

our stories



the women's
the royal women's hospital

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Archie and Lawson at birth

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Our Stories



The Women's newborn intensive care unit is the largest in Australia and this year has won two industry

awards. We're proud of this unit, not because of its size or the awards it wins, but because of the high level of care it provides to early born babies and families. The work we do in the newborn intensive care unit is a perfect example of the Women's commitment to clinical excellence, consistency of care, consumer participation, partnership engagement, industry leadership and innovative thinking.

On behalf of the staff of the Royal Women's Hospital, I thank you for your support and wish you and your family the very best for 2011.

We welcome your contributions so please write to us at:

Our Stories

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Parkville VIC 3052

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Dale Fisher, Chief Executive

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Some of the Newborn Intensive and Special Care team with their Public Healthcare Award trophy

Industry Awards for our Newborn Intensive Care

Each year, our dedicated staff at the Women's care for 1500 premature and sick babies in our Newborn and Intensive Special Care (NISC) unit.

The construction of a new Women's hospital gave us an opportunity to incorporate the latest designs in sustainability and neonatal care. More importantly, we were also able to use feedback from our families and staff, gathered through an extensive consultation process, to re-design the physical layout of unit and the way we care for babies in NISC.

Today's neonatal rooms are designed as 'pods' that offer privacy and extra space around cots. The design is based on the concept of 'baby's first bedroom' and families are encouraged to individualise the area around their baby. The Women's also developed an improved Model of Care (MoC) to encourage families to be more involved

with the care of their babies and to improve the way our clinical staff share their skills and expertise with each other and with families.

Since its introduction the new MoC has received consistently positive feedback from families and staff who agree that our NISC babies really benefit from the new approach.

Now the MoC has also received industry recognition. In October, the Women's *Partners in Care - Neonatal Services Model of Care (MOC)* was Highly Commended in the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards. Just one month later it was Highly Commended in the Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety Category of the 2010 Australian Council of Healthcare Standards.

Women's Doctor Wins Rhodes Scholarship

A young doctor at the Royal Women's Hospital is Victoria's newest Rhodes Scholar.

Neonatal registrar Dr Evelyn Chan, 25, has been awarded a Rhodes Scholarship for further study at Oxford University in 2011. Evelyn will use the prestigious scholarship to advance her studies in global health.

"I hope the opportunities offered by the scholarship, and the skills I obtain through further study, will help me to improve the lives of children and their families in the future," she said.

Evelyn joined the Women's in February 2010. "I have enjoyed really good support at the Women's, with excellent communication and team work

between the obstetric and paediatric teams; and the hospital facility itself is fantastic and state of the art."

Rhodes Scholarships are awarded annually to young people aged 18 to 25 who display high academic ability, community involvement, leadership and sporting ability.

Miracle Tom

When Tom Roach was born 11 weeks early, he weighed less than one kilogram and his chances of survival were slim. Despite spending the first 290 days of his life in intensive care at the Women's, tiny Tom beat the odds.

In fact, since his premature arrival in June 2008 Tom, now aged two, has amazed everyone with his energy and zest for life. In mid 2010, he enjoyed a family holiday during which he saw Paris from the top of the Eiffel Tower and visited London's Buckingham Palace.

His parents, Jen Williams and Andrew Roach, call him 'a statistical miracle'. Tom has battled chronic lung disease and pneumonia that nearly claimed his life at 15 months.

Tom no longer needs a feeding tube, and uses oxygen only at night. Doctors expect Tom's physical development will match his peers by the time he is aged five.

"Whenever there's a challenge he beats the odds, he's so determined," Jen said.

"Not many babies can claim their first home was the Women's, nor that they grew up being loved by so many people."

"When we are out and about we are often greeted by members of the Women's staff who say hello and ask after Tom. He is a very lucky boy," she said.

"We just want people to know how grateful we are to everyone at the Women's."



Tom Roach

Franks Twins

When Sarah Franks gave birth to twins, she recognised her baby boys would face challenges that were as individual as they were.

Born 14 weeks premature on 21 June 2010, Archie arrived first weighing in at only 780 grams. Second-born Lawson weighed in at 852 grams.

Their special care stay was completed on 1 September when Sarah and her husband Vaughan took them home.

During their stay at the Women's, Archie was physically more robust and encountered few obstacles in NISC, but his bigger brother had to overcome health challenges along the way.

"I could see Archie did quite well apart from a couple of infections, while Lawson had a bit more of a struggle.

There were differences in their weight gain and Lawson was on oxygen until a week before we brought them home.

They both did remarkably well but it's hard not to compare and think 'what if?'" Sarah said.

Today the boys are thriving, and their parents thank the Women's staff for taking such care to cater for each twin's individual needs.



Sarah with twins, Archie and Lawson

"They were brilliant because I often felt pulled between two babies," Sarah said. Archie was stronger from the start and has a forceful personality, while Lawson has a more laid back approach.

When either twin did encounter a problem, the staff kept Sarah and Vaughan informed all the time.

"The nurses were always happy to listen to me and didn't mind if I shed a few tears. The care manager was awesome in supporting us and informing us along the way."

"All the staff made us feel we were really doing something for our babies, rather than just watching. We spent pretty much all day, every day, there. They would encourage us to rest, but they never sent us away."



Ironman Aunt

When Noah was born at the Women's in November 2009 he was 13 weeks early and weighed just 1310 grams. He wasn't breathing when he was born and had to be resuscitated before being raced to intensive care.

According to Noah's aunt, Jill Stevenson, her legs literally gave out when the family was told Noah was alive. Another landmark moment in Noah's journey was when his mum Kerry, Jill's sister, first held him in her arms.



Noah's first cuddle with Mum Kerry

"The first time Kerry was able to hold Noah was such a special time for the whole family," says Jill. "The photo taken at the time still brings tears to my eyes."

During their 11 weeks in newborn intensive care, Kerry was able to provide Kangaroo Care for Noah in a special recliner chair being trialled at the Women's. Noah's family came to recognise the benefit that Kangaroo Care gives to tiny babies. With Kerry reclining in a 'Kanga Chair' and Noah cradled on her chest, they were able to bond as mother and baby, and Noah began to thrive. Kerry and her husband Mark also spent many hours sitting (and sleeping) in the Kanga Chair beside Noah's humidicrib.



Aunt Jill with Noah

According to Jill, all families with premature or very sick babies should have the opportunity to care for their babies in this way to give them the best chance at life. So she decided to raise money for the hospital to buy several more Kanga Chairs.

Next March, Jill will compete in the Ironman New Zealand event, which involves a 3.8 kilometre swim, a 180 kilometre bike ride and a 42.2 kilometre run. The working mother of three is training 25 hours a week to compete in the event.

"Through sponsorship I hope to raise enough money to buy four special Kangaroo Care chairs so more mothers have the opportunity to care for their prem babies in this way," Jill said.

● Jill's Ironman team is called
 SwimBikeRun4Premmies.
 ● To sponsor Jill, head to:
 www.thewomens.org.au/
 sbr4premmies



Noah at home with his family on his first birthday

Helping in The Long Run

Abbey Eeles, a Neonatal Occupational Therapist at the Women's, knows first-hand the importance of involving families with the care of their premature babies.

"Here at the Women's, the family is acknowledged as one of the most important and constant influences on the development outcome of their baby and we are committed to assisting families in finding ways to become involved with the care for their baby" said Abbey.

When the lack of Kangaroo Care chairs in the intensive and special care nurseries became a problem, Abbey decided to take on the North Face 100 to raise funds. Abbey will have 28 hours to complete the 100 kilometre endurance running race, which is being held in the NSW Blue Mountains.



Abbey Eeles

- We'll be following Abbey's progress during training and the race over the coming months. You can follow too at www.thewomens.org.au/thelongrun

Our Calendar

International Day of Persons with Disability

3 December 2010

On 3 December every year International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) is celebrated worldwide recognising the achievements and contributions of people with disability.

The Women's is committed to removing barriers to women with a disability enjoying high quality health care, and opening up job opportunities to people with disabilities.

International Volunteer Day

5 December 2010

The Women's has a team of 99 dedicated volunteers who provide invaluable support to the staff and patients at the Women's.

Volunteer activities range from hospital guides, clerical support and 'cuddlers,' volunteers who are trained to settle, comfort, play with and cuddle babies when the parents cannot be with them. A big thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers!



Volunteers from left to right: Pat Portlock, Irene Millar and Helen Lynn

International Day Against FGM

6 February 2011

Three million girls and women are subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) worldwide each year. The Women's has committed to helping eradicate this practice and has introduced Australia's first de-infibulation clinic, for women who have experienced FGM.

This clinic offers a variety of corrective procedures for FGM and is run by the staff from the Family and Reproductive Rights Education Program at the Women's.

From Nurse to Internationally Recognised Researcher

Dr Jennifer Dawson trained and worked as a nurse for more than 20 years before studying for a PhD in neonatal research at the Women's. "It's fairly uncommon to do a PhD when you come from a nursing background," says Jennifer. "In Australia, there's probably only 10 to 15 of us who work with newly born babies and have done a PhD."

So is she a doctor-nurse or a nurse-doctor? "Definitely a nurse-doctor!" laughs Jennifer. "And no, it's not a rivalry thing between doctors and nurses. I'm very proud of being a nurse and I never want to forget where I came from professionally."

Jennifer decided to do research when she realised, while caring for a particular patient, that there were so many mysteries to unravel to provide the best care for premature babies. When she saw an advertisement for a research nurse position at the Women's, she contacted Professor Colin Morley, the former director of neonatal research, straight away.

"Colin is just lovely," said Jennifer. "He suggested I study oxygen levels and was so encouraging. Peter Davis, the new director of neonatal research, is just the same. I'm just really lucky to be working in a place that is so supportive of research. The team is very collaborative – we all help each other and our research is better for it."

According to Jennifer, the culture of research and collaboration extends to the clinicians working in intensive

care and also to the parents of premature babies. "I'm quite humbled by the parents who give permission for their babies to be part of our studies. It's incredibly generous of them to be thinking of helping babies in the future when their own are quite ill."

Jennifer's PhD thesis investigated oxygen saturation and heart rate measurements in the first minutes after birth. Her findings are unique because of the large number of infants studied and the novel method of illustrating the findings in the form of reference charts that enable clinicians to better manage infants in the delivery room.

The charts, developed through Jennifer's research, have now been adopted internationally as a reference guide for administering oxygen to newborns after birth.

Jennifer was recently awarded a highly competitive grant of nearly \$300,000 from the federal National Health and Medical Research Council to continue her research on helping premature babies in the first minutes of life.

"We definitely know far more about how to care for babies compared to when I first started nursing. But, you know, we've still got a lot to learn. I'm really proud to be part of the Women's because I know our research is really making a difference."

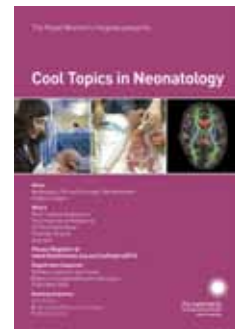


Dr Jennifer Dawson with equipment used to monitor a baby's oxygen and heart rate after birth.

Seasons Greetings

May you and your family and friends enjoy a safe and happy festive season and new year – from the staff of the Royal Women's Hospital and the Royal Women's Hospital Foundation.

Cool Topics in Neonatology



On November 17th & 18th the Women's hosted the annual Cool Topics in Neonatology conference.

The conference attracted specialists and students in the field of neonatal medicine from around Australia and New Zealand, with over 170 people attending each day.

Attendees included experts in neonatal paediatrics, nursing, psychology, brain imaging and monitoring, physiology, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy, as well as many younger researchers, and several parents of survivors of neonatal intensive care.

Topics covered ranged from breathing problems in newborn infants all the way through to long-term outcomes for survivors of neonatal intensive care.

Effects of neonatal intensive care on families were also discussed, with several parents presenting their experience.

Born @ the Women's?

Born @ the Women's gives everyone who was born or gave birth at the Women's a chance to tell their stories.

"At 28 weeks pregnant with twins I was rushed from Ballarat to Melbourne after going into early labour. Born 12 weeks early Nyree weighed 2lb 11oz and Nathan 2lb 6oz. Sadly our son passed away 4 days. Nyree spent a total of 10 weeks at the Women's in the Newborn Intensive and Special Care (NISC) Unit.

Now nearly 6 years later, Nyree is a happy and healthy little girl, with not one health problem to show for her incredibly rocky start to life.

My husband and I could never say just how wonderful the staff at the Women's were. Especially the NISC nurses who never left Nyree (and Nathan's) side and fought for their survival as much as anyone could ask for.

The Special Care Nursery staff are a credit to their profession. A huge thank you to all."

Thank you to Yvette for sharing her incredible story of joy and sadness.

Were you born at the Women's? If you were then we want to hear from you. Join our Baby Alumni and share your experience at the Women's.

To share your story visit
<http://www.thewomens.org.au/bornatthewomens>

New Transitions Workshop



On November 19th the Women's hosted the *New Insights into Neonatal Transitions* workshop.

Most premature babies have difficulty breathing at birth and need help (resuscitation). The treatment for this is to gently inflate their lungs with a breathing device and a face mask placed over the baby's mouth and nose.

In this highly interactive, hands-on workshop conducted by the Women's, participants were invited to discuss new insights into physiological changes of heart rate, oxygen saturation, lungs aeration and pulmonary circulation around birth. Presentations were coupled with Q&A to give the participants the opportunity to ask all their questions.

In hands-on sessions, all participants had the opportunity to improve their skills in managing neonatal transition and how to support newly born infants who need resuscitation.

Quality of Care Report 2010

The Women's publishes a **Quality of Care Report** each year to provide information on new initiatives and improvements in quality and safety, and how women's voices shape the work of the Royal Women's Hospital.

The Report is available on our Web site <http://www.thewomens.org.au/ReportsPublications> or you can contact the Foundation Office on (03) 8345 2954 to have a copy mailed to you.



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Enclosed is my cheque or money order for the amount I have indicated:

\$100 \$50 \$25 \$500 \$2,500

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I would like to donate the entire cost (\$2,300) of a 'Kangaroo Care' chair

I would like to donate the entire cost (\$2,300) of a breast pump

Please debit the amount I have indicated from my:

VISA Mastercard AMEX

_____/_____/_____/_____

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I authorise the Royal Women's Hospital to make automatic monthly deductions (\$15 minimum, debited on the 15th of each month) from my credit card until further notice.

Monthly amount \$ _____

Please send me information about:

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All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. ABN 70 077 725 261

If you do not wish to receive further communications from the Women's Foundation please write or telephone.

The Royal Women's Hospital Foundation,
Locked Bag 300, Parkville, VIC 3052
Ph: 03 8345 2954
Email: admin.foundation@thewomens.org.au

thewomens.org.au/SupportTheWomens

Please return in envelope supplied

Breast Pumps and Kangaroo Care Chairs

In this appeal, the Women's Foundation is raising funds for non-medical equipment to support the work of our Newborn and Intensive Special Care unit.

Two years ago, donations to the Women's Foundation funded a comprehensive review of breastfeeding across the hospital and developed the *Right from the Start Strategy*, specifically to provide mothers with the right support, advice, information and education to start giving breast milk to babies in special care.

One issue identified was a shortage of breast pumps in the intensive and special care nurseries, which is a particular problem for parents who cannot afford to buy one outright. The pumps cost \$2,300 each.

Kangaroo Care is based on skin-to-skin contact between babies and their parents, which reduces the baby's stress levels and allows parents and baby to bond.

Currently, parents are using standard, straight-backed chairs to provide Kangaroo Care, but these chairs are uncomfortable and limit the time parents can hold their baby. Kanga Chairs, as they're known, cost \$2,300 each and allow parents to recline in comfort and more easily hold their baby on their chests for longer periods of time.

Our Newest Supporters

The Royal Women's Hospital welcomes and thanks our newest donors. All of the Women's top donors can be found online at: www.thewomens.org.au/OurSupporters

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