

# Supporter Newsletter

## Autumn 2025



# Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, as part of the wider UnitingCare family, pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging and the unique role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples play in the communities we serve.

We acknowledge our gratitude that we share this land today, our sorrow for the costs of that sharing, and our hope to move to a place of justice and partnership together.



## ST ANDREW'S FUNDRAISING

**T** 1800 961 441

**E** [fundraising@standrewhospital.com.au](mailto:fundraising@standrewhospital.com.au)

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# A heart full of gratitude: Glennis' story

**What began as a routine eye appointment led Glennis on a life-saving journey across states.**

While undergoing complex eye surgery, clinicians discovered that Glennis' pacemaker needed urgent replacing.

She was transferred to St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, where a team of cardiac specialists stepped in.

Under the care of a highly skilled surgeon and cardiology team, Glennis received her new pacemaker and was compassionately cared for until she was ready to go home.

Having grown up on a farm near Uralla, New South Wales, and later spending 33 years on a sheep and cattle farm with her husband, Glennis has always faced life's challenges with quiet determination.

***"It is what it is, and you just keep going,"*** she says with characteristic warmth.

Today, Glennis enjoys life in a beautiful seaside town where everything she loves is within a short stroll.

She tends to her beloved garden, enjoys films, and takes walks, with the confidence that specialists are remotely monitoring her heart rhythm.

For Glennis, giving monthly was a natural response to the exceptional care she received at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital.

If you'd like to help this world leading care to continue to be available for others like Glennis, simply contact our fundraising team on **[fundraising@standrewhospital.com.au](mailto:fundraising@standrewhospital.com.au)** or **1800 961 441** to begin your monthly giving today.







# A splash of joy: Ward 5D's transformation

**Through the dedicated fundraising efforts of our volunteers and virtual volunteers fundraising for the Auxiliary, and the generosity of the community, Ward 5D has undergone an inspiring transformation that's bringing smiles to faces young and old alike.**

The paediatric ward's renovation showcases what we can achieve when our community comes together. Every item bought from our Auxiliary shop and every visit to our market stalls has contributed to creating this welcoming space for our youngest patients and their families.

Step into Ward 5D today and you'll find yourself immersed in an underwater wonderland.

Vibrant ocean-themed decals dance across the walls, creating a calming atmosphere that helps ease the anxiety that can come with hospital stays, especially for children.

The star attraction – a 1.8-metre interactive crocodile wall feature – has quickly become a favourite among our young patients, turning a hospital corridor into an adventure space.

Understanding that extended hospital stays can be challenging for both children and their families, the renovation focused on creating spaces that serve everyone.

Modern entertainment options, including mobile Nintendo Switch gaming consoles, help young patients stay engaged and connected to the familiar joys of home.

***"The transformation goes beyond just the physical space,"*** shares Anita Filippini, Ward 5D's Nurse Unit Manager.

***"We're seeing children more engaged with their environment, which can make a real difference in their recovery journey. The comfortable parent areas mean families can maintain their energy and spirits while supporting their children."***

This renovation represents more than just a fresh coat of paint or new furnishings – it's a testament to the power of community support. Every element has been thoughtfully chosen to create an environment that promotes healing, comfort, and joy.

From the Auxiliary volunteers who tirelessly staff our shop and market stalls to every person who has made a purchase, this rejuvenated space is the result of countless acts of kindness coming together.

The next time you visit our ward trolley, shop, or market stalls, know that you're contributing to projects just like this – initiatives that make a real difference in the lives of our patients and their families.

**Together, we're creating spaces that don't just treat illness, but nurture wellbeing and hope.**



# Knowledge that heals: one nurse's mission to transform wound care

**Every day across Australia, nearly half a million people live with chronic wounds that affect not just their health, but their entire quality of life.**

For Myfanwy Jones, a dedicated nurse at St Andrew's, these aren't just statistics – they're the stories of real people who need specialised care to heal and return to their daily lives.

***“Proper wound care can mean the difference between someone returning home in weeks rather than months,”*** Myfanwy shares.

***“But without specialised training, even experienced nurses can struggle to provide the most effective treatment.”***

It was this understanding that drove Myfanwy to seek advanced wound care training.

However, like many healthcare professionals, the cost of specialised education seemed out of reach – until she received a life-changing opportunity through the Rosalie Russell gift in Will.

Rosalie's legacy includes a bursary program that supports nurse education and training.

***“When I learnt about the bursary, I knew this was my chance to make a real difference,”*** she says. ***“Not just for my own patients, but for everyone who comes through our hospital doors.”***

The impact of this educational opportunity has rippled far beyond individual patient care.

Today, thanks to Myfanwy's dedication to sharing her knowledge, every ward at St Andrew's has access to advanced wound care expertise.

She's created a network of informed practitioners who can recognise, assess, and treat complex wounds with confidence.



*"What's beautiful about knowledge is that it multiplies when you share it," Myfanwy reflects.*

***"Every nurse I train can help countless patients heal better and faster."***

Her expertise has even reached beyond St Andrew's walls, as she now shares her knowledge with staff at other hospitals, creating a broader community of skilled wound care practitioners.

The transformation in patient care has been remarkable. Complex wounds that might once have led to complications are now managed with expertise from the start.

Patients experience less discomfort, shorter hospital stays, and better outcomes – all because one nurse received the opportunity to expand her knowledge.

The impact is particularly evident in the way wound care is now approached across the hospital.

Where once each ward might have handled similar wounds differently, Myfanwy's training has helped establish consistent, evidence-based practices throughout St Andrew's.

This standardised approach means patients receive the same high level of care regardless of which ward they're in, leading to more predictable healing times and better resource management.

***"One of the most rewarding aspects has been seeing other nurses grow in confidence,"*** Myfanwy explains. *"When they understand the science behind*

*wound healing, they're better equipped to make informed decisions about treatment. It's not just about applying dressings – it's about understanding the whole healing process and how we can best support it."*

For Myfanwy, this journey has been about more than just learning new techniques.

It's about honouring Rosalie Russell's passion for education by ensuring her gift continues to touch lives through improved patient care.

***"Every time I see a wound healing well, or teach another nurse a new technique, I think about how one person's commitment to education can create such lasting change,"*** she says.

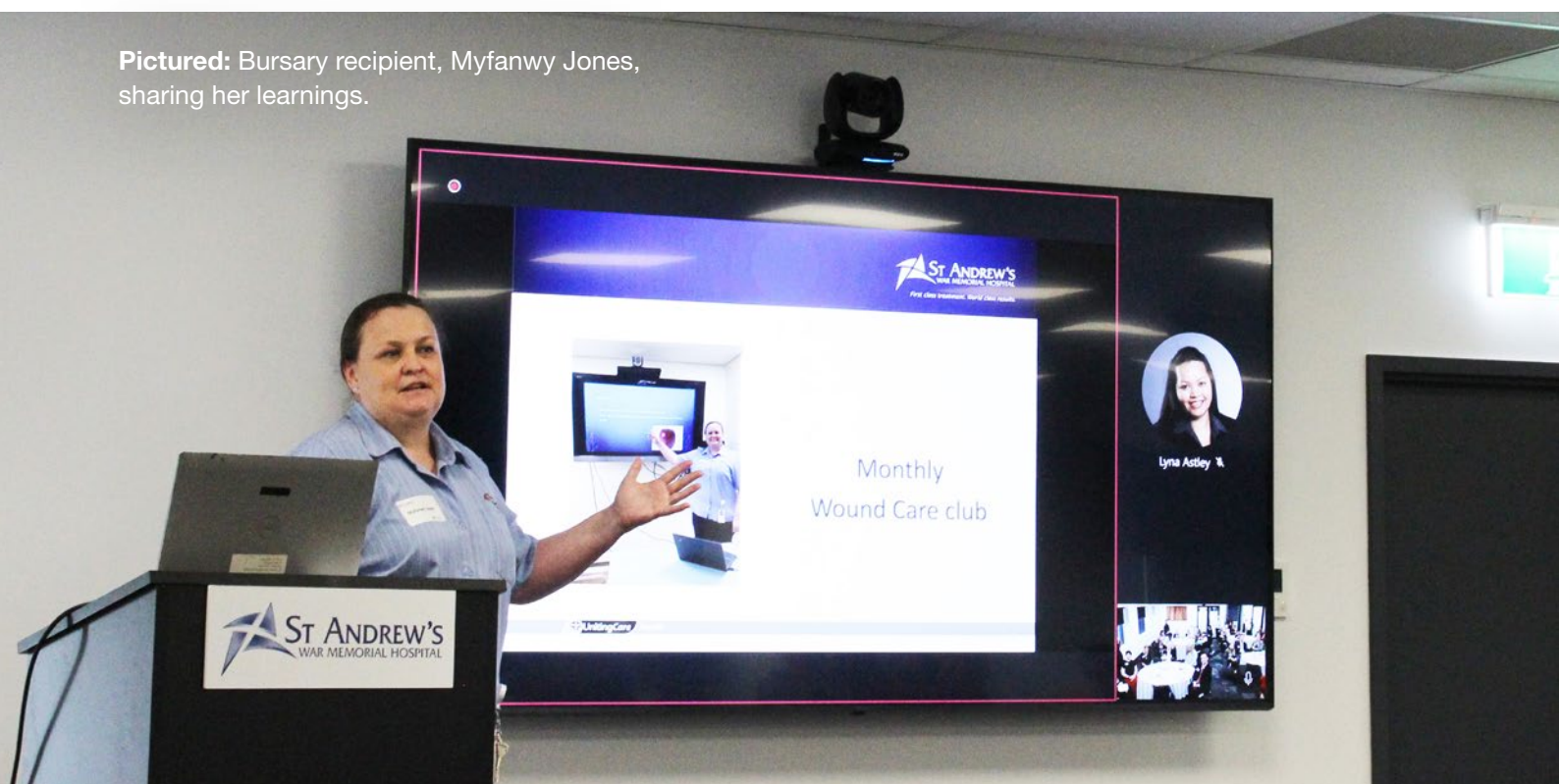
This is the power of investing in healthcare education – it creates a ripple effect that extends far beyond the initial investment.

Through Myfanwy's story, we see how supporting one healthcare professional's education can transform care for countless patients, while building a stronger, more knowledgeable medical community.

As chronic wounds become more prevalent and complex, the need for specialised wound care expertise grows ever more critical.

**Thanks to the generosity of supporters like Rosalie Russell, nurses like Myfanwy can access the education they need to meet this challenge, ensuring better outcomes for patients today and into the future.**

**Pictured:** Bursary recipient, Myfanwy Jones, sharing her learnings.



# Paws for Joy

**Three new recruits are bringing wagging tails and warm hearts to St Andrew's, thanks to a special partnership with Patinos Personal Lawyers.**

Joker, Choppa and Spencer – therapy dogs from Empower Assistance Dogs Queensland – now visit our patients twice monthly, accompanied by their dedicated volunteer handlers.

***"It's a privilege to see the faces of our patients and team members light up when we arrive on their ward,"*** says Simone James, St Andrew's Volunteer Manager.

***"The dogs can be a great distraction and conversation starter. Many patients tell us about their own pets at home that they're missing while in hospital."***

Whether it's helping calm pre-surgery nerves, motivating rehabilitation exercises, or simply bringing a moment of normalcy to a hospital day, these gentle companions have a remarkable way of lifting spirits.

Just ask Catherine, a patient who recently received a visit from three-year-old Labrador, Joker: ***"It's just beautiful to be able to see the dog, give him a pat and say hello. It has absolutely made my day!"***

***"As St Andrew's is located just next door to our Spring Hill office, we're thrilled that this could be***



***the first hospital the firm has been able to support. It's our pleasure to help spread some joy and wagging tails for patients in hospital,"*** shares Patinos Personal Lawyers.

These furry visitors are making a real difference throughout the hospital. The healing power of animal companionship is well-documented – from lowering anxiety and blood pressure to encouraging movement and social interaction.

**As Simone notes, these moments of joy help break up the day for everyone in our hospital community.**

## Your heart's rhythm



**Not all irregular heartbeats are cause for concern.**

Your heart is unique in that it can generate electrical impulses throughout its tissue, occasionally resulting in extra beats. Many people may never notice these, and they're often harmless.

However, some arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythms) can signal more serious conditions, particularly when associated with structural or functional heart problems.

In some cases, genetic variations in the heart's electrical system can create risk factors even when the heart appears normal.

Symptoms vary widely. Some people experience skipped beats, chest pressure, or unusual sensations in their neck.

Others might have no symptoms at all, with their arrhythmia only discovered during routine health checks like blood pressure measurements. When should you seek medical advice? If you notice:

- New or unusual heart rhythm changes
- Persistent chest discomfort
- Unexplained dizziness
- Shortness of breath

Start with a visit to your GP, who can assess whether you need specialist cardiac care.

**At St Andrew's, your support helps ensure our cardiac team stays at the forefront of heart rhythm management, providing peace of mind to patients across Queensland.**





# Reimagining critical care: you're making a difference

## **Sometimes the most powerful insights come from unexpected places.**

For Dr James Winearls, Senior Staff Specialist in Intensive Care at St Andrew's, that moment came when he found himself not standing beside an ICU bed, but lying in one.

***"I laid in bed counting every single screw in the ceiling to bring myself back to reality,"*** he shares softly.

*"The harsh lights, the constant noises, people walking past... it's impossible to maintain any rhythm or routine. Even as a medical professional who understood exactly where I was rationally, my experience was deeply confronting and humbling."*

His experience echoes what Professor John Fraser AO, our Director of Intensive Care, has long understood:

***"When people are at their weakest, that's our time when we can help best. The more we understand and the better we can make intensive care, the more we can help."***

This understanding has sparked our vision for a transformed ICU – one where natural light patterns help maintain our patients' daily rhythms, where quieter

spaces support rest and recovery, and where every detail is designed to preserve dignity during vulnerable moments.

As Professor Fraser notes, *"Every eight seconds, an alarm goes off in the ICU. But what's the one thing you want to do when you're sick? You want to lie down, curl up in a dark space, and sleep."*

## **To our compassionate supporters: your belief in this vision means everything.**

While we're at the beginning of this journey, your generosity will help create an ICU where the environment works in harmony with healing. Every element – from circadian lighting systems to acoustic engineering that reduces disruptive noise – has been carefully considered to support our patients' recovery.

Together, we can build a space where comfort and clinical excellence go hand in hand, where families feel connected to their loved ones, and where our dedicated medical teams have the environment they need to provide the very best care.

## **This is more than a redesign – it's a reimagining of what critical care can be.**

# How one woman's gift continues to transform lives

**When Rosalie Russell first joined the St Andrew's volunteer team in 2007, few could have guessed the extraordinary impact she would have on the future of healthcare in our community.**

Born in Bessarabia, Eastern Europe, and having survived tuberculosis as a young girl, Rosalie's own journey took her from war-torn Europe to Canada, and finally to Australia, where she found her true home.

After losing her beloved husband Barrie to a cardiac event at St Andrew's in 2004, Rosalie was deeply moved by the extraordinary lengths our medical team went to in caring for him.

This experience sparked a connection with our hospital that would grow deeper over the years, as she dedicated countless hours to "behind-the-scenes" volunteer work - from photocopying to collating charts - always insisting that freeing up our clinical staff to focus on patient care was reward enough.

A passionate believer in the power of education to change lives, she left a transformative gift in her Will

**Pictured:** Dr Alex Incani, Dr James Winearls and Professor John Fraser AO at the opening of the Rosalie Russell Conference and Education Centre.



**Pictured:** Alex Steele, Cathy Cash and Mairi McNeill.

that has helped create the Rosalie Russell Conference and Education Centre - a vibrant hub where healthcare professionals can learn and grow together.

In 2024, we proudly opened the doors to this state-of-the-art facility, marking a new chapter in St Andrew's commitment to excellence in healthcare education. Her gift has also established staff bursaries, enabling our team to pursue further education and advance their skills. Alongside the conference facilities, Rosalie's gift has helped upgrade our rehabilitation centre, creating purpose-built spaces where patients can focus on their recovery journey.

Rosalie believed in speaking only when you had something meaningful to say. Today, her legacy speaks volumes about the power of giving back. Through her generosity, she continues to touch countless lives - from the patients receiving care in our enhanced facilities to the healthcare professionals advancing their expertise through education.

Her story reminds us that every gift, whether through volunteering time or leaving a gift in Will, has the power to create ripples of positive change that continue long into the future.

Call Nicole Williams on **1800 961 441** or email **[plannedgiving@ucareqld.com.au](mailto:plannedgiving@ucareqld.com.au)** to discover how you can help shape the future of healthcare for generations to come.

**Scan the QR code to find out more.**

