vincent's, Homes Victoria, Launch Housing, and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's Emergency Department receives more than one-quarter of Victoria's total emergency presentations by people experiencing homelessness. One of the major challenges in supporting the health of homeless people is that, once they're discharged from care, their lack of housing makes their ongoing recuperation very challenging. The lack of stable and long-term accommodation also means other health issues – such as poor mental health and substance misuse – can deteriorate.

But with the Better Health and Housing Program, people experiencing homelessness are accommodated for three to six months, receive the ongoing medical care they need, and receive help across a range of other areas – from housing to legal, from employment to social services – to stabilise their lives.

While a full report into the Better Health and Housing Program's successes – including a cost benefit analysis – is currently underway, an early evaluation of a small group of its residents was published in April 2024 and found a range of positive outcomes including that the service had a 100 per cent success rate in residents who completed the program finding stable accommodation; and that 83 per cent of residents who completed the program were successfully linked to a GP upon exit.

Also in Melbourne, St Vincent's Care announced in February 2023 that it would begin a process of decommissioning independent living units it operated on the grounds of its aged care site in Eltham in the city's north-east. St Vincent's made the decision to decommission the buildings – which were originally constructed between the 1960s and 1980s – because, despite ongoing maintenance, they had deteriorated and were no longer safe and healthy places for tenants to live. Independent estimates put the cost to St Vincent's of rebuilding the units in excess of \$20 million – a sum beyond the organisation's capacity as a not-for-profit.

St Vincent's made a public commitment to support each of the buildings' 53 tenants into alternative, long-term housing.

Finding new homes for 53 tenants – many of whom required social housing, were elderly, or from socially complex backgrounds – during a once-in-a-generation housing crisis was very challenging. However, in July 2024, St Vincent's supported the final two Eltham tenants into new homes and completed the decommissioning process.

Alcohol and other drugs

June 2024 marked the 60th anniversary of St Vincent's opening Australia's first clinic for the study of alcohol use disorder and care of people with alcohol problems at its Melbourne hospital. While progressive in Australia at the time, the clinic had limited capacity, caring for an estimated 100 patients each year, and there were limited treatment options to provide to patients.

Sixty years later, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's Department of Addiction Medicine is the only physician-led addiction medicine unit in Victoria – meaning it can address the full spectrum of physical and mental comorbidities – and supports more than 2,000 people each year.

Acknowledging its expertise in addiction medicine, the Victorian Premier and Minister for Mental Health joined with St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Antony Tobin, in April 2024 to announce the hospital as a successful partner in the new consortium operating the North Richmond Medically Supervised Injecting Room, alongside North Richmond Community Health, Access Health and Community, and Your Community Health.





Health equity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Both St Vincent's public health networks in Sydney and Melbourne sought to enhance their care for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people during the year.

In Melbourne, St Vincent's implemented a First Nations-identified Nurse Outreach service across the hospital and its Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) service to support the delivery of culturally safe and high-quality healthcare, increase the use of virtual services, and ensure appropriate follow-up for consultations for First Nations patients. Since introducing this new role, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients using the VVED per day has grown from an average of 1.3 to 16.1, with repeat presentations indicating growing trust between patients and the service.

The Melbourne hospital also implemented a Rapid Identification and Engagement of First Nations People pathway in the ED, mandating the priority care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In response, ED wait times for First Nations community members reduced from 100 to 44 minutes and continues to decline.

And in July 2023, St Vincent's Melbourne re-signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, which it has worked alongside for decades, to improve the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing its health services.

Meanwhile, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney and St Vincent's Private Community Hospital Griffith – in partnership with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District and the Aboriginal Medical Service – established an Outreach Heart Failure Diagnostic Clinic to provide early screening and diagnosis of First Nations patients at risk of heart conditions.

Supported by local GPs, the clinic travels around the NSW Riverina to deliver specialised cardiac care on a monthly rotation, alleviating the stress, time and costs associated with travelling to Sydney to receive specialist care, for people living in rural NSW. With thanks to philanthropic funding from the St Vincent's Curran Foundation, the clinic uses state-of-the-art cloud-based echocardiography imaging that allows the team to review ultrasound images in real-time from anywhere in the world, dramatically enhancing telehealth capabilities.

St Vincent's implemented a First Nations-identified Nurse Outreach service to support the delivery of culturally safe and high-quality healthcare for First Nations patients.



Healthy ageing

Australia's health and aged care sector is already experiencing the complex challenges of caring for our nation's ageing populations.

Thousands of elderly patients are routinely held longer than necessary in our nation's hospitals because of the lack of healthcare in nursing homes and the community, or simply residential aged care beds.

The situation will only become more challenging with the number of Australians aged 65 and over predicted to double to 6.9 million by 2060–61, making up almost one quarter of our population.

At the same time, health services are witnessing a sharp rise in typical age-related health problems, everything from arthritis, dementia (the number of Australians with

dementia is projected to more than double to one million people over the next 34 years), and cancer along with lifestyle-related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes.

For St Vincent's, patients aged 65 and over already account for 55 per cent of bed days in both our public and private hospitals.

With an eye to current and future challenges, St Vincent's is committed to making an ongoing contribution to healthy ageing: creating better care pathways and residences for older people by integrating their health, social and care needs.



Preventable admissions and connected care

Older Australians make up almost half of all potentially preventable hospitalisations, with people living with dementia at significantly greater risk. During the year, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne implemented its Geriatrician in the Emergency Department (GED) initiative, which prevents hospitalisations among elderly people by fast-tracking their care in the ED through early geriatrician assessment.

During its initial 13-week pilot, the GED was found to enable 61 per cent of older emergency presenters – who were initially planned for acute admission – to return home with supports of bed substitution, home, and community programs. This approach strengthens and supports family and social connections, and created a saving of approximately 366 acute bed days and 185 sub-acute (community and home-based) bed days.

The GED service is now an ongoing part of the hospital's ED, simultaneously lowering the number of older patients being admitted to hospital, creating capacity for more patients who need in-hospital care, and improving patient experience.

In a similar fashion, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney developed and implemented an enhanced Geriatric Model of Care in 2024. A key feature is the Geriatric Short Stay (GSS) initiative which facilitates early collaboration between nursing staff, geriatricians, social workers, allied health, family members, carers and elderly patients to avoid an unnecessary admission to an acute ward where possible. The approach also enhances care coordination from the ED through to the wards and discharge, ensuring a more seamless and effective care experience for older patients.

With more elderly patients receiving more appropriate and effective care in the home, St Vincent's Virtual and Home has been focused on developing a series of healthy ageing 'connected care pathways', so that wherever an elderly patient first encounters our organisation, the care they continue to receive – at whatever clinical level – remains connected and seamless across St Vincent's.

The first connected care pathway developed by Virtual and Home was a pilot across St Vincent's private and public hospitals and integrated with our community aged care services post-discharge. Within the first few months of the pilot, 32 patients were admitted into the program with close to three-quarters continuing to receive home-based support.

The changing face of aged care

People's changing needs, preferences, and expectations – including of the forthcoming new Aged Care Standards – are driving a re-evaluation of how St Vincent's delivers its aged care services.

Launched in February 2024, St Vincent's Care is engaged in a three-year rollout of a new model of care for its residential homes – based on the success of a pilot at its Corinda site in Brisbane – with an ambition to transform every aspect of service delivery.

Known as 'Heartprint', the new model's purpose is to significantly increase person-centred care by adopting a 'small household' approach, which provides an environment for team members to build genuine connections more successfully with residents and their loved ones.

At St Vincent's Care Corinda, the pilot-site's 96 residents have been divided into eight distinct households with 12 people in each. Dedicated team members are assigned to each resident, encouraging strong inter-personal relationships. The language around these employee roles has also changed – from 'Personal Carer' to 'Living

Support Partner' – emphasising their role in helping residents be themselves and to live independently.

The model creates a sense of home for residents in terms of look and feel, while empowering them to collaborate in how it is run, which includes the freedom to invite and host friends and family into their home, and having the meals they prefer.

The success of the Heartprint pilot at Corinda has contributed to the site's 100 per cent occupancy and for it achieving St Vincent's Care's best results in the annual employee engagement survey. Corinda's team members appreciate the model as much as residents and their families. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has also audited Corinda since the introduction of Heartprint and commended and assessed the site as "very good."

The Heartprint model will now underpin St Vincent's Care's future service delivery – from home design and hiring practices, to employee training, meal service protocols, and resident interaction – as it continues its comprehensive rollout.

Connecting with residents and families

Further reflecting its commitment to transforming its aged care offering, St Vincent's Care launched the second season of the *Celebrating You* video series in May 2024.

The three-part series – with accompanying podcast – aims to encourage early conversations between elderly people and their loved ones as they make decisions around their future care needs. Based on interviews with St Vincent's Care residents, family members and staff, the series covers some of the difficult discussions adult children often have with their parents about aged care including the challenges of being a carer, the guilt loved ones can experience when they support their elderly family member into care, and the unexpected benefits of residential aged care living.

Positive advocacy

St Vincent's has been at the heart of the Federal Government's aged care reform agenda throughout its progress. The voices of St Vincent's senior personnel were included in the Aged Care Taskforce established by Minister Anika Wells. The Taskforce report, released in early 2024, set out a pathway for guaranteeing the aged care sector's future sustainability by introducing a fair funding mechanism.

Throughout the year, St Vincent's advocated for the adoption of the Taskforce's recommendations. In March 2024, St Vincent's Care CEO, Lincoln Hopper, and

Season one of *Celebrating You* contributed to a 10 per cent increase in aided awareness and St Vincent's Care's residential home occupancy rates moving past 95 per cent.

Lincoln Hopper, St Vincent's Care's CEO, said the aim of *Celebrating You* was to shed light on the ageing process and help people step through the ins-and-outs they may face along the journey.

"So much of the public discussion around aged care – including at the policy and political level – is around the clinical: How many minutes of care? How many staff are on deck? How many dollars are being spent? These are all important issues, but they ignore the person...and that's overwhelmingly at the heart of what aged care is about," said Lincoln.

Queensland State Manager, Nicole Devlin, went to Federal Parliament to meet with more than a dozen MPs, Senators, and their advisers, including the Minister for Health, Mark Butler.

St Vincent's believes the reforms will benefit older Australians by ensuring our aged care system is well-funded, innovative, and caring. To advance our advocacy, we partnered with the National Seniors organisation to urge parliamentarians to support the reforms in the best interest of current and future aged care residents.

"We need to be having discussions around what gives residents meaning and purpose in aged care. Too often those conversations are ignored. *Celebrating You* is all about identifying the need for those conversations and creating a safe space for them to take place."

St Vincent's and *Celebrating You* were recognised at both the Catholic Health Australia and Inside Ageing annual awards for the campaign's contribution to positive ageing and consumer experience.

We were pleased when the Prime Minister announced in September a bipartisan agreement on a new funding model for aged care in line with the Taskforce's recommendations. Our advocacy, together with Catholic Health Australia, to press parliamentarians to urgently pass these reforms in the new Aged Care Act was successful with the legislation passing the parliament in November 2024.

Outstanding occupancy

The success of St Vincent's Care's approach to the challenging landscape in Australian aged care was evidenced by the division posting a positive occupancy result for the year. Occupancy levels at St Vincent's Care's residential and independent living sites are running at all-time highs.





Research and innovation

Since our founders, the Sisters of Charity, opened our first hospital in 1857, our services, clinicians and researchers have been behind some of Australia's most important medical breakthroughs.

Innovation – largely driven by our research capabilities – has been part of the St Vincent's story since we began. Medical research is a crucial pillar of our approach to providing the best person-centred care.

Throughout the past 12 months – and in every corner of the organisation – the St Vincent's commitment to pursuing globally-renowned research and innovation, supported by cross-sector collaboration with our partners, has been a feature of our work.

Every day our people and partners are tackling the world's most challenging health problems and advancing biomedical engineering solutions to improve disease treatment, diagnosis and prevention, and translate ground-breaking discoveries into tangible healthcare solutions.

Breakthrough treatments and research

In Melbourne, St Vincent's Gastroenterologist, Associate Professor Bronte Holt, and a team of specialised endoscopy nurses, performed the world's first 3D Per Oral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM) in February 2024.

A POEM is a minimally invasive procedure used to treat achalasia, an oesophagus disorder that makes it difficult to swallow food and liquid. The procedure can help patients avoid more invasive surgeries.

Regular endoscopies are performed with 2D vision, which is the same as watching a video or looking at a photo. In comparison, 3D imaging creates the impression that the operation is occurring on the screen in front of you by enhancing the different layers of the gastrointestinal tract, as well as critical structures like the blood vessels and muscle fibres, helping clinicians perform the operation with greater precision.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne researchers are also leading a world-first, multi-centre clinical trial of a personalised treatment approach that could potentially transform the outcome for multiple myeloma patients based on genetic abnormalities.

The VIBER-M trial is being carried out in nine Australian and New Zealand hospitals, and seeks to provide tailored treatment for a specific group of patients who are currently treated with a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. The trial provides hope for the one-in-five multiple myeloma patients who carry a genetic abnormality, known as the T(11:14) lesion. Previous research suggests the T(11:14) abnormality responds particularly well to drugs called BCL2 inhibitors, including a drug named Venetoclax.

With this knowledge, SVHM researchers established the world's first clinical trial combining two approved medications – Venetoclax, and another immune-stimulating medication, lberdomide – to assess how effective they are together and if they can provide more personalised results.

The study will test if the two drugs can work together against multiple myeloma by forcing cancerous cells to kill themselves and stimulating the immune system to better fight the disease.

Results are also imminent in St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's world-first clinical trial into the use of psilocybin-assisted therapy, to potentially offer an effective treatment for the depression and death-anxiety often experienced by terminally ill patients. The trial has aimed to reduce depression and death-anxiety in terminally ill patients, particularly those nearing end-of-life and suffering fear, demoralisation, and depression, who don't respond to traditional anti-depressant and anti-anxiety therapies.

St Vincent's Mater Hospital Sydney was part of groundbreaking new Australian research that paves the way for a major shift in the way early-stage breast cancer is treated.

By using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to screen women's breasts for additional cancers or pre-cancers, researchers were able to identify patients who could safely avoid radiotherapy and its sometimes incapacitating side effects.

Meanwhile, researchers and clinicians at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney and the Garvan Institute of Medical Research launched an Australia-wide study to improve our understanding of multiple sclerosis, the debilitating autoimmune condition that affects 2.8 million people worldwide.

More than 40 clinicians and scientists have united in the Open Coast-to-Coast Australian Multiple Sclerosis (OCCAMS) consortium to detect genetic 'biomarkers' in immune cells that could lead to early detection of multiple sclerosis risk, earlier intervention and better patient outcomes.

And further consolidating St Vincent's Sydney's role as a centre of excellence in treating cancers, the hospital is leading a multi-site research trial investigating a

promising new treatment option for men with resistant metastatic prostate cancer, an initiative that has been announced as a finalist in the 2024 NSW Health Awards.

Led by Professor Louise Emmett, the research goal is to improve treatment responses, reduce adverse side-effects, and improve pain management and quality of life for patients with metastatic prostate cancer.

The trial – which involves 15 sites across Australia and is funded by the Movember charity, the federal government, and Novartis – uses advanced techniques like molecular imaging and analysis of circulating tumour cells and DNA to personalise treatments and create predictive models.

Preliminary results of the trial published in The Lancet demonstrated improved treatment response duration and depth; reduced adverse events; enhanced pain control; and an overall improvement in quality of life. Further analyses on overall survival and quality of life are underway and will be published in 2025.

St Vincent's Sydney also commenced a world-first pilot study in partnership with the Garvan Institute, to investigate the effectiveness of a pharmaceutical treatment to reduce the prevalence of bone disease in patients with multiple myeloma. The disease, which is characterised by an overproduction of abnormal plasma cells in the bone marrow, affects approximately 1,800 Australians each year and leaves 80 per cent with bone lesions or thinning.

The study is evaluating romosozumab, an antibody therapy already approved for fracture prevention in osteoporosis, to determine if it can also restore the health of bones weakened by the disease. The drug counters the effects of a protein called sclerostin, which blocks bone formation and can be found in high levels in myeloma patients.

Technology

Technology – and providing our patients with access to the world’s latest advances – is a hugely important part of our capacity to innovate. Across our hospitals in 2024, a steady stream of new medical technologies became available to improve health outcomes for St Vincent’s patients.

At St Vincent’s Private Hospital Sydney – thanks to a generous donation from supporters of the St Vincent’s Curran Foundation – we took delivery of the latest Zeiss OPMI Lumera 700 Ophthalmic operating microscope, one of the most advanced surgical operating microscopes in the world.

The Zeiss Lumera 700 microscope’s clarity will lead to safer and better surgical outcomes for patients undergoing procedures such as corneal transplantation, glaucoma surgery, advanced cataract surgery, and vitreoretinal surgery.

Philanthropic support was also behind St Vincent’s Private Sydney’s acquisition of a state-of-the-art Hana operating table. This cutting-edge equipment is essential for advanced orthopaedic procedures, including hip arthroscopy and fracture repairs, and delivers outstanding results.

At St Vincent’s Private Hospital Fitzroy, the team began using Melbourne’s first robotic-navigated Globus ExcelsiusGPS. The platform markedly improves outcomes from complex spinal surgery by assisting surgeons to accurately insert screws into spinal bone, immobilise the spine to allow fusion of the bones, and accurately insert interbody devices which sit between the spinal bones to promote fusion and restore alignment.

With two Mako robotic surgery systems, St Vincent’s Private Hospital Northside operates one of the largest orthopaedic robotic and colorectal robotic programs in Australia. In the first quarter of the financial year, St Vincent’s Northside performed more than 200 robotic surgery cases, the

largest of any hospital in Australia. In August 2024, Northside also reached the milestone of having performed 3,000 Mako robotic surgeries in total. Meanwhile, at St Vincent’s Private Hospital Toowoomba, Dr Alan Loch performed his 1,000th joint procedure using the hospital’s Mako robot, becoming the first surgeon in Queensland to reach this significant milestone.

St Vincent’s Northside is also one of Queensland’s premier destinations for cardiac care, performing more than 600 open heart procedures annually. In January, two of St Vincent’s Northside’s leading cardiac specialists, Dr Roland Hilling-Smith and Dr Andrew Clarke marked a major milestone, performing their 200th TAVI (Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation) procedure together.

St Vincent’s Private Hospital Werribee’s patients also experienced the benefits of advanced technology with the facility’s first procedure involving Mako SmartRobotics in October 2023. Made possible thanks to donations from generous Werribee philanthropists, the technology confirmed the hospital as offering the most advanced orthopaedic surgery in Melbourne’s west.

St Vincent’s now has nine Mako robotic surgery systems in operation across its 10 private hospitals.

In August 2024, St Vincent’s Private Hospital Fitzroy became the first hospital in Australia to host a procedure using a new implantable device – an EV-ICD – to treat patients at risk of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA).

Led by Melbourne cardiologist, Dr Uwais ‘Wes’ Mohamed, the device is a game-changer for the estimated 30,000 Australians who receive a pacemaker or implantable defibrillator every year. The EV-ICD was approved for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in July 2024 and is an advance on a traditional ICD in that it minimises risk of complications.

Finally, our Fitzroy private hospital also welcomed an exciting new piece of technology in its operating theatres, the ‘babycam’, to allow expectant mothers undergoing uncomplicated caesarean births to witness their baby’s first moments on a large TV screen.

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New facilities

The St Vincent’s commitment to innovation is also reflected in our ongoing efforts at modernising our facilities.

Our new \$180m tower at St Vincent’s Private Hospital Fitzroy is nearing completion with a grand opening scheduled for early 2025. Clinical departments have commenced transitioning into the new building and the first baby was delivered in the tower’s new maternity unit in September with significant media coverage. The \$206m build of the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery on the same Fitzroy campus is scheduled for completion in mid-2025.

Other projects include the \$140m Brenan Place health and life sciences development Melbourne – a project between superannuation giant HESTA and property fund manager ISPT – which is under construction at St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne, and the St Vincent’s Mater Hospital Sydney’s new \$43m palliative care centre, both scheduled for completion in 2026.

St Vincent’s Private Hospital Northside announced a new multi-million dollar on-site radiation therapy service in partnership with the Icon Cancer Centre. The new service – which will begin operating in early 2025 – will provide a fully integrated end-to-end cancer service for Northside patients, eliminating the need to travel away from the hospital campus for radiation therapy.

Around the country, St Vincent’s is investing in the future of care. During the financial year, St Vincent’s Private Hospital Toowoomba officially opened its new Clive Berghofer Intensive Care Unit; St Vincent’s Private Hospital East Melbourne opened its newly refurbished Central Sterilising Services Department; and St Vincent’s Private Hospital Werribee opened its new inpatient Rehabilitation Ward.

Further consolidating St Vincent’s Sydney’s role as a centre of excellence in heart and lung transplants and treatment, we also commissioned new Heart Lung outpatient clinic capacity to enhance service delivery.

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Virtual and at-home care

Just as the health and aged care sector is being irreversibly shaped by factors such as our ageing population and increasing rates of chronic illness, it's also being transformed by people's preferences for receiving their care and advancing technology.

Virtual and in-home care exploded during the pandemic – partly because of necessity – but also as governments seized the opportunity to deliver care in a more person-centred and affordable way.



People want faster and more convenient health and aged care, and in their home if they can. They want the same seamless digital experience they enjoy in their daily lives.

Rapidly improving technology is allowing that to happen: not just through a smart watch, phone, or tablet, but also with wearable, consumable, or implantable devices, which can be monitored by remote clinical teams.

St Vincent's – as is the entire health and aged care sector – is experiencing a strong growth in interest in people receiving their care at home.

For example, in 2024 more than 11 per cent of St Vincent's public hospital separations in Victoria – the terminology used in healthcare to describe the completion of a person's care – were delivered outside of hospital. St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne also experienced a 43 per cent increase in demand for at-home care.

St Vincent's Virtual and Home coordinates our in-home and virtual services across facilities and jurisdictions. During the year, the Virtual and Home team oversaw a major expansion of the St Vincent's Rehab-at-Home program with two major initiatives.

To relieve pressure from the Royal Melbourne Hospital's public waiting list for orthopaedic elective surgery, Virtual and Home developed a Rehab-at-Home

Program in partnership with St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne which delivered 550 elective orthopaedic cases in a joint effort to reduce waiting lists. Once the surgery was completed at the private hospital, Virtual and Home delivered the Rehab-at-Home program designed to reduce hospital lengths of stays and deliver positive clinical outcomes. The program showcased the significant clinical and economic value of a public-private partnership when integrated with a contemporary out-of-hospital care model.

And in south-east Queensland, Virtual and Home – working in partnership with St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba – developed and implemented a virtually-enabled Rehab-at-Home program. Difficulties in accessing specialist health services in rural and regional Australia is common-place and can impact health outcomes. This initiative enabled timely and convenient early supported discharge from hospital, allowing patients to recover in the comfort of their own home while also overcoming equity and access issues.

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Virtual and at-home care

Rural and regional impact

The benefit of virtual health service delivery for people in rural, regional and remote parts of Australia is significant.

St Vincent's This Way Up is the largest and most established digital mental health treatment service in Australia – with more than 37,000 registered clinicians (including one-third of all GPs and psychologists in Australia), and 270,000 total program enrolments/users – and has been in operation for more than two decades.

More than 100 Australians register to participate in a This Way Up program every day, or around 4,000 per month.

One of This Way Up's biggest strengths is that it provides immediate access to professional, evidence-based, mental health support and treatment for Australians living in rural and regional areas who are unable to obtain the same from face-to-face consultations or face long waiting lists and travel times.

For example, 35 per cent of This Way Up's clinicians are based in regional, rural, and remote Australia.

In April 2024, This Way Up commissioned an independent socio-economic evaluation of its platform by the economic consultancy, SPP. SPP found that over the past eight years, This Way Up had delivered an estimated \$290m in health benefits –

almost 10 per cent of which can be attributed to patients living in outer regional, remote, and very remote areas – and a quantified economic benefit of over \$170m.

On its current trajectory, This Way Up is expected to deliver at least \$637m in economic benefits over the next five years and help more than 130,000 people.

In June, Emma McBride MP, the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, met with the This Way Up team in Griffith to learn more about the platform's collaboration with the Commonwealth's youth mental health walk-in service, Headspace. This Way Up is unique in Australian online digital mental health platforms in that it is highly integrated with GPs and other mental health services, like Headspace. Often described as 'blended care', clinicians use This Way Up to enable and enhance their care and prescribe the site's programs as either a stand-alone intervention or as part of a treatment plan, where they can monitor patient progress.

By the end of 2024, This Way Up's registrations had grown by 9 per cent – up from 48,000 in 2023 to over 52,000 – mainly driven by partnerships with new and existing funding bodies. Clinician registrations grew by an average of 450 new registrations per month. Four peer-reviewed clinical papers

were also published, further enhancing St Vincent's This Way Up's evidence base and its reputation as a clinically effective and scalable provider of digital mental health programs.

St Vincent's is focussed on using technology to reach regional and remote communities with its clinical expertise wherever possible.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne established an online Emergency Multidisciplinary Team (eMDT) meeting in neurosurgery during the year to improve the care of brain haemorrhage patients in regional and remote parts of Victoria. The eMDT brings together emergency multidisciplinary teams within five to 10 minutes to better manage neurosurgical referrals by assessing treatment options.

Referrals to the eMDT have come from Mildura, Gippsland, other Melbourne hospitals, Ambulance Victoria, and Fiji, and – so far – more than 40 patients have benefited.

Research shows 22 per cent of patients with haemorrhagic stroke don't need to be transferred away from their local hospital. Avoiding the unnecessary transfer of patients can also create a better patient and family experience, particularly during end-of-life care.

Digital and technology

For St Vincent's to retain the agility and capacity to meet growing individual and community need for virtual, at-home, and connected care, its own digital and technology systems need to be contemporary, robust, and reliable.

Through the year, the St Vincent's Digital and Technology (D&T) team has played a key role in enhancing patient care and hospital operations across the organisation.

At St Vincent's public hospital in Melbourne, D&T has contributed to improved patient safety, outcomes, and experiences by supporting and driving the implementation of new online medical records and queue manager solutions. D&T's support for a new Cardiology Cath Lab upgrade on the St Vincent's Hospital Sydney campus has also led to better diagnostic accuracy and reduced procedure times.

At St Vincent's Mater Hospital Sydney, D&T's input has led to significant improvements in cardiology workflow and diagnostic outcomes. The team has also supported the expansion of St Vincent's Virtual and Home Healthcare's Care Monitor telehealth solution, which now includes vital diabetes care services.

D&T's progress in governance and analytics capabilities continues to improve data-driven decision-making and reduce clinical risk through divisional financial and operational performance dashboards. The St Vincent's 'Enterprise Data Warehouse' has expanded to include more than 50 data pipelines, 28 datasets, and 25 dashboards. Additionally, business-supported progress in data governance, data literacy, and artificial intelligence initiatives are helping to advance delivery of the refreshed St Vincent's strategy.

The eMDT brings together emergency multidisciplinary teams within five to 10 minutes to better manage neurosurgical referrals by assessing treatment options.

D&T has also facilitated the development and enhancement of hospital infrastructure by providing new networks and systems for our major property developments. This includes the new tower at St Vincent's Private Hospital Fitzroy, the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, the Mater's new palliative care centre, and St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba's new Intensive Care Unit.

St Vincent's is currently engaged in a network modernisation program that is introducing a medical-grade technology network that will support our EMR investments, robotics, and remote monitoring with enhanced security features. At the same time, an ongoing network upgrade program is being implemented across all St Vincent's aged care sites.

St Vincent's has also committed to a modernised telephony platform strategy that will replace end-of-life PABX equipment and improve business continuity across all sites. This approach will transform client and clinician experiences via unified communications tools such as instant messaging, audio, video conferencing, and document sharing.

Integrating these features into a single platform will enable seamless connectivity and change the way St Vincent's hospitals and aged care work together, resulting in better patient and resident outcomes and greater opportunities for connected care as staff can quickly communicate and coordinate with each other.

Finally, St Vincent's private hospitals are on track to deliver a foundational Electronic Medical Record (EMR) platform capability in 2024-25 with the implementation of Meditech, a leading platform used by more than 2,000 healthcare organisations across 23 countries.

St Vincent's is investing in foundational Meditech capabilities that will provide our private hospitals with nursing and medical mobile apps, patient charts, clinical documentation and ordering, scanning, and a medical language tool. Future functionality is being investigated which includes a patient portal, clinical applications, medications management and medical device integration.

At the same time, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne began the vendor selection process and project planning for the introduction of its \$35.7 million Electronic Medical Record (EMR) platform, funded by the Victorian Government.

Cybersecurity

After experiencing a cyber-attack in December 2023, St Vincent's successfully completed its forensic investigation in January 2024 concluding there was no evidence that sensitive personal information had been stolen from its network or that any data had been posted on the dark web.

Reflecting the open and transparent approach St Vincent's took to keeping its patients, residents, and broader community abreast of its investigation, Australia's National Cyber Security Coordinator described St Vincent's as an "exemplar in collaboration...working around the clock with us to manage and limit the consequences of this incident."

In the wake of this event, St Vincent's is continuing to improve its cyber resilience and reduce the risk of further incidents.



Health leadership

St Vincent's has always been an organisation of leadership. Our founders, the Sisters of Charity, were fearless in their displays of leadership, often in ways that, for the time, were considered radical.

The decision to establish Australia's first ever HIV/AIDS service, Ward 17 South, at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney in 1984 remains an outstanding example of the Sisters' willingness to show leadership at the most challenging times.

Leadership at St Vincent's is expressed in a range of ways. From the organisation taking a public stand and advocating on issues of importance, by the pursuit of ground-breaking results through clinical or research excellence, through to team members acting as an example to their peers by displaying outstanding individual effort.

Leading and influencing the transformation of Australia's health and aged care system is a central part of the St Vincent's 2030 strategy.

The launch of the strategy's accompanying Always campaign in early 2024 had significant success in sharing that vision for the future, creating a distinctive, national St Vincent's campaign and a 'One St Vincent's' story to unify our many services and facilities and highlighting our role as a national leader in so many clinical areas.

Because of the Always campaign, the St Vincent's digital community increased from 178,000 to 240,000 in the seven months following its launch. Over the same period, our video views increased by 1,880 per cent.



Leading in times of crisis and always improving

One of the most public examples of St Vincent's leadership took place in April 2024, following the stabbing of multiple people at Bondi Junction Westfield shopping centre which killed six and injured a further 12.

St Vincent's Hospital Sydney was a chief recipient of the injured in the immediate aftermath of the shocking event, resulting in a 'Code Brown' response – the highest level of emergency for the hospital based on an external event. Reflecting the hospital's training and preparedness for crises of this nature, the Emergency Department, surgical team and Intensive Care Unit in particular, all worked closely together, under enormous pressure, to successfully manage the inflow of injured people.

As with other first responders and members of the public who displayed extraordinary levels of bravery and heroism on that day, the timeliness, professionalism and care from the St Vincent's Hospital Sydney team was widely and publicly recognised. In the wake of the tragedy, St Vincent's Sydney team members appreciated a private visit from the NSW Premier, Chris Minns, and NSW Health Minister, Ryan Park, to commend them for their service.

Both St Vincent's public health networks in Sydney and Melbourne achieved significant and sustained improvement in timely emergency care during the year.

At St Vincent's Sydney's ED, a sustained improved performance in Transfer of Care times, with results consistently exceeding the NSW benchmark key performance indicator, saw the hospital return more than 1,500 hours of ambulance time back into the system between November 2023 and March 2024.

St Vincent's Melbourne implemented measures that improved patient flow in its emergency department. Improved outcomes included discharging more patients by 10am, an increased use of the transit lounge to allow for more efficient transfers to sub-acute care, reduced ED length of stay, releasing ambulance arrivals to ED within 40 minutes, and making faster decisions about admitting patients from ED.

St Vincent's Melbourne's Rapid Access Hub – located at St Vincent's on the Park – continued to contribute to significant reductions in the hospital's planned surgery waitlist. The Hub has now performed more than 4,500 surgeries and continues playing a vital role in delivering surgery for Victorians. It has contributed to significant reductions in St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's planned surgery waitlist, which decreased by more than 600 patients through 2023-24.

Meanwhile, Virtual and Home's consolidation of St Vincent's out-of-hospital programs under the one team continued during the year leading to better service coordination and providing a foundation for growth. Several new virtual and connected care projects were designed to solve national system-wide health challenges and presented to key stakeholders throughout the year.

The Hub has now performed more than 4,500 surgeries and continues playing a vital role in delivering surgery for Victorians.

Health leadership

Clinical excellence

Reflecting the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement, St Vincent's undertook a review of its Clinical Governance Framework for all public and private hospitals and Virtual and Home services during the year. The aim was to create a refreshed and consistent framework of accountability and systems that support team members and facilities to meet the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare's (ACSQHC) Clinical Governance Framework.

In the same vein, a key focus of our Clinical Governance program over the past year has been boosting and improving data-driven decision-making at point of care through the introduction of online 'How Safe are We?' dashboards. These tools empower staff to assess care outcomes and identify areas for enhancing safety and quality.

A major part of this initiative is integrating the patient voice by allowing staff to receive real-time feedback through an improved Net Promoter Score (NPS) dashboard. NPS is an internationally recognised measure of patient or resident satisfaction in a health and/or aged care environment.

This enhancement resulted in a significant increase in the NPS score for St Vincent's hospitals to 81, against our target of 80 (a score above 70 in healthcare is commonly regarded as exceptional).

At the same time, the St Vincent's score under the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) measurement has also improved. HCAHPS is a survey tool which provides more detailed information on the experience of in-hospital care and identifies further opportunities for improvement.

The St Vincent's HCAHPS score rose to 78.3 per cent, surpassing the international benchmark of 69.9 per cent and ranking our hospitals in the 80th percentile – reflecting strong performance – with eight facilities ranked in the top 25 per cent or higher.

In further recognition of our efforts to sustain and improve on clinical excellence, six St Vincent's hospitals were assessed under the new Short Notice Assessment Process (SNAP) – a testing framework introduced under the National Safety and Quality

Health Service (NSQHS) standards – and achieved full accreditation with minimal or no recommendations. SNAP can occur at any time within a hospital's three-year accreditation cycle with only 24 hours' notice.

St Vincent's hospitals achieved a 12 per cent reduction in hospital-acquired complications (HACs) nationally. A HAC refers to a complication that takes place during a patient's stay which is unrelated to their admission and includes healthcare-related injuries or infections.

Against an internal target of achieving a 10 per cent reduction, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne achieved an 18 per cent HAC reduction and St Vincent's Sydney achieved a 16 per cent reduction, while our private hospitals accomplished an 8 per cent reduction, over the previous 12-month period. For St Vincent's private hospitals, this latest reduction equals a 37 per cent reduction in HACs over the last four years.

Individual leadership

St Vincent's is rich with examples of individual leadership from across its services.

The co-directors of the Melanoma Institute of Australia, Professor Georgina Long AO and Professor Richard Scolyer AO, were named Australians of the Year for their work saving thousands of lives by developing an immunotherapy approach to treating melanoma.

Professor Long has had a decade-long presence at St Vincent's Mater Hospital Sydney, particularly in setting up the melanoma clinical trials program at the hospital's Patricia Ritchie Centre for Cancer Care and Research. Many of the critical trials that have been initiated by Professors Long and Scolyer take place at the Patricia Ritchie Centre and on the Mater's McAuley Ward.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne cardiologist Dr Elizabeth Paratz received four prestigious awards in one week for research she led into unexplained sudden cardiac arrest.

Dr Paratz's multi award-winning study has enhanced care for people suffering out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and helped identify at-risk and vulnerable populations needing targeted support.

Dr Paratz was announced as St Vincent's Melbourne's TJ Martin Award winner, which is presented to the author of the best PhD thesis completed by a St Vincent's campus researcher over the past 18 months.

In the same week, she won the Clinical Section of the 2024 Ralph Reader Prize.

This award is presented by the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand to early-career researchers. She also received the University of Melbourne Chancellor's Prize for Excellence in a PhD thesis and the Faculty for Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences Deans Award for Excellence in the PhD Thesis.

As a result of the research, Dr Paratz has co-led a first-of-its-kind, state-of-the-art clinic and registry in Victoria with St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's Head of Cardiovascular Research, Professor Andre La Gerche, to tackle sudden cardiac arrest.

The End Unexplained Cardiac Death (EndUCD) registry uses data to track patterns in patients who have suffered sudden cardiac arrest to enable better planning of interventions and strategies for prevention and management. Meanwhile, Dr Paratz's clinic, which was nine months in the making, was co-designed with people who have lived experience of cardiac arrest.

In Queensland, two members of the St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba team received recognition for their examples of leadership during the year.

St Vincent's Toowoomba nurse and midwife, Cathy Krause, was recognised with the 2023 Neonatal Nurse Excellence Award by the Australian College of Neonatal Nurses. Cathy was up against 13 other worthy nominees, the award recognising her outstanding contribution to neonatal clinical practice, education, and research.

And in 2023, St Vincent's Toowoomba Ear, Nose and Throat specialist Dr Roger Grigg AM was honoured in the King's Birthday Honours List for his 'significant service to medicine'. Dr Grigg is highly regarded among his immediate colleagues and the broader Toowoomba team for his clinical excellence, his mentoring of younger team members, and his charitable work.

St Vincent's Care's Werribee Facility Manager, Annie Kahulugan, received the Emerging Leader award from aged care magazine, Inside Ageing, in September 2024. Annie became Facility Manager at Werribee in 2022 when the site was experiencing a range of internal and budgetary challenges.

Annie's collegiate and consensus-approach to problem-solving at Werribee has seen the site achieve full re-accreditation, reach an occupancy level of 99.9 per cent, and enjoy one of the lowest rates for using agency staff across St Vincent's Care's 23 sites.

Finally, one of the best examples of quiet leadership was displayed during the year by 92-year-old St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane volunteer, Colin Apelt. An ABC profile on Colin – who manages a drinks trolley in the hospital's palliative care unit – went viral internationally, showcasing Colin's personal warmth and gentle manner along with the work of our 1,000 volunteers. Colin's story was viewed, shared and commented on by millions of people worldwide.



People and Culture

St Vincent's leads through its name and reputation – built up over more than 165 years of service excellence – but also thanks to the efforts of its people. St Vincent's believes strongly in investing in the leadership skills and capacities of its employees so they are equipped to navigate the organisation through the increasingly complex sector in which we work.

In parallel to refreshing our organisational strategy, St Vincent's is actively pursuing new ways of working to make sure that frontline leaders are empowered to drive our strategy forward. Over the last 12 months, St Vincent's has reorganised its leadership structure, updating how leaders engage with each other, and widening the members of both the Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team groupings.

A further change has been establishing 'Impact' – a grouping of the organisation's Top 30 leaders, including our leading clinicians – to work together on our priorities, including how to implement our refreshed strategy. Meeting once every six months, Impact is our first cross-divisional leadership group and has the responsibility to actively problem solve and identify solutions through a 'One St Vincent's' approach.

St Vincent's also continued its leadership forums during the year, a gathering involving 300 team members from all three states where St Vincent's has a presence, and which proved valuable in co-creating our refreshed strategy and new brand campaign.

Over the last 12 months, St Vincent's has reorganised its leadership structure, updating how leaders engage with each other, and widening the members of both the Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team groupings.

The importance of leadership was also behind the decision to establish the first St Vincent's Nurse and Facility Leaders Program, an initiative that gathered more than 250 frontline leaders – predominantly senior nurses – across four divisions, in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. The focus of the program included leadership development, strategy co-creation, and the building of technical capabilities (such as financial skills).

Our commitment to fostering and developing our next generation of St Vincent's leaders can also be seen in updating our formation process – the way we introduce and educate team members in the history, culture, and purpose of our organisation. Beginning in 2025, formation and leadership development will be considered together to amplify our unique culture to team members over their duration of their career at St Vincent's.

Investing more time and resources in our leaders is already delivering results. The St Vincent's annual employee survey recorded increased levels of engagement across the entire organisation. We lifted participation in the survey by 5 per cent and our engagement overall rose from 68 per cent to 71 per cent nationally. Importantly, we asked 28 questions and our scores improved in every single category, including employee and patient safety, employee pride and trust in leadership.





Chronic care platforms

Australians are living longer than ever but almost half have one or more chronic health conditions, a situation that is only expected to grow in the years ahead.

Such an increase will place an increasing and potentially unmanageable burden on the health system. St Vincent's is focussed on what it can do to create platforms that offer accessible, holistic and lifelong care for the prevention and management of chronic conditions.

Diabetes

One initiative that St Vincent's launched in February 2024 – with a focus on chronic illness – was the Regional Diabetes Education Access and Management Program (DREAM). Delivered in partnership with Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network – and made possible through generous donations – DREAM provides regional communities with access to multidisciplinary specialists in diabetes management from St Vincent's Sydney through both face-to-face and telehealth interaction.

Led by St Vincent's Sydney's Head of Endocrinology, Prof Jerry Greenfield, and Clinical Nurse Consultant, Gael Holters, DREAM aims to address the often poor access to specialist diabetes services in regional areas. For example, in the Murrumbidgee area – which encompasses 508 communities in the south of NSW – there is no full-time endocrinologist working in the area's public health services.

Each month, the St Vincent's diabetes outreach team visit a different regional or remote community in the Murrumbidgee and both support and observe local clinicians as they see patients requiring complex care. They ensure patients are receiving specialist medical advice from experts and that local doctors and nurses are fully trained in the latest in diabetes care. Patients then receive follow-up telehealth care from the St Vincent's team back in Sydney.

Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic condition in Australia. Around 1.2 million Australians are hospitalised with diabetes-related conditions every year and it's the seventh most common cause of death by disease. The total annual cost impact of diabetes in Australia is estimated at \$17.6 billion.

Diabetes treatment is an area of clinical speciality across the St Vincent's organisation. Both St Vincent's major public health networks in Melbourne and Sydney are designated centres of excellence in diabetes care by the National Association of Diabetes Centres, two out of only nine hospitals in Australia to hold this title.

During the year, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne combined its expertise in diabetes with its equally strong background in providing healthcare to disadvantaged groups to trial a new approach to glucose monitoring for diabetics from complex backgrounds.

A Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) is a device used by people with diabetes to track glucose (sugar) levels in real time. Levels are measured by a tiny sensor implanted under the skin with results then sent to a receiver or a smartphone, without the need for finger-prick blood tests.

Disadvantaged groups are 1.9 times more likely to experience diabetes than the general population. Mismanaged diabetes means more poorer health outcomes and more hospital admissions.

It's long been assumed that diabetics from socially complex backgrounds – people who are in insecure housing or homeless, experiencing mental health issues, or with cognitive impairment – would not be successful candidates for CGM because of their challenges, despite having the most to gain from this approach to stabilise their chronic illness. The cost of CGM devices can also be prohibitive for people.

The St Vincent's Melbourne team conducted a trial to challenge this assumption by examining the feasibility of glucose monitoring for diabetics with complex needs.

The study found that 79 per cent of trial participants found using the CGM to be "very easy" with 97 per cent reporting they would like to continue using the device.

With the full results of the study to be published at the end of 2024, the project team hope that by demonstrating the effectiveness of CGM for disadvantaged people, it will improve their access to these devices and reduce preventable diabetes-related harm.

Chronic care platforms

Chronic pain

Chronic pain affects more than 3.6 million Australians and is the leading cause of disability. St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane is one of the largest providers of pain management services in south-east Queensland. The hospital has been helping patients living with debilitating chronic pain for more than 10 years, working closely with them and their loved ones to help patients gain the confidence and skills to manage their pain and achieve their goals.

One of the important roles the St Vincent's Brisbane team plays in the area of chronic pain management is educating and training GPs and other healthcare professionals to better understand pain management. People wrestling with chronic pain often turn to their GP for answers, making it crucial for doctors to stay updated with the latest insights and treatments.

Heart health

In April 2024, Australia celebrated the 40th anniversary of the then youngest successful heart transplant on 14-year-old Fiona Coote AM by legendary St Vincent's cardiologist Dr Victor Chang AC.

The anniversary was celebrated with a gala event in Sydney with special guests the Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon Anthony Albanese, and Fiona Coote.

To mark the occasion, St Vincent's announced it would host Australia's largest ever National Heart Health Summit in 2025 along with establishing a National Heart Health Alliance.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne also celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Heart Centre during the year.

In the latter half of 2023, St Vincent's Brisbane held its inaugural Pain Symposium to provide GPs with the tools and knowledge to better support patients living with this chronic condition. In particular, the symposium focussed on discussing alternative therapies to the prescribing of painkillers, particularly opioids, and possible referral pathways. The symposium, which was met with overwhelming support from our GP community, shed greater light on this complex issue and the treatment options available for patients.

Meanwhile, the St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne team is now using a cutting-edge laser scanning system that is transforming care – and pain management – for amputees.

St Vincent's continues to lead the way treating chronic heart disease, along with organ care preservation and transportation. St Vincent's in Sydney now undertakes close to 100 heart and lung transplants each year, and the survival and success rates are among the highest in the world. Nationally, we are experts in minimally invasive heart surgeries, using the latest groundbreaking technology to care for the 1.5 million Australians living with heart and lung disease.

We are currently well on the way to adding another cardiac care breakthrough to our long list of Australian and world-firsts: St Vincent's, in partnership with BiVACOR, Monash Health and other institutions, is on the cusp of ground-breaking trials for a fully artificial heart which could offer a viable and life-saving option for heart failure patients.

The scanner and its computer-aided design software allows for more precision and accuracy in the development and fitting of prosthetic limbs, which means designs can be better tailored to the unique needs of patients.

The technology uses infrared light to take thousands of measurements of a patient's limb per second, overlapping and stitching them together based on geometric shape. The scan is then modified by St Vincent's clinicians, creating a carving of the patient's limb via an automated machine or 3D printer.

.....
St Vincent's Sydney expects to carry out Australia's first artificial heart transplant before the end of 2024.

Environment, social and governance

As a purpose-driven social enterprise, St Vincent's is not only compelled to focus its efforts to benefit Australians-in-need, but to do so while also reducing our impact on the planet.

A commitment to delivering on Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) outcomes is central to our ability to create and sustain our health and aged care services in a rapidly changing world while managing associated risks and opportunities.

As part of the refreshed St Vincent's strategy, ESG has been embedded as a standard part of the way we work, including:

- A dedicated Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) champion at Board level (St Vincent's Director, Jill Watts);
- Regular ESG reporting at St Vincent's Board meetings;
- ESG as an agenda item at all Audit and Risk Board Committee meetings;
- ESG as a priority within the St Vincent's strategy for 2030, with set outcomes and targets;
- Bi-monthly ESG Working Group meetings (a cross-functional group of senior leaders from all parts of the organisation); and
- Established governance structures within business units (public and private hospitals, and aged care) for regularly-meeting ESG groups, committees, or communities of practice.

Environment

Our environmental sustainability reporting has transitioned to Microsoft Sustainability Manager (MSM), making St Vincent's the first not-for-profit health and aged care provider in Australia to use the platform. MSM will build our capacity, enabling team members to streamline, integrate, and accelerate ESG reporting using AI, interactive Power BI, and other tools.

All St Vincent's hospitals have established, or are working towards, individual Sustainability Action Plans, with consistent themes covering energy, waste, culture, procurement, transport, and clinical sustainability. These action plans will help us deliver our aim to become a low carbon and climate-resilient health and aged care provider.

As part of its plan, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne holds monthly Environmental Sustainability Grand Rounds, presentations which are available to all staff to attend. Grand Rounds are traditionally focused on clinical issues, but the Environmental Sustainability Grand Rounds raise awareness

about healthcare's environmental impact, provide education and support for staff on taking action, encourage idea-sharing, and foster collaborative efforts to achieve sustainable healthcare.

Fifteen Environmental Sustainability Grand Rounds have now been held, with approximately 200 staff members involved. Topics have included recycling in the operating theatre, climate risk governance, and tackling food waste in hospitals.

During the year, four St Vincent's hospitals (St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, St Vincent's Private Hospital Fitzroy, St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney, and St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside) were selected to pilot the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare's Environmental Sustainability Climate Resilient module. The module provides a framework to support organisations to reduce resource waste, eliminate low-value care, and address climate risks.

St Vincent's also generated 4.7 Gigawatt hours of renewable energy from 26 of our sites, which equates to driving between Sydney and Melbourne approximately 8,486 times. Further solar arrays are being installed across the organisation.

Across all St Vincent's hospitals we reduced Desflurane – one of the most environmentally harmful anaesthetics gases – by 16 per cent since 2023, with both Sydney and Melbourne public health networks totally removing its use.

St Vincent's introduced seven new waste diversion streams into a number of our facilities, increasing recycling by 28 per cent and reducing clinical waste by 4 per cent.

These activities were also matched by many individual efforts at the facility level. For example, between the financial years of 2023 and 2024, St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside increased its recycling by 147 per cent due to the introduction of various new recycling streams and improvements in other streams.

Inclusion, diversity and equity

Just as with our commitment to the environment, St Vincent's is taking an organisation-wide approach to inclusion, diversity and equity, ensuring all team members feel safe and respected when working across our hospitals, aged care sites and administrative offices.

As part of this commitment, we have employed a new National Manager, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity to deliver on our strategic approach to developing inclusive workplaces. The National Manager is developing an understanding of our current workforce and what supports are needed to continue in this space.

St Vincent's was proud that its Sydney public health network was recognised as Service Provider of the Year by ACONS's Pride in Health and Wellbeing Index during the year. This award recognises St Vincent's ongoing commitment towards improving sexuality and gender diversity inclusion across its health service.

Modern slavery

St Vincent's regards our organisation's anti-slavery endeavours as fundamental to our mission and legacy. We are committed to pursuing the elimination of modern slavery within health and aged care while supporting victims and helping them reclaim their dignity and thrive.

During the year, we published our fourth St Vincent's Modern Slavery Statement which provides an update on our efforts in this space.

We adopted a 'due diligence' program for our suppliers to foster direct communication, enhance visibility and transparency, and to provide them with a tailored platform to discuss their challenges and mitigate risks.

We have begun the rollout of this program with a select group of suppliers with the goal of extending it to all those companies identified by our modern slavery risk identification framework within the next two-to-three years.

We advanced our partnership with the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network (ACAN) and established the Health Sector Working Group (HSWG) of Catholic healthcare organisations to encourage better collaboration in tackling modern slavery across our supply chains.

We have similarly continued to work closely with the Australian Catholic Religious

Against Trafficking Humans (ACRATH), which has been instrumental in advocating for modern slavery legislation in Australia and aiding us in setting up essential protocols for survivor assessment.

Finally, St Vincent's is a member of the NSW Healthcare Working Group facilitated by the Office of the Anti-slavery Commissioner for NSW. The group aims to raise awareness, build training resources, and referral pathways to support survivors of modern slavery. St Vincent's is a key contributor to the group due to its expertise within this area.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

St Vincent's has long sought to play a leading role in nurturing and achieving genuine reconciliation in Australia. It's a commitment that reflects its importance to our organisation, people, and communities we serve.

We were one of the first health and aged care organisations in Australia to launch a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2010. More recently, we took a public lead in announcing our support for a 'Yes' vote in 2023's referendum to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice (The Voice) to Parliament.

Since the launch of our previous RAP four years ago, St Vincent's has almost doubled the number of team members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

And when measured against our organisational spend during the first six months of 2020, our procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses has grown by more than 50 per cent.

Our newly developed First Nations Procurement Strategy is designed to take our efforts in this area even further and contribute to a growing and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurial and business sector.

During the year, we worked on developing our third St Vincent's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, 2025-2028

Our plan will focus St Vincent's on enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, clients, and residents; recruiting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members and improving the employment journey for those who have already joined us; and continuing to engage in cross-organisational education for all team members, enabling culturally safe environments in our workplaces for healing and growth.

And we've made sure that the ambitions of our plan are firmly embedded within our recently refreshed organisational strategy.

Across our organisation, in a range of different ways, our commitment to reconciliation and addressing inequality and past injustice is taking shape.

In November 2023, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney employed its first Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer attached to the facility's Gambling Treatment Program.

Tim Gray, a Gumbayngirr/Wiradjuri/Bidjigal man, provides support and advice to problem gamblers across south-eastern Sydney and works closely with similarly located Aboriginal health and community organisations and services.

In March 2024, thanks to a generous grant from the William Buckland Foundation, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne established a First Nations Mental Health Wellbeing Pilot Program in its Emergency Department (ED).

Under the program - which was designed in collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service - a First Nations Mental Health Nurse is available to support the more than 100 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who present at the hospital's ED each year.

Starting in May 2024, team members from St Vincent's private hospitals at Brisbane and Northside are now regularly taking part in cultural walking tours - run by BlackCard Cultural Tours - to better understand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history of their city.

And finally, in partnership with the Menzies School of Health Research, St Vincent's completed a study to better understand and improve the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in our private hospitals.

The project incorporated an iterative 'yarning' approach - a conversational process synonymous with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that involves the telling of stories as a way of passing on cultural knowledge. In this way, the involvement and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the survey and its data analysis was strengthened, making the results more comprehensive.

The study's results revealed several areas where St Vincent's could improve the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander private patients and the organisation has committed itself to pursuing the necessary changes and improvements.

Since the launch of our previous RAP four years ago, St Vincent's has almost doubled the number of team members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.



Corporate governance

St Vincent's Board

The St Vincent's Board closely monitors the organisation's performance against its strategic plan. The Board ensures St Vincent's strengthens and grows its mission to express God's love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus.




Mr Paul McClintock AO

- › First appointed in January 2013
- › Appointed Chair in October 2019
- Chair – St Vincent's Health Australia Group of Companies
- Chair – Cyber Security Committee (ad hoc)
- Member – Research and Education Committee
- Member – Aged Care Committee



Mr Paul O'Sullivan

- › First appointed in August 2019
- › Appointed Deputy Chair in July 2024
- Chair – Finance and Investment Committee
- Member – Mission, Ethics and Advocacy Committee
- Member – Cyber Security Committee (ad hoc)



Ms Anne McDonald

- › First appointed in June 2017
- Chair – Audit and Risk Committee
- Member – Finance and Investment Committee
- Member – Cyber Security Committee (ad hoc)



Mr Damien O'Brien

- › First appointed in November 2019
- Chair – Mission, Ethics and Advocacy Committee
- Member – Audit and Risk Committee
- Member – Research and Education Committee



Ms Sheila McGregor

- › First appointed in December 2019
- Member – People and Culture Committee
- Member – Clinical Governance and Experience Committee
- Member – Aged Care Committee
- Member – Cyber Security Committee (ad hoc)



Prof Michael Coote

- › First appointed in August 2016
- Chair – Research and Education Committee
- Member – Clinical Governance and Experience Committee



Ms Sandra McPhee AM

- › First appointed in October 2017
- Chair – People and Culture Committee
- Member – Mission, Ethics and Advocacy Committee



Ms Anne Cross AM

- › First appointed in January 2019
- Chair – Aged Care Committee
- Member – Audit and Risk Committee
- Member – Clinical Governance and Experience Committee



Ms Jill Watts

- › First appointed in August 2019
- Member – Finance and Investment Committee
- Member – People and Culture Committee
- Member – Aged Care Committee



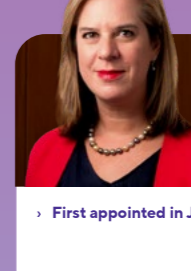
Prof Vlado Perkovic

- › First appointed in October 2021
- Chair – Clinical Governance and Experience Committee
- Member – Research and Education Committee



Ms Kathleen Bailey-Lord

- › First appointed in April 2023
- Member – Finance and Investment Committee
- Member – People and Culture Committee
- Member – Cyber Security Committee (ad hoc)



Ms Ariane Barker

- › First appointed in June 2024

St Vincent's Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team provides management and leadership of St Vincent's hospitals, aged care, and virtual and home divisions. The Executive shape and implement the Board-approved strategy and execute the day-to-day operations of the organisation with the highest possible levels of safety, effectiveness, efficiency, and concordance with the organisation's mission.



Mr Chris Blake
Chief Executive Officer



Mr David Brajkovic
CEO, Virtual and Home
(until October 2024)



Ms Michelle Fitzgerald
Chief Digital Officer



A/Prof Michael Franco
National Chief Medical Officer/
Virtual and Home from October
2024



Ms Kaylene Gaffney
Chief Financial Officer



Adj Prof Pat Garcia
General Manager, Public Affairs
and General Counsel



Mr Lincoln Hopper
CEO, St Vincent's Care



**Dr Chris
Jacobs-Vandeger**
Mission Leader



Dr Robert Marshall
Chief Strategy Officer



Ms Anna McFadgen
CEO, St Vincent's Health
Network Sydney
NSW State Lead



**Adj Prof Patricia
O'Rourke**
CEO, St Vincent's Private
Hospitals



Ms Rebecca Roberts
Chief People and Culture
Officer



Adj Prof Nicole Tweddle
CEO, St Vincent's Hospital
Melbourne
Victoria State Lead



Our financials

Health and aged care are facing unprecedented funding pressures across public, private and aged care services. Across the sector we have witnessed the closure of over 70 private hospitals and there is constant pressure on public health care driven by a range of factors.

Current system pressures and changes include:

- volatility and lack of predictability of funding models, which remains an ongoing discussion with our State Government funders
- the need for new fair deals with private health insurers, which we are negotiating strongly across the cycle, and
- the recent legislative changes to residential aged care funding starting from 1 July 2025 provides opportunities for more sustainable investments.

The St Vincent's Health Australia Statutory Group's operating result was an operating surplus of \$33.7m (2023: \$48.8m deficit). Revenue increased by 8.2 per cent and expenses increased by 5.4 per cent.

Revenue of \$3,361.6m (2023: \$3,108.1m) was generated by:

- Patient and resident fees increased by 8.7 per cent to \$1,098.7m. Both increased occupancy and Commonwealth Government funding for aged care delivered higher revenue. St Vincent's private hospitals increased their patient days by 3.2 per cent.
- Government grants and COVID-19 and general subsidies increased by 7.2 per cent to \$1,769.0m due to activity increases.
- Non-cash fair value gains on investment properties was \$22.6m (2023: \$13.5m).

Expense of \$3,327.9m (2023: \$3,156.9m) was impacted by:

- Employment increase of 5.2 per cent to \$2,025.5m reflecting an increase in activity requiring additional resources in a health sector characterised by continuing people shortages.
- Goods and services increase of 5.2 per cent to \$970.3m. Pricing increases are running higher than inflation.

Investment in new and upgraded infrastructure has continued with more than \$250 million cash paid for property, equipment, and systems in the current year.

State government budgets continue to be affected by increased public health demands. St Vincent's public hospitals continue to work with state governments and other key stakeholders to ensure their funding adequately reflects the true value they provide the community, both now and in the future.

Profit or loss

	Statutory Group		Management Group	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue	3,262,174	3,011,788	3,377,022	3,136,044
Other income	99,431	96,329	42,055	81,923
Total revenue and other income	3,361,605	3,108,117	3,419,077	3,217,967
Employment expenses	2,025,464	1,926,166	2,027,351	1,980,641
Goods and services	970,278	922,196	1,018,757	808,804
Finance costs	93,218	74,586	36,164	72,107
Depreciation and amortisation	176,607	181,166	183,953	186,576
Other expenses from ordinary activities	62,312	52,763	119,219	217,928
Total expenses	3,327,879	3,156,877	3,385,444	3,266,056
Share of investments accounted for using the equity method	-	-	1,255	2,324
Operating surplus/(deficit)	33,726	(48,760)	34,888	(45,765)
Capital funding received	20,392	22,149	21,400	23,263
Total surplus/ (deficit)	54,118	(26,611)	56,288	(22,502)
Other comprehensive loss	(1,311)	(2,507)	(4,447)	348
Total comprehensive income/(loss)	52,807	(29,118)	51,841	(22,154)

Balance sheet

	Statutory Group		Management Group	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Cash and cash equivalents*	373,853	384,861	369,917	384,861
Trade and other receivables	227,164	213,660	236,586	222,006
Inventories	37,915	39,684	42,080	39,684
Investments*	344,872	371,246	269,754	371,246
Current assets	983,804	1,009,451	918,337	1,017,797
Property, plant and equipment	1,830,470	1,692,250	1,845,142	1,692,250
Investment properties	364,770	323,774	361,820	323,774
Intangible assets	175,369	225,895	177,313	225,895
Investments*	183,851	157,708	112,476	157,708
Right-of-use assets	161,374	148,311	161,443	148,311
Other	86,971	66,383	93,440	58,037
Non-current assets	2,802,805	2,614,321	2,751,634	2,605,975
Total assets	3,786,609	3,623,772	3,669,971	3,623,772
Trade and other payables	436,897	487,819	418,920	487,819
Accommodation bonds and payables	859,866	799,626	859,866	799,626
Lease liabilities	13,113	5,868	12,057	5,868
Member loan	6,154	6,209	6,154	6,209
Borrowings	73,661	65,357	554	65,357
Provisions	461,299	461,080	470,581	461,080
Current liabilities	1,850,990	1,825,959	1,768,132	1,825,959
Payables	50,899	16,190	42,704	16,190
Lease liabilities	167,248	151,212	168,250	151,212
Member loan	87,451	86,754	87,451	86,753
Borrowings	304,634	299,834	298,500	299,835
Provisions	59,829	55,155	61,843	55,155
Non-current liabilities	670,061	609,145	658,748	609,145
Total liabilities	2,521,051	2,435,104	2,426,880	2,435,104
Net assets	1,265,558	1,188,668	1,243,091	1,188,668

*Combined cash and investments balances includes funds tied to specific purposes or held in trust and can only be spent accordingly

Statement of operations

	Inpatient Admissions	Residents	Outpatient appointments (eg: specialist clinic appts)	Registered online service users	Episodes of in-home care	ED Presentations	Births	Surgeries	Beds	Headcount
The Mater	36,053	-	-	-	-	-	2,087	22,002	223	1,093
St Vincent's Private Toowoomba	19,502	-	-	-	-	17,932	858	14,490	186	847
St Vincent's Private Brisbane	4,038	-	-	-	27,068	-	-	979	149	573
St Vincent's Private Northside	38,200	-	-	-	-	14,336	-	24,541	231	1,310
St Vincent's Private Fitzroy	27,894	-	-	-	-	-	1,952	16,386	227	1,442
St Vincent's Private East Melb	20,278	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,084	156	455
St Vincent's Private Kew	7,667	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,612	41	98
St Vincent's Private Community Griffith	2,485	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,006	20	88
St Vincent's Private Werribee	8,167	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,986	57	159
St Vincent's Private Sydney	33,258	-	-	-	-	-	-	22,646	260	1,425
St Vincent's Private Hospitals Total	197,542	-	-	-	27,068	32,268	4,897	131,732	1,550	7,490
St Vincent's Health Network Sydney	45,611	-	815,192	-	1,361	54,953	-	15,477	513	3,826
St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne	82,795	216	475,700	-	-	51,100	-	25,900	880	7,500
St Vincent's Public Hospitals Total	128,406	216	1,290,892	-	1,361	106,053	-	41,377	1,393	11,326
St Vincent's Care Services Qld	-	1,390	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,453	2,301
St Vincent's Care Services NSW	-	628	-	-	-	-	-	-	652	816
St Vincent's Care Services Vic	-	410	-	-	-	-	-	-	432	670
St Vincent's Care Services Total	-	2,428	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,537	3,787
Virtual and Home	4,231	489	-	52,410	50,886	-	-	-	229	363
SVHA Group Offices	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	512
TOTAL	330,179	3,133	1,290,892	52,410	79,315	138,321	4,897	173,109	5,709	23,478

Our locations



Our National Services

- Hospital in the Home (HITH)
- Residential In-reach Program
- GEM@Home
- Cancer@Home
- Pallcare@Home
- Rehab@Home
- Transition Care Program
- Domiciliary Allied Health
- Community Nursing and Post Acute Care
- Home Care Packages
- Telehealth and telemedicine
- THIS WAY UP
- HealthMonitor
- Commonwealth Home Support Program



New South Wales

Our public health hospitals and services

- St Vincent's Hospital Sydney
- Sacred Heart Health Service
- St Vincent's Correctional Health Parklea

Our private hospitals

- Mater Hospital, North Sydney
- St Vincent's Private Hospital, Sydney
- St Vincent's Private Community Hospital, Griffith
- St Vincent's Clinic

Our care services

- St Vincent's Care Haberfield
- St Vincent's Care Heathcote
- St Vincent's Care Auburn
- St Vincent's Care Bronte
- St Vincent's Care Edgecliff
- St Vincent's Care Yennora

Research

- Garvan Institute of Medical Research
- Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute
- St Vincent's Centre for Applied Medical Research
- Nursing Research Institute

Foundations

- St Vincent's Curran Foundation
- Friends of the Mater



Victoria

Our public health hospitals and services

- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne
- St Vincent's on the Park
- Caritas Christi
- St George's Health Service
- Berengarra
- Auburn House
- Prague House

Our private hospitals

- St Vincent's Private Hospital, East Melbourne
- St Vincent's Private Hospital, Fitzroy
- St Vincent's Private Hospital, Kew
- St Vincent's Private Hospital, Werribee

Our care services

- St Vincent's Care Hawthorn
- St Vincent's Care Kew
- St Vincent's Care Eltham
- St Vincent's Care Werribee

Research

- The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery
- St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research

Foundations

- St Vincent's Foundation (Victoria)



Queensland

Our private hospitals

- St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside
- St Vincent's Private Hospital, Brisbane
- St Vincent's Private Hospital, Toowoomba

Foundations

- St Vincent's Foundation Queensland

Our care services

- St Vincent's Care Bardon
- St Vincent's Care Boondall
- St Vincent's Care Carina
- St Vincent's Care Carseldine
- St Vincent's Care Corinda
- St Vincent's Care Kangaroo Point
- St Vincent's Care Mitchelton
- St Vincent's Care Toowoomba
- St Vincent's Care Southport
- St Vincent's Care Arundel
- St Vincent's Care Maroochydore
- St Vincent's Care Gympie
- St Vincent's Care Douglas (Townsville)

Better and
fairer care.
Always.



ST VINCENT'S
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UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

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