

## A Letter from the Chair

**What a second half of this year it's been! Our donors and supporters have continued to stand strong with Westmead Hospital Foundation.**

Over the past six months, together we have delivered many new programs for healthcare staff and patients, purchased new medical equipment, and invested in medical research for epilepsy at Westmead Hospital.

Thank you, Jessica Alves for sharing your story about living with epilepsy and the added challenges faced during pregnancy. Thank you to the donors who supported Jessica's appeal. With your donated funds, the Foundation has purchased new laboratory equipment for the development of a new world-first test for people living with epilepsy.

The community continues to support our tiniest patients in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Thank you, Jess and Roy of the [Bahsa Mezza and Bar and The Dancing Bear](#), and Joe and Cathy Bracks and staff of Acron Building Services for sharing your stories and fundraising efforts with the Foundation.

Finally, our Foundation is guided by the collective strength of our Board of Directors, and I can't speak highly enough of them. Recently our Board Members were bestowed international recognition for their life's work in healthcare, namely:

*Professor Jeremy Chapman AC was awarded the 2022 Medawar Prize – globally recognised as the most prestigious award for Excellence in Transplantation Science, and Board Director Carol Farmer received a Queen's Birthday Honour - awarded a Public Service Medal for her Outstanding Public Service to NSW Health.*

Congratulations Jeremy and Carol on your outstanding achievements!

Thank you, all again for your great support and donations to our Foundation as we continue to serve Westmead Hospital. As we approach the holiday season, I wish you all a joyous time with friends and family as we ready for 2023.

Yours sincerely,

James Nguyen  
Board Chair, Westmead Hospital Foundation

# Supporting research into a new epilepsy test

Earlier this year, Westmead Hospital Foundation asked for your help to support people like Jessica Alves, who lives with epilepsy and faces unique challenges during pregnancy.

Today, thanks to your support and donations, Westmead Hospital Foundation has proudly purchased new medical equipment for the Clinical Pharmacy at Westmead Hospital, to begin research into a new world-first epilepsy test.

Epilepsy is a common brain disorder that causes recurring and unprovoked seizures.

Pregnant women with epilepsy need their anti-seizure medication regularly checked and adjusted to prevent seizures.

"Until now, frequent blood tests were the only effective way to monitor the level of anti-seizure medication in pregnant women," according to Professor Johannes Alffenaar, Chair of Clinical Pharmacy at Westmead Hospital. "These blood tests are very expensive and are held for batch testing, meaning it takes between two to three weeks before the results are available."

Professor Alffenaar is leading the Clinical Pharmacy team on the world-first project using a mobile nanophotometer; specialist laboratory equipment with a built in computer that can test saliva to measure the level of anti-seizure medication in pregnant women.

To learn more about epilepsy in pregnancy and Jessica's story, please [click here](#).



Jessica and David celebrating their daughter Alice's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

"Your donation ensures that we can now develop a new, simple, convenient, and fast test for epilepsy that we envisage will be rolled-out across pharmacies in Australia and the world," said Professor Alffenaar.

***"Thank you to all the people who have taken a leap of faith and supported the Foundation's appeal to help improve the lives of people living with epilepsy, and especially pregnant women with epilepsy."***

# Christmas comes early

We are delighted to have onboard again this year the Australian award-winning furniture company, **KING Living** sponsoring Westmead Hospital's Christmas trees.

A 3.4 metre traditionally decorated Christmas tree has been installed in the entrance of Westmead Hospital, and a 6 metre LED Spiral Christmas tree is on show in the foyer of the multistorey Central Acute Services Building.

The Christmas trees were installed in early November and are bringing much joy, Christmas cheer and big smiles to our healthcare staff, visitors and patients! Thank you KING Living!



Foundation Board Director Jeremy Chapman AC with Renata Bayer-Volf of the King Living Foundation viewing the new Christmas tree.

## A Paws-itive Experience

**Thanks to your continued support, Westmead Hospital Foundation introduced a new four-legged therapy service for patients and healthcare staff at Westmead Hospital.**

Over 60% of Australian households own a pet, and of those, 61% own dogs! So, it is no surprise that the new **Nepean Therapy Dogs** program at Westmead Hospital has received positive feedback since its launch in April.

Nadine Wheeler, Nurse Manager of the Medical Oncology and Radiation Ward at Westmead Hospital said, "It's wonderful to see the faces of patients, visitors and staff light up with excitement in seeing the dogs."

"Then there are the special quiet moments with patients who are vision impaired or unable to speak or communicate well, and their family's asks to have a therapy dog put on their bed to touch and feel. Sometimes, you will see a patient moving just a couple of fingers on a therapy dog, trying to pat them, which makes it all worthwhile.

"The most challenging moments are the most rewarding, and it's when the handlers and their therapy dogs visit patients receiving palliative (end-of-life) care. Nepean Therapy Dogs are trained for these moments.



Moana with the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Dame Zahli aka Zsa Zsa

"Families holding vigils for their loved ones, will sometimes ask to have the therapy dogs visit them. You can see and feel the mood in the room change with the dogs there, providing immense comfort and affection," said Nadine.

This year, the therapy dogs have rotated through Westmead Hospital's wards, specifically medical oncology and radiation, respiratory medicine, geriatrics and rehabilitation, neurology, cardiology, physiotherapy, adolescent medicine and adolescent mental health. The Nepean Therapy Dogs visit Westmead Hospital every fortnight and look forward to continuing their visits next year.

**To learn more about this program, please [click here](#).**





Baby Alexander in NICU.



Baby Alexander leaving NICU for home.

# Raising Funds For Our Tiniest Patients

**Baby Alexander was welcomed into the world three months early at 27-weeks gestation on the 21<sup>st</sup> July. His parents, Jess and Roy were told that baby Alexander had a 50/50 chance of making it through the first 48 hours.**

After 74 days in Westmead Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Jess and Roy took their baby son home to finally be together as a family.

Jess said, "We were incredibly scared for our baby, seeing him so tiny, helpless, and fighting for life".

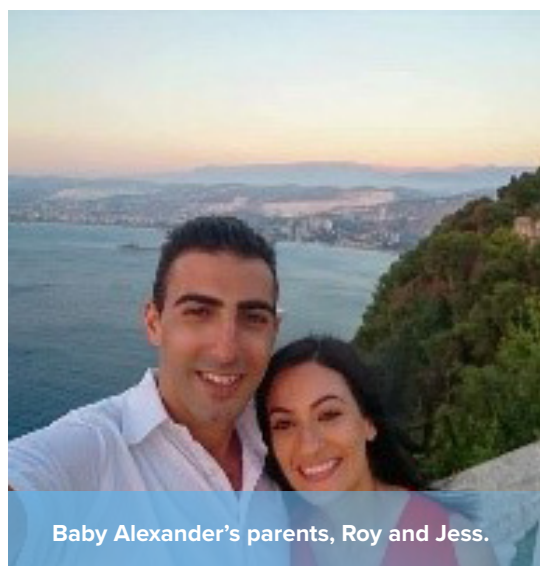
"The doctors and nurses were so caring and compassionate and took care of me as much as they took care of our baby," said Jess. "We are forever grateful to the doctors and nurses for saving our baby's life."

Baby Alexander's home-coming coincided with the NRL Grand Final

weekend. Jess and Roy wanted to "thank and give back to the amazing nurses and doctors," and organised a fundraiser on the NRL Grand Final weekend at their family businesses, [Bahsa Mezza](#) and [Bar and The Dancing Bear](#) at Wentworth Point.

So far Jess and Roy have raised \$3,000! These funds are going towards the purchase of a new neonatal resuscitation bed, which is used at birth to keep babies like Alexander alive.

**If you would like to support families like Jess and Roy and learn more about Westmead Hospital's NICU, please [click here](#).**



Baby Alexander's parents, Roy and Jess.

“The doctors and nurses were so caring and compassionate and took care of me just as much as they took care of our baby.”

# Making Memories to Treasure

The Hawks Nest Retreat is another special program that provides people with advanced cancer who are receiving palliative care, an opportunity to take a break away from their regular medical routines and treatments. These people often spend quality time with their families, making memories, and in some cases, saying their goodbyes.

Working with [Hawks Nest First National Real Estate](#) and supported by grants and donations from our community and property owners, the Foundation is fortunate to offer cancer patients from Westmead Hospital time away with their loved ones.

Westmead Hospital patient, Janet and her husband Frank, recently spent a week away and said “we had the most wonderful retreat at Hawks Nest”.

Janet said the location was “a very Zen place” and “it was difficult to say goodbye to Hawks Nest.”

“It was so calming and cosy with everything we needed, and there was lots of space to move around and the proximity to all the amenities was perfect,” said Janet.

It was thanks to Dr Clare Zachulski, Staff Specialist from Supportive and Palliative Medicine at Westmead Hospital, who put the Foundation in touch with Janet to offer her time away with her family.

**If you would like to support people like Janet and Frank and this special program, please [click here](#).**

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Beautiful Jimmy's Beach, Hawks Nest.



# New eye equipment helping patients

**Westmead Hospital's Eye Clinic / Ophthalmology Service is one of the busiest clinics in Greater Western Sydney.**

Earlier this year Westmead Hospital's Eye Clinic received two new Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) machines thanks to The Lionel & Yvonne Spencer Trust and The Noel Ernest Maddison Charitable Trust. Westmead Hospital Foundation successfully applied for the grant, securing \$96,977 for the upgrade of the OCT machines.

OCT is a non-invasive, imaging technology that produces highly detailed 3D images of the retina. OCT is safe and does not cause any discomfort, along with detecting eye problems like glaucoma and macular degeneration.

Michael Cosstick, Head Orthoptist with the Department of Ophthalmology at Westmead Hospital said, "Having two functioning OCT machines means that we no longer have patients waiting in long lines to have their scans, and it's quite common now to take a patient straight in for their scan".

One of the OCT machines has OCTA (angiography) which is another non-invasive way of imaging blood vessels and blood flow in the retina. Michael said that, "Previously, the only way to do this was to give an injection of dye into the arm of the patient and take a photo of where it went. This was time-consuming and carried a small risk of severe allergic reaction, so we can now do the same thing much faster and more safely."

"We are one of the most innovative eye units in NSW, and thanks to these generous philanthropists, our clinicians are treating more patients in a timelier manner, with the latest cutting-edge technology," he concluded.



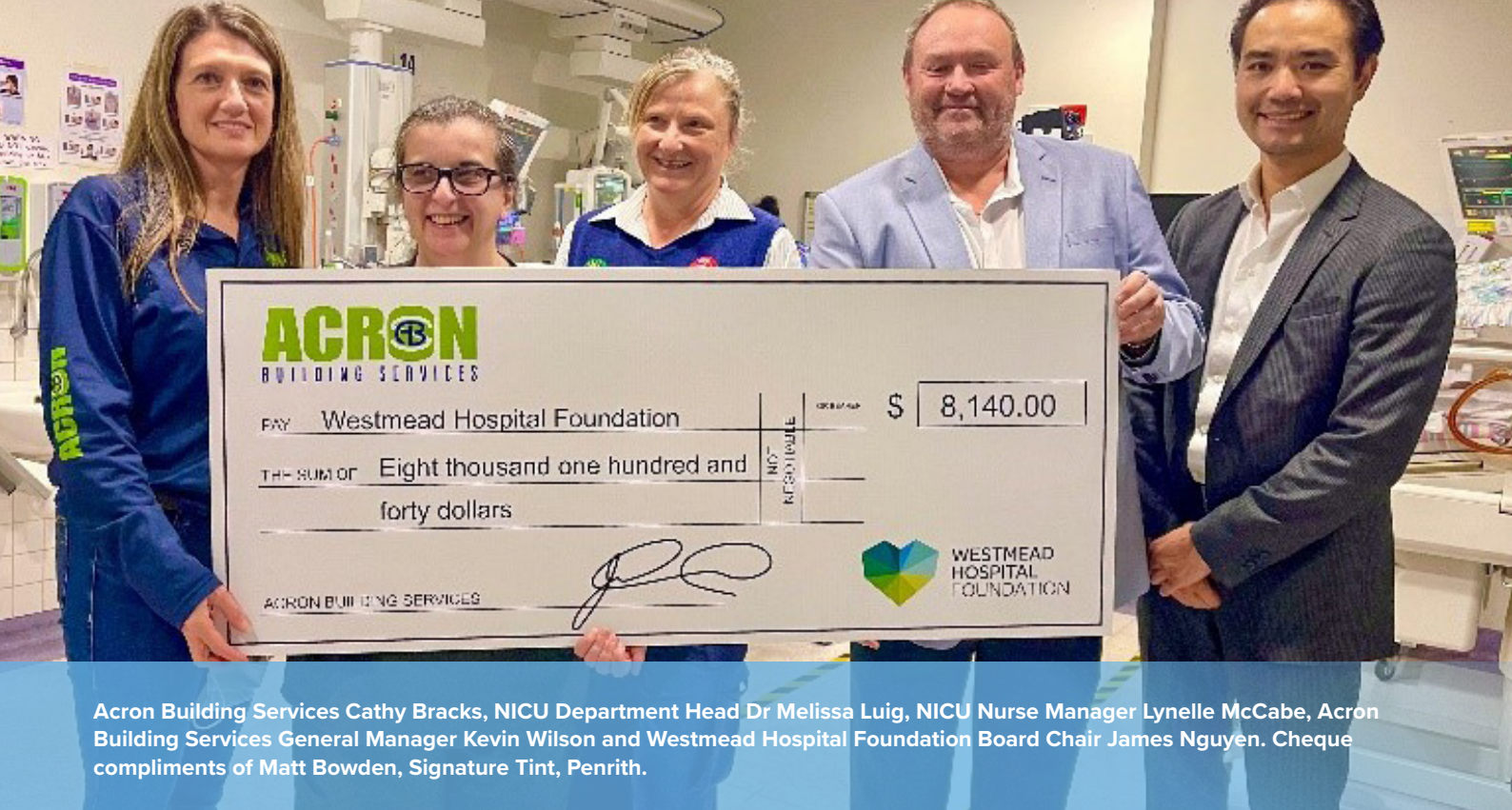
Michael Cosstick, Head Orthoptist with the Department of Ophthalmology at Westmead Hospital using the new OCT machine with a patient.



New OCT machine.

“ We are one of the most innovative eye units in NSW, and our clinicians are treating more patients with the latest cutting-edge technology. ”





Acron Building Services Cathy Bracks, NICU Department Head Dr Melissa Luig, NICU Nurse Manager Lynelle McCabe, Acron Building Services General Manager Kevin Wilson and Westmead Hospital Foundation Board Chair James Nguyen. Cheque compliments of Matt Bowden, Signature Tint, Penrith.

# NICU donation two decades in the making

Recently, Westmead Hospital Foundation had the pleasure of meeting Acron Building Services, who generously donated \$8,140 to support Westmead Hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Acron Building Services toured NICU and viewed the specialist medical equipment used to care for premature babies (babies born before their due date) and babies born with complex health problems.

Acron Building Services General Manager, Kevin Wilson said that their staff incentive scheme funded the donation as did the company’s owner, Joe Bracks and his wife Cathy.

The staff from Acron Building Services shared their personal stories about NICU. Cathy Bracks said, “We choose to donate to Westmead Hospital’s NICU because our son spent time here after his birth and he is now a healthy 19-year old. It’s our way of ‘giving back’ and saying ‘thank you’.”

Stacey Pritchett said, “While discussing the NICU Unit, we discovered that several of our staff and their families have personal connections to here too.”

Kevin Wilson added, “Seeing these babies in NICU today makes me

realise how lucky my wife and I were to have had three healthy babies, and to have brought them home straight after their birth.”

Head of NICU, Dr Melissa Luig said, “We are extremely appreciative of the generosity of the staff of Acron Building Services, for selflessly donating their bonuses to make a real difference to the quality of specialist care we provide to our tiniest and most vulnerable newborn babies.”

This donation will be used to purchase a much-needed new LED phototherapy light for treating jaundice in newborn babies and infant humidifiers to help babies breathe.

Westmead Hospital’s NICU provides specialist neonatology care to 1,500 babies annually and is the largest Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in NSW.

**Every donation, no matter how small, helps. If you would like to give, please [click here](#).**



LED phototherapy light used to treat jaundice in babies.



Infant humidifier to help babies breathe.



## R U OK? Day Initiative

In the lead up to this year's R U OK? Day, Westmead Hospital Foundation proudly supported Western Sydney Health's wellbeing hampers for healthcare staff.

R U OK? Day aims to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and start a conversation with those in their world who may be struggling with life.

The wellbeing hampers were full of goodies including R U OK? Day information, chocolates and República Organic coffee pods.

Westmead Hospital Foundation is very grateful to República Organic for their continued support of Western Sydney healthcare staff.

We are appreciative of República Organic supplying their divine assortment of Organic Certified and 100% biodegradable coffee pods, fairtrade sourced from the coffee producing continents and countries of Guatemala, Columbia, Ethiopia and Timor.



Healthcare staff with their wellbeing hamper including República Organic's premium organic coffee pods.



Physiotherapists enjoying time with Gary the Greyhound.

## World Physiotherapy Day

Early September, Westmead Hospital's Physiotherapy team and patients enjoyed therapy of the doggie-kind to mark R U OK? Day.

"We can't thank the Nepean Therapy Dogs and Westmead Hospital Foundation enough for spending a beautiful morning with us outdoors enjoying lots of smiles, laughs and pats," said Kirra Hennessy, Allied Health staff member. "I don't know who had a better time - us or the dogs!" said Kirra.



Westmead Hospital's Allied Health Team enjoying Nepean Therapy Dogs visit.





(L-R) Sydney Zoo's Head of Marketing Chris Rivett, Managing Director Jake Burgess and Foundation Board Chair James Nguyen.

## Sydney Zoo

*Thank you to the new Sydney Zoo for your support this year of healthcare staff at Westmead Hospital.*

During the COVID pandemic, Sydney Zoo were extremely generous in supporting the wellbeing of healthcare staff at Westmead Hospital, gifting staff a complimentary opportunity to get up close and personal with their amazing animals.

Sydney Zoo opened on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Home to thousands of animals, five iconic precincts, and Australia's largest Reptile and Nocturnal house, Sydney Zoo has fast become one of Sydney's most popular attractions. Plus, with no hills or steps and wide pathways, the zoo is an accessible facility for everyone to enjoy.

Sydney Zoo offers an immersive guest experience that connects people with wildlife from around the world, while promoting conservation and Aboriginal culture through it's Bungarribee Dreaming experience.

Sydney Zoo is located off the Great Western Highway in Bungarribee. It's the easiest zoo to get to, with excellent access to the M4 and M7, and only 40 minutes from the CBD.



# Thank you!



*Thank you Nati Roses for supporting last month's Memorial Service at Westmead Hospital with a beautiful selection of your finest roses.*

*Nati Roses is a family run business, who for nearly 20 years has supported the work of Westmead Hospital Foundation.*



*Thank you Grill'd Westfield Parramatta for your support this year of Westmead Hospital Foundation*



As a way to give back and help strengthen and support communities, the Australian-owned multinational restaurant chain specialising in healthy burgers, Grill'd started their Local Matters

initiative. Earlier this year Grill'd Westfield Parramatta supported Westmead Hospital Foundation through their community donation program, Local Matters.

Each month Grill'd promotes three community groups for customers to support. With every burger ordered, a Local Matters token is handed over to guests to drop into a jar of their choice, and at the end of the month a total of \$500 is split between the groups.



**WESTMEAD  
HOSPITAL  
FOUNDATION**

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