

vitality

Spring 2024

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Austin
HEALTH



Olivia
Newton-John
Cancer and Wellness Centre

Thank you!

Thank you for your generous support in the 2023/24 year, which included:



\$190,000

for our Paediatric
Emergency Department
(Christmas Appeal)

\$3.6m

from 18 inspiring
bequests (Gifts
in Wills)

\$120,000

to upgrade our
Eating Disorder Unit
(Tax Appeal)

\$54,746

Dry July
funds raised

\$48,365

Grease the
Musical Charity
partnership

25,674

hours donated
by volunteers

58,460

patients and
visitors assisted
by volunteers

Our Christmas Appeal is coming soon

Our Christmas Appeal this year will focus on raising funds to update our Spinal Unit and improve the patient experience for those with spinal injuries.

Austin Health is recognised for our success in improving the quality of life for people with spinal cord injury, and with your help we can do so much more!

Keep a look out for our appeal in October.



A message from Cameron Goodyear

I am thrilled to warmly welcome you to this issue of Vitality, and to introduce myself.

I am the Chief Executive Officer (Interim) here at Austin Health, following the departure of our former Chief Executive Officer, Adam Horsburgh, to take up a new role.

I have been part of Austin Health for over two decades, including as Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO for the past three years, and before then in a variety of roles, including on the wards as a nurse. This has given me a thorough and authentic understanding of our health service and its values.

As you may know, Austin Health was founded by a philanthropic gift, meaning that giving and generosity are important to us at a foundational level. Our staff give selflessly and compassionately to care for patients in need, and our community of dedicated donors give generously each year to support Austin Health.

On behalf of staff and patients, I sincerely thank you for this support. We strive to provide exceptional care every day, and it's because of donors like you that we can continue to do so.

This edition of Vitality explores important initiatives and developments we have been able to make to patient care thanks to your kindness. We update you on the progress of the new Australian Centre for Transplantation Excellence and Research (ACTER), which will bring together our transplant expertise under one roof thanks to philanthropic support.



We reflect on our recent Tax Appeal, which raised vital funds to support our Eating Disorder Unit. And we gear up for our biggest community fundraising event of the year, Olivia's Walk for Wellness on Sunday 6 October.

On behalf of our staff, patients and their loved ones, I want to thank you for your ongoing support of Austin Health and the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre. You reflect the spirit of generosity that's intrinsic to our organisation and we are forever grateful for your kindness.

With thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Goodyear". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cameron Goodyear
Chief Executive Officer (Interim)

Let's Get Physical at Olivia's Walk for Wellness

The annual Olivia's Walk for Wellness is just around the corner! Join us on **Sunday 6 October** in Melbourne or virtually to support cancer patients accessing evidence-based wellness therapies at the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre (ONJ Centre).

The ONJ Centre wellness programs, such as exercise, massage, acupuncture, music and art therapy, are available free to all patients alongside medical treatment for cancer.

These vital programs are funded by donations, to bring love and light to people with cancer, or as Dame Olivia Newton-John put it, "help people with cancer to thrive".

In the past year, more than 9,000 wellness sessions were provided at the ONJ Centre with overwhelmingly positive feedback from patients.

The theme for this year's Olivia's Walk for Wellness is Let's Get Physical – we spoke to some members of our community about what it means to them.





**Penelope Sanderson,
Head of Partnerships,
Austin Health
Foundation**

“This year we are leaning into the 80’s theme of Let’s Get Physical, which of course is a nod to Olivia’s song. Walkers are encouraged to wear their lycra and legwarmers and help us to support those with cancer to access wellness services and honour Olivia’s legacy.

This year’s walk is shaping up to be a joyful and colourful day, with an incredible entertainment line-up, a buzzing event village and thousands of walkers coming together for a day filled with love and light. We can’t wait to welcome everyone to Alexandra Gardens on Sunday 6 October.”

**Tottie Goldsmith,
Olivia’s Walk for
Wellness Goodwill
Ambassador
and Olivia’s niece**

“Olivia was such a happy person and it’s great to see everyone dress up – the Let’s Get Physical theme is just perfect. I think she would love it.

The ONJ Centre is focused on treating the whole person: mind, body and spirit. That was Olivia’s legacy. She was a trailblazer. Every single person that supports the walk is helping us keep funds going for Olivia’s legacy, to help people going through their cancer journey and support the wellness centre.”

**Adriano Donato,
ONJ Centre patient**

“The mental challenges are real during cancer treatment. It was a very frightening time. I had a young daughter at home and a wife, and I thought, God, what if they’re left behind without me?

It felt like I couldn’t live a normal life outside of treatment, or the hospital, so having the wellness component was important. To be doing some exercise a few times a week, felt like I was away from the treatment side of things where I got to jump on the treadmill or bike, do some weights, and just feel normal again.”

Scan to watch
Adriano and
Dr Ashley
Bigaran



Dr Ashley Bigaran, Operations Manager, Wellness and Supportive Care, ONJ Centre

“Research shows that exercise for people living with cancer has huge benefits both physically and emotionally. Staying active can increase the chances of survival, stop the cancer from returning, and improve the chances of becoming cancer-free.

Through wellness programs like exercise physiology, we are helping patients get fitter prior to their treatment and during their treatment, and it’s also about getting them fit for what’s next.”



Wellness therapies proven to help

There is an expanding body of clinical trial evidence highlighting the benefits of patient-centred, evidence-informed wellness and supportive care therapies, which incorporate mind, body and lifestyle interventions along with traditional cancer treatments.

Benefits of wellness therapies* for those affected by cancer include:

- reducing anxiety and depression
- reducing cancer-related pain
- reducing cancer-related fatigue.

With several Australian government policies now emphasising the enhancement of supportive care throughout the cancer journey, the ONJ Centre stands out nationally for integrating wellness therapies into cancer care for over a decade.

* Journal of Clinical Oncology, 2022, 2023, 2024

Olivia's Walk for
Wellness 

**LET'S
GET
PHYSICAL**

DO IT FOR FUN

DO IT FOR AN ICON

**DO IT FOR PEOPLE
WITH CANCER**



SUNDAY 6 OCTOBER 2024

ALEXANDRA GARDENS, MELBOURNE or VIRTUAL



REGISTER NOW

walkforwellness.com.au

Austin
HEALTH

 **Olivia
Newton-John**
Cancer and Wellness Centre

The Australian Centre for Transplantation Excellence and Research (ACTER)

Building on Austin Health's long-standing reputation for excellence and innovation in organ transplantation, last year we began establishing the Australian Centre for Transplantation Excellence and Research (ACTER).

An exciting, long-term initiative, ACTER will bring together multi-disciplinary clinical and operational experts from different transplant units, world-leading researchers, consumer perspectives, and cutting-edge technology within a single centre of excellence.

This bold project aims to foster cross-collaboration, knowledge sharing and innovation, accelerating translation of research into better treatment options, positioning Austin Health as a leader in this space.

What's happened so far

In 2023, ACTER had a busy first year with many people across the organisation working to bring the vision to life. The ACTER team created an establishment plan and working groups began to execute key priorities, including the development of a vision and strategy, creating branding and a web presence, and appointing its inaugural director, Austin Health's A/Prof John Whitlam.

\$2.5m

donated so far

We thank our generous donors for supporting ACTER-related projects over the past two years, including transplant research and kidney perfusion.

Special thanks to Beverley Briese OAM, the Diamond Creek Op Shop, and the estates of Richard Ibbotson, Phillip Gillis, Dr Muriel Baker, and everyone who supported the 2023 Tax Appeal.

For more information visit
austin.org.au/acter



Steven's way of saying 'thank you'



Five years ago Steven Broadhurst received a life-changing prostate cancer diagnosis. We asked the director and entrepreneur about his experiences at the ONJ Centre and choices to give back.

What stood out to you during your treatment?

At one point, I had 12 different departments looking after me – from post-operative issues to oncology massage and psychological support. Despite the complexity, every expert involved in my care made me feel like I was their prime focus. Among these incredible people was my Cancer Specialist Nurse, Carla D'Amico.

From my point of view, my specialist nurse was as important as my surgeon. Post-operative care is huge – it goes for years and years and changes. Carla was one of the first professionals I met, she's been with me throughout and I can ask her anything. This dedicated support right from the start has been essential to my treatment and beyond.

“A prostate cancer specialist nurse is a bridge between the patient, treating teams and community supports, fostering personalised and responsive care.”

Carla D'Amico, Cancer Specialist Nurse, ONJ Centre

The care at Austin Health is simply amazing, and the Wellness Centre is a huge benefit to everyone who walks through its doors. Family, friends, everyone can gather there, in a safe, friendly, open environment.

You have supported the ONJ Centre in multiple ways, including a gift in your Will. How did this decision come about?

Leaving a gift in my Will is my way of saying 'thank you'.

I've learned firsthand how important it is to have the right support. So my gift will help others facing cancer challenges, with funding for prostate specialist nursing at Austin Health.

I'm very grateful for the non-judgmental, compassionate care I received – and continue to receive. I want to somehow express my gratitude, and I think this is the best way to do it.

“Today, like every day since my cancer treatment started, I'm celebrating being alive and living a life that is still creative and full of hope.”

Steven Broadhurst, ONJ Centre patient

Community comes together to fight growing increase in eating disorders

Thanks to our generous donors, our Tax Appeal raised over \$120,000 for our Eating Disorders Unit. This will allow us to update the unit's sleeping rooms, make a light and open common room, create a private dining space, and offer more group therapies, such as art and music therapy.

The campaign featured Mikayla, who received treatment for her eating disorder at the Austin. Mikayla now works as a Lived Experience Worker in the unit, offering real hope to our patients that with the right environment, support and services, recovery is possible.



“Our patients are in the best, safest place with the most wonderful staff. I wish I had the same sort of wrap-around services to help me back then; I would have gotten better so much faster.”

Mikayla, Lived Experience Worker

Swimming in honour of Jackson Car

In 2023, Diamond Valley Aquatic Club (DVE) raised over \$5,000 for Ward 6 South ONJ Centre through the DVE Jackson Car Encouragement Meet. This event was inspired by Jackson, a beloved DVE club member known for his dedication and support to his teammates.

Jackson passed away in 2022, leaving a lasting impact on those who knew him.

To honour his memory, the meet brought together swimmers of all levels to celebrate Jackson's passion for the sport. Swimmers who placed 1st in their age group and category in the 50m Butterfly race received a special Jackson Car medal, symbolising his invincible spirit. The event also featured a silent auction, with all proceeds going to the ONJ Centre.

This fundraising effort not only honoured Jackson's legacy but also made a meaningful contribution to the ONJ Centre's mission of providing world-class cancer care, research, and support.

The meet has become an annual event for DVE. Every dollar raised helps the Centre continue to make a difference in the lives of those affected by cancer.



A paw-some partnership bringing Pet Therapy to Austin Health

Austin Health has partnered with Lort Smith to enhance patient care through Pet Therapy. At Austin Health, there are 11 pet therapy teams consisting of a doggy friend and their human, to bring joy, comfort, and companionship to our patients.



These dedicated teams visit various areas on all campuses, Austin Hospital, the ONJ Centre, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital and Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre, offering much-needed respite and positive distraction.

This year, two new teams began visiting the Acute Psychiatric Unit. Clinical Nurse Consultant Nicola Cowling says:




“The pet therapy program is absolutely the most well-received group we have ever had on the Acute Psychiatric Unit. I am consistently impressed by the extraordinarily positive impact on our patients and feel these teams have been tremendously well matched. It is utterly beautiful to witness!”





Visit Austin Gifts today

Proceeds from all purchases are donated to Austin Health – so your gift will keep on giving.





-  Level 3, Harold Stokes Building, Austin Hospital
-  www.austin.org.au/giftshop
-  @austingifts

**10% OFF
EVERYTHING
ONLINE***

Use code: SPRING2024

* This offer is available until end of October. Offer of 10% off applies to all items online with discount applied at checkout.

Learn more about what's happening at Austin Health. Follow us on social media and listen to our Talking Transplant podcast.

-  @austinhealth_ and @onjcancercentre
-  Austin Health and Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre
-  Austin Health
-  Did know we are on TikTok? @austin.health