

Chief Executive's report



It is a privilege to deliver our report card for 2017-18.

As most staff would agree, it was a year of significant achievement as well as significant challenge.

For another year we saw an increase in patient admissions as demand for our services grew across the board.

- We delivered around 115,000 episodes of inpatient care and treated more than 110,000 people in our two Emergency Departments: both up 3 per cent on last year.
- Demand for our 14 statewide services continued to grow with Victoria's population. As a result of these services and their specialist clinics, more than half of our admitted patients on any given night come from outside our catchment – arriving here from greater Melbourne, elsewhere in Victoria or interstate.
- Our trauma and critical care programs received more injured Victorians than ever before. We saw 9000 trauma patients. Of these 1520 were major trauma patients who had life threatening

injuries and required the expertise of our leading critical care teams.

- Our organ transplant service grew, giving more people a second chance of life. The reporting period saw a 25 per cent increase in heart transplants and a 28 per cent increase in kidney transplants compared with the prior year

Lung transplants grew by 11 per cent to more than 100 for the year, including Alisha Kapoor who, at just four years old, became Australia's youngest lung transplant recipient. For the first time, Alisha can live her life without the aid of a ventilator.

We continued to deliver timely quality care. We achieved the National Emergency Access Targets at both The Alfred and Sandringham Emergency Departments; and was the only health service in Australia to do so.

Importantly, 98 per cent of all our elective surgery patients were treated within clinically recommended times.

They are impressive results by any measure, and they are truly inspiring

when we consider the lives saved and the lives improved as a result of our care.

We continue to grow our expertise in acute and complex care – to match the increased need in our community.

Patient Petra Bosch gives real meaning to acute and complex care. During a routine run on Elwood beach, the 35-year-old's heart stopped beating due to an undiagnosed and extremely rare heart condition. Petra was brought to The Alfred's emergency department and within minutes was put on heart lung bypass.

She was under the care of our ICU and heart specialists for months. She received a mechanical heart as she waited for a heart transplant.

The transplant was a success and our rehabilitation service at Caulfield Hospital helped build her strength and resilience.

Petra is looking forward to returning to work and running soon.

Even just a decade ago, patients like Petra may not have survived. Today, they have a real chance to pull through, thanks to the skill, expertise

and absolute determination of our staff to push boundaries.

Research focus

Our clinical trials program also pushed boundaries – achieving breakthroughs and changed practice.

During the year our researchers did this on an international scale, solving age-old debates with two groundbreaking studies about:

- levels of IV fluids required in surgery and
- the continued use of aspirin prior to surgery.

Also in a significant move our neurosciences unit expanded to include an Australian-first clinical trials area.

Improving care, safety and quality

Fundamental to providing ‘best care’ is listening to patients and learning what is important to them.

Results from our Patient Experience Survey have been consistently positive and, while these results are pleasing, we know we can improve.

We know we need to listen better to family feedback.

This was a key learning from an incident at Caulfield Hospital where there were serious concerns about the treatment of a patient.

The incident shocked and saddened us all.

It was certainly one of the most challenging periods of the year.

We took immediate action and the nurse subsequently resigned after an internal investigation. We welcomed the involvement of Safer Care Victoria in reviewing safety systems in our ABI unit.

All Safer Care Victoria’s recommendations have been accepted and we are building on our commitment to improve patient and staff safety.

Respect and safety

Healthcare is a challenging work environment.

That’s why the Respect and Quality improvement project that is a centrepiece in our Strategic Plan is so important for staff and patients.

Better understanding our diverse population helps build respect so practitioners see the person and their needs rather than their disease and clinical solutions.

Our Vulnerable Persons project is training frontline staff on how to sensitively enquire if a patient is in a vulnerable position and requires specialist support to keep them safe.

Alfred Health’s Reconciliation Action Plan, launched a year ago, is building greater understanding for Aboriginal culture and ensuring our health services are accessible to all.

A statewide forum held at The Alfred discussed ideas with health professionals and community members about how to create more inclusive, supportive care for the LGBTI community

And we are improving at respecting patients’ preferences for treatment at home, through our GEM at Home and expanded telehealth services. Plans are in development for a rehabilitation at home model.

Through our annual People Matter Survey, we know our staff have high levels of engagement and belief in their work as well as a strong attachment to our health service.

We also know that workplace stress continues to be a factor.

While many wellbeing initiatives are in place, there is more we can do to support staff, and this will continue to be a priority for me and our Executive Team in 2019.

Infrastructure challenges

Ageing facilities, particularly at The Alfred, continued to be one of the most challenging aspects 2017-18.

We started a government funded program of urgent infrastructure maintenance works to improve roofing and sewerage. And in May the Victorian Government announced further \$69.5 million to bring the Main Ward Block close to modern standards.

While these works will improve patient amenities in the short to medium term, we remain focussed on achieving a major redevelopment of The Alfred so the next generations of Victorians can continue to receive high level critical care.

We are working closely with the Department of Health and Human Services on this project and have completed the business case.

Due to the largest donation received in our history, we expanded facilities in the Les and Eva Erdi Emergency & Trauma Centre at The Alfred. It was opened by Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Health Jill Hennessy in June.

Our new Day Procedure Centre at Sandringham, opened in early August 2018, was also possible due to strong community support.

Purpose-built respiratory clinics on Level 2, which opened this week, will improve facilities for patients. As a result, planning for our new trauma ward with an additional 40 beds is well underway.

Becoming a digital hospital

The successful implementation of Alfred Health's Electronic Medical Record - known internally as eTQC (electronic Timely Quality Care) - was the highlight of the year.

While the implementation was in November and outside this reporting period, its preparation was our single focus - other than patient care - for 2017-18.

Staff embraced the change with

more than 650 SuperUsers supporting its introduction.

In just four weeks, patients' paper records were digitally converted across three hospital campuses and 206 outpatient clinics.

This was an Australian first and the largest transformational change undertaken at Alfred Health.

It was impressive to witness and I am grateful for the unstinting staff support at all levels.

As we embed our practices and optimise the system, the benefits for patient safety, quality and efficiency will flow.

Appreciation

Thanks are due to the Board and Executive team for their ongoing dedication this year.

This gratitude extends to all our committed, hardworking staff, our generous volunteers and our donors, who make such a difference to the care we provide.

Finally, thanks must go to our community, both locally and throughout Victoria, who support

their healthcare service and inspire us to continually improve our care to meet their needs.

Thank you

Chief Executive,
Professor Andrew Way