

A photograph of two surgeons in an operating room. They are wearing blue scrubs, blue bouffant caps, and yellow face masks. They are focused on a surgical site. A large, white Siemens Artis Zeego C-arm is visible on the right side of the frame, positioned over the patient. The room is brightly lit by a large, circular surgical light fixture hanging from the ceiling. The overall scene is professional and clinical.

Supporter Newsletter Spring 2024

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

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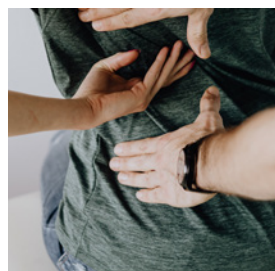
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Heartfelt dedication

Structural Heart Coordinator Wendy Keegan orchestrates cardiac care, bridging patients, doctors, and cutting-edge treatments.



A legacy of healing and learning



A leap forward: New physical rehabilitation centre and conference area showcase the impact of planned giving.

Heartbeats of hope: Bryan's journey

Your generosity enables life-saving cardiac care: Bryan's journey from severe heart condition to CrossFit at 85.



More than 1,000 lives changed, thanks to you



Offering hope to heart patients and transforming cardiac care for previously untreatable patients.

A new era in breast cancer surgery

A breakthrough making breast cancer surgery more accurate and less stressful.





Pictured: Wendy Keegan,
Structural Heart Coordinator

Heartfelt dedication

In the bustling corridors of St Andrew's, there's a constant rhythm of hope and healing. One person at the centre of this life-saving symphony is Wendy Keegan, our dedicated Structural Heart Coordinator.

Her role, though often behind the scenes, is pivotal in orchestrating the complex care of patients with structural heart diseases.

The scope of structural heart diseases is vast, ranging from congenital conditions present at birth to those acquired through ageing. These ailments affect the very architecture of the heart, impacting its valves, walls, and chambers. Left untreated, they can lead to serious complications, including heart failure.

Wendy's days are a whirlwind of activity, filled with a diverse mix of patient interactions, consultations with doctors and nurses, and meticulous record-keeping.

"It's very busy and continually evolving," Wendy shares. "There's always a blend of new patients, follow-ups, and those we've treated. Everyone has questions that need answers."

This is where Wendy's expertise becomes invaluable. She serves as a vital link between patients, their families, and the clinical team. Her role extends beyond medical coordination; she's often a source of emotional support, helping patients navigate the complexities of their diagnosis and treatment options.

"Regular check-ups are crucial for prevention and early detection against heart disease," Wendy emphasises.

"It's important not to ignore early warning signs, especially in rural settings where access to specialised care might be limited."

The field of cardiac care is rapidly evolving, and St Andrew's is at the forefront of these advancements.

Thanks to cutting-edge technology and innovative procedures, many patients now have options that were unthinkable just a few years ago.

This progress is made possible by the generous support of people like you. Your support helps bridge the gap when standard funding falls short, ensuring that St Andrew's can offer the most advanced treatments available.

"These advancements have transformed patient outcomes," Wendy notes. ***"Procedures that once required open-heart surgery can now often be performed using minimally invasive techniques."***

For Wendy, the motivation to continue in this demanding role comes from the impact she sees daily.

"Knowing that you can make a difference to patients and their families, seeing their individual outcomes and receiving their feedback," she reflects.

Your support ripples through every aspect of cardiac care at St Andrew's. You're not just funding equipment and treatments; you're providing hope, extending lives, and keeping families together.

On behalf of Wendy, the entire cardiac care team, and the countless patients whose lives you've touched, thank you for your unwavering generosity.



A legacy of healing and learning

At St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, we believe in the power of healing and continuous learning.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of one of our volunteers, Rosalie Russell, a significant step forward has been taken in both these areas.

Through her generous act of compassion in leaving a gift in her Will to St Andrew's, we've been able to refurbish and expand our physical rehabilitation centre and create a state-of-the-art conference area, enhancing both patient care and medical education.

Named in honour of our benefactor, the Rosalie Russell Conference and Education Centre is a testament to the lasting impact one person can have on countless lives.

This new space, capable of hosting up to 150 people, fills a critical need at St Andrew's.

The conference area isn't just a room – it's a hub for knowledge sharing and professional development.

It will enable us to host education sessions not just for St Andrew's staff, but for medical professionals across various institutions.

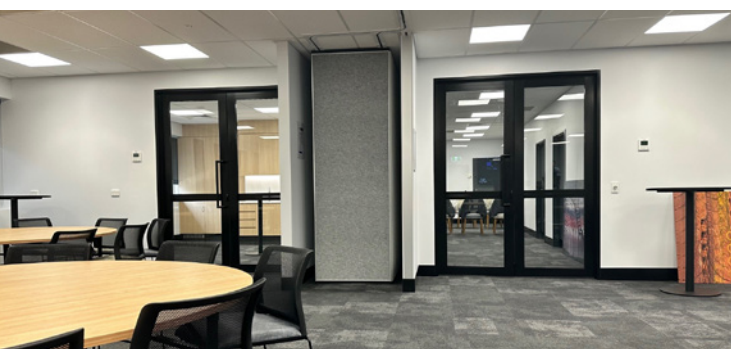
Mairi McNeill, our General Manager, shared her excitement: ***"The hospital did not have anywhere special to host events and we do host a lot of educational events and lectures from the hospital, so this space will be invaluable."***

This commitment to ongoing education ensures that our team, and the broader medical community, stay at the forefront of healthcare advancements.

Alongside the conference area, Ms. Russell's gift has allowed us to significantly upgrade our Day Rehabilitation facilities.

These enhancements to the rehabilitation facilities will play a crucial role in patient recovery. Physical rehabilitation is a vital component of the healing process for many patients, helping them regain strength, mobility, and independence after illness or injury.

The new space, which became operational on 2 May 2024, offers a more open and patient-friendly environment.



John Zambelli, Rehabilitation Lead, who has been instrumental in overseeing the project from the rehabilitation team's perspective, worked to ensure the new space meets the needs of both patients and staff.

The space has a more open layout, improving visibility and accessibility, additional purpose-built consultation rooms and specialised spaces for various therapies, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology.

St Andrew's Day Rehabilitation specialises in providing treatment to people with Parkinson's Disease. Part of this treatment often includes loud voice retraining with a speech pathologist.

One of the most impactful improvements is a specially designed room that can help patients who require speech therapy.

As John explained, ***"If there is a patient that is participating in loud voice retraining, sometimes they can be quite self-conscious about the volume and sounds they may make. So, we've upgraded one of those spaces with additional acoustic panelling to help mitigate noise and provide them a comfort zone."***



The improved spaces and facilities will also support our dedicated rehabilitation team in providing the highest quality care, potentially shortening recovery times and improving outcomes for our patients.

Rosalie Russell's generosity serves as a shining example of the profound impact that leaving a legacy can have. Her gift has not only transformed our hospital's facilities but will continue to touch the lives of countless patients, families, and healthcare professionals for years to come.

Rosalie has ensured that her passion for healthcare and education lives on. Her gift will facilitate healing, foster learning, and drive medical advancements long into the future.

As we prepare for the official opening of the Rosalie Russell Conference and Education Centre in August, we're reminded of the incredible impact a gift in Will can make.

The success of this project has energised our team and highlighted the transformative power of philanthropic support.

As we reflect on the incredible gift left by Rosalie, we're filled with gratitude for all our supporters – past, present, and future.

Whether through a gift in Will or ongoing support, your contributions make a tangible difference in the lives of our patients and the capabilities of our staff.

Every gift, regardless of size, contributes to our mission of providing exceptional care and driving medical excellence. From upgraded facilities to enhanced treatments, your support touches every aspect of our hospital's work.

We invite you to consider how you might like to leave your own legacy to St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital. Whether it's supporting our current initiatives or planning for the future through a gift in Will, your generosity can have a lasting impact on healthcare in our community.

*Together, we can build
a healthier future for
generations to come.*

For more information or to have a confidential chat contact our Gifts in Wills Team on **1800 961 441**, email **plannedgiving@ucareqld.com.au** or scan on the QR code:



Heartbeats of hope: Bryan's journey

At St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, every day brings stories of courage, resilience, and the transformative power of advanced cardiac care.

One such story is that of Bryan Merry, an 85-year-old from Berserker, North Queensland, whose life took an unexpected turn during a routine check-up.

Bryan had no inkling of any heart issues when he visited his local doctor. However, a heart check revealed a complex combination of coronary artery disease and severe aortic stenosis. This dangerous condition puts immense strain on the heart muscle, forcing it to work harder to pump blood through narrowed valves. If left untreated, it can lead to heart failure. This diagnosis came as a shock to Bryan and his wife, Gloria.

Adding to their concerns, scans showed Bryan had suffered minor strokes and was experiencing early onset dementia. Given Bryan's age and the complexity of his heart condition, traditional open-heart surgery wasn't a viable option.

Using cutting-edge technology like the Impella heart pump, our team of specialists was able to perform a series of intricate procedures that quite literally gave Bryan a new lease on life.

The Impella device allowed Bryan's heart to nearly stop, resting dormant while its blood supply was being rectified. This innovative approach enabled our cardiac experts to work through blockages, deploy stents, and ultimately replace Bryan's aortic valve - all without resorting to open-heart surgery.

The impact of this treatment was profound. Gloria emphatically states, ***"Bryan would not be alive if it wasn't for this surgery."***

Just four weeks after the procedure, Bryan was back at the gym. They've also returned to enjoying their favourite pastimes, like going to the movies and attending touring shows at their local theatre.

Bryan's story is a testament to the power of modern cardiac care. It's also a reflection of the incredible impact that people like you have on the lives of patients like Bryan. Your generosity enables investment in state-of-the-art equipment, supports ongoing research, and provides world-class care to every patient who walks through our doors.



Your support also goes beyond the tangible medical equipment and treatments. It allows families like Bryan and Gloria's to create more memories together. It empowers our medical team to push the boundaries of what's possible in cardiac care.

As we continue our mission to provide exceptional cardiac care, we're deeply grateful for your ongoing support. Your generosity is the heartbeat that keeps our hospital thriving, enabling us to touch and transform lives every single day.

As we celebrate Bryan's recovery, we'd like to share some heart health tips that can benefit us all*:

- 1** Regular check-ups with your GP are crucial for monitoring heart health.
- 2** A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins supports heart health.
- 3** Maintaining a healthy weight through diet and regular physical activity is key.
- 4** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.
- 5** Manage stress through relaxation techniques and healthy coping mechanisms.
- 6** Avoid or limit behaviors like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.
- 7** Know the signs of a heart attack and seek immediate medical attention if experiencing them.

These simple steps can make a significant difference in maintaining cardiovascular health.

*The information provided is for educational purposes only and should not be considered a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider for personalised guidance on managing your heart health.



More than 1,000 lives changed, thanks to you!

Imagine waking up each day, your heart struggling with every beat. Simple tasks become Herculean efforts.

The diagnosis: severe aortic stenosis. Just a few years ago, your only option would have been major open-heart surgery – a daunting prospect. But today, thanks to the generosity of people like you, there's a revolutionary alternative that's changing lives.

Your support has helped turn that scenario from a frightening reality into a story of hope for thousands. Last year St Andrew's reached a remarkable milestone: 1,000 Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) procedures performed, making us the first private hospital in Queensland to achieve this feat.

But what exactly is TAVI, and why does it matter so much? For those suffering from aortic stenosis, TAVI offers a less invasive alternative to open-heart surgery.

During this procedure, which can be performed under general or local anaesthetic, a new aortic valve is implanted using a catheter guided along an artery to the patient's heart. The new valve is then expanded within the narrowed aortic valve, relieving the obstruction. This can be done via the arteries in the groin, the arm, directly into the aorta, or through a small chest incision – all without the need to cut through the breastbone.

Dr Karl Poon, who performed the milestone procedure, reflects on its significance: ***"We are humbled to be entrusted by our colleagues and so many patients with their structural heart care needs. This milestone inspires us to continue to innovate and improve."***

Your support has been instrumental in establishing

St Andrew's as a leader in cardiac care.

Dr Alex Incani, another pioneer of the TAVI program at St Andrew's, notes how far we've come: ***"A decade ago, TAVI was a treatment for those deemed untreatable. Today, a whole range of patients stand to benefit from this minimally invasive procedure, and we're thrilled to have been a part of making that possible for people here in Queensland."***

You have helped create a future where innovative treatments like TAVI are accessible to more patients than ever before. You've contributed to a legacy of excellence that extends beyond our hospital walls, as evidenced by our team live-streaming the 1,000th procedure to a global conference of cardiologists.

We're reminded that every advance in patient care, every life improved, and every boundary pushed is made possible by your generosity. You are an essential part of our multidisciplinary team, working alongside our medical professionals to ensure the best outcomes for those we serve.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for your continued support. Together, we're not just treating hearts – we're touching lives and shaping the future of cardiac care. If you'd like to deepen your impact, consider becoming a monthly supporter.

Your ongoing commitment would help ensure that we can continue to innovate, provide cutting-edge treatments, and change lives for years to come.

Whether through one-time gifts or monthly support, every contribution makes a difference in our journey to revolutionise cardiac care.

A new era in breast cancer surgery thanks to you

Imagine facing breast cancer surgery. The anxiety, the fear of the unknown, the physical discomfort. Now, picture a revolutionary approach that eases this anxiety, making the process smoother, more precise, and less invasive. Thanks to the generosity of people like you, this vision is now a reality at St Andrew's.

Meet Kim, a patient who has experienced both traditional wire-guided surgery and the new SCOUT technology.

"My first procedure was in 2012. The wire insertion was incredibly uncomfortable – I had to hang upside down while the radiologist inserted the wires into the tumours," Kim recalls. "This new procedure was far more comfortable, and I am so happy it can be made available to others."

Kim's experience highlights the transformative power of your support. The SCOUT system, a cutting-edge surgical guidance technology, is now available at St Andrew's, dramatically improving the breast cancer surgery experience for patients.

Dr Ben Green, a breast surgeon at St Andrew's, explains the game-changing nature of this technology, ***"The SCOUT works by using a transmitter which is inserted into the breast lesion via a needle. What's unique is that the reflector can remain in place for weeks or months prior to surgery without interfering with other scans and imaging."***

This advancement, made possible by your support, eliminates the need for uncomfortable hook wires to be inserted on the day of surgery.

Instead, surgeons can pinpoint lesions with astounding accuracy – within 1mm – leading to shorter surgeries, dramatically reduced re-excision rates, and preservation of healthy breast tissue.

For patients, this means less anxiety on the day of surgery and improved cosmetic outcomes. Catherine Gillam, a breast care nurse at St Andrew's, witnesses the impact firsthand:



"Patients can arrive ready for surgery with the transmitter already inserted, making that already nerve-racking day a lot more bearable. To be able to remove that step in the process means the day of surgery is much calmer and more efficient."

The SCOUT system allows for more precise targeting of tumours, increasing the probability of complete cancer removal while reducing the amount of healthy tissue removed. This precision can significantly impact a patient's body image and overall wellbeing after surgery.

Dr Green emphasises the broader implications: ***"Our goal is to preserve as much of the normal breast tissue as possible. This can mean less deformity in the breast, which we know is important for cosmesis and body image along with overall wellbeing after surgery."***

You play a crucial role in this medical advancement. Your support has directly contributed to reducing patient stress, improving surgical outcomes, and potentially saving lives.

Your continued support enables us to stay at the forefront of medical innovation, ensuring that patients like Kim receive the best possible care. Every donation brings hope to those facing breast cancer, making their journey a little easier and their future a little brighter.

On behalf of all the patients whose lives you've touched and the medical professionals you've empowered, thank you. Your generosity is transforming breast cancer care, one precision surgery at a time.