

# impossible

NEWS | SPRING 2023



## RESEARCH

### Clinical trials

Award to help Hannah

## FEATURE

### Family legacy

Elizabeth to honour her family

## COMMUNITY

### Wholehearted support

Alessia runs for her dad



theAlfred  
FOUNDATION

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT


It is an exciting time at The Alfred as work continues apace on the world-class Paula Fox Melanoma and Cancer Centre on St Kilda Road. Set to be unveiled next year, this building is representational of all that we aspire to in constantly seeking to advance and develop the tremendous level of medical excellence and best quality patient care The Alfred can provide.

We hope you enjoy some of the positive stories we have been privileged to hear over the past few months within the pages of this spring edition of impossible. Stories which reflect the emotions with which people regard The Alfred and the experiences they have had in connection to the hospital — and most importantly their interactions with our amazing staff and the difference this can make in people's lives.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support and generosity — we at the Foundation are incredibly grateful and continually in awe of what our donors provide, enabling us to help The Alfred continue to deliver excellence in healthcare.

As always, your feedback is highly appreciated and always welcome. Please email us at [foundation@alfred.org.au](mailto:foundation@alfred.org.au) or phone (03) 9076 3222.

Warmest regards,



**Patrick Baker**  
DIRECTOR,  
THE ALFRED FOUNDATION

## COVER IMAGE

Joshua, Alessia, John, Jane and Amelia (front) at Run Melbourne. Turn to the inside back page for their story.

## RIGHT

Prof Christine Mitchell, Prof David Kaye, Prof Tom Marwick and Prof Andrew Way at the cardiovascular research centre launch.

## NEWS

# Heart partnership drives cutting-edge care

**Heart patients of the future are set to benefit from a new partnership which will combine the strengths of three leading institutions in cardiovascular research and patient care.**

Launched in July, the Monash Alfred Baker Centre for Cardiovascular Research will build on the many significant advances in cardiovascular medicine and surgery already achieved by specialists at The Alfred, Monash University and Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, to tackle some of Australia's most significant and emerging cardiac issues.

Professor David Kaye, Director of Cardiology at The Alfred and inaugural director of the new centre, said the formalised partnership would become a hub for the next generations of leading clinicians and researchers as they work together to break new ground in the treatment of heart failure and heart disease.

**“Our three organisations have a long and proud history of together translating research into healthcare that saves lives,” he said.**

“This new partnership now means we can continue to achieve more together, using big data and first-in-human clinical trials to ensure patients receive cutting-edge care.”

Alfred Health Chief Executive Prof Andrew Way AM said the centre was a great reflection of what could be achieved through collaboration in healthcare.



NEWS

## Award allows Hannah scope for research

**The Alfred is home to Australia's largest collective clinical trials program which, for more than 30 years, has allowed us to put new and cutting-edge treatment into clinical practice.**

One of our specialists leading the way is Hannah Stevens.

Hannah, who is just one of a handful of people at The Alfred to receive a Sylvia and Charles Viertel Clinical Investigator Award, is investigating problems associated with blood thinners and how to potentially identify patients who may be adversely affected by them.

The 35-year-old, who recently returned home to Tasmania after a decade in Melbourne, including five years at The Alfred, is a clinical haematologist and specialises in bleeding and clotting disorders.

"My interest in this area started when my brother had a large blood clot in his lungs during my early years of medicine," she said. "That guided me down the path of haematology and an interest in research, as well as clotting and what factors are associated with it."

Hannah said she felt "very fortunate" to have received the grant as it allows her to establish her research program during a traditionally difficult time.

"Heart disease is one of the biggest medical problems worldwide and many people affected by this go on blood thinning medications to prevent problems," Hannah said.

"However, blood thinners can cause serious bleeding and we are unable to predict which patients can develop bleeding complications. During my PhD, I measured levels of lipids (fats) in people with new venous blood clots. We found that these fats are associated with clotting risk, but whether fats also affect bleeding risk is unknown.

"Because of the potential risk of bleeding, we need new markers to predict which patients develop bleeding complications. So, we are investigating if we can use the levels of fats in the body to predict bleeding outcomes for patients.

ABOVE

Hannah Stevens received a Sylvia and Charles Viertel Clinical Investigator Award.



"This research has the potential to improve outcomes for people with cardiovascular disease. Without the Viertel award, this research wouldn't be able to go ahead, so I am extremely grateful and thankful for their support."

One of Hannah's mentors at The Alfred, Associate Professor James McFadyen, said Dr Stevens was "an outstanding clinician researcher".

**"The Viertel award provides significant recognition of Hannah's research achievements and important support for her to establish her own clinical research program," he said.**

"Her research project involves world-class collaborators that will hopefully uncover new ways we can predict bleeding risk of patients who take blood thinning medication. The ability to do this accurately will have a major clinical impact given the large number of Australians who take blood thinners."

Other Alfred Health staff to have received the award include current Director of Infectious Diseases, Anton Peleg, and current head of Paediatric Lung Transplantation at The Alfred, Glen Westall.

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PROFILE

## Historical connection makes bequest an easy choice for Elizabeth

**For Elizabeth Orchard, there was no question as to where to direct her legacy considering the history her family has with The Alfred hospital.**

Her future gift in Will will be equally split between burns research and a nursing scholarship to advance nursing leadership, in honour of her parents Boyd and Roma Orchard and her sister Jennifer Orchard.

"I wanted my sister and my parents to be remembered at The Alfred, which was a very important part of their lives," she said.

Born at Margaret Coles House, Elizabeth's association with The Alfred continued as her father became an honorary dentist at The Alfred for 10 years, working half a day a week.

Her sister, Jenny, graduated from nurse training at The Alfred in 1965 before settling in England two years later. Jenny then spent 33 years working at the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, well known for its work in burns and plastic surgery, where she continued training in both fields.

Jenny was the Sister-in-Charge of the Burns Ward for 10 years, after which she became a Theatre Manager and Senior Sister, specialising in facio-maxillary surgery.



"My sister came to get her training at The Alfred because my father knew that she would get the best training there," Elizabeth said. "I would like them to be remembered in an area that meant something to them, and also to me. Burns was (Jenny's) speciality and what started it all was what she learnt at The Alfred."

Her mother also volunteered at The Alfred with the library trolley for many years.

Chief Nursing Officer at The Alfred, Ged Williams, said they were "extremely grateful" to Elizabeth and her sister and family for their wonderful contribution to Alfred Health nurses.

"Alfred Health nurses have shown amazing resilience and courage during COVID and have given a lot of themselves to protect and treat the community during a particularly difficult time," he said.

"As we rebuild and reestablish our future path, we have published a revised Nursing Professional Practice Framework (NPPF) that will guide our future direction and investment to retain The Alfred as one of the best health facilities in Australia and a great place to develop oneself as a nurse, just like Elizabeth's sister did in the mid 1960s and as I was able to do in the 1980s.

**"One of the key pillars of the NPPF is leadership. Alfred Health is a place where great nursing leaders are born and developed, and it is our mission to continue this legacy.**

"Through the generosity of Elizabeth Orchard, we will be able to support many more nurses on their leadership journey to not only lead nursing activity at The Alfred, but indeed Australia and the world."

**LEFT (AND ABOVE)**

Elizabeth's sister, Jenny, graduated from nurse training at The Alfred in 1965; (above) Elizabeth is eager to support The Alfred in memory of her family.



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PROFILE

# Continuing to evolve: Ken still strong 64 years after open-heart surgery

The pioneering nature of The Alfred has resulted in it continually seeking to push boundaries throughout its 152-year history.

A notable example was the evolution of the heart bypass machine, or heart-lung machine, which allows a machine to temporarily take over the function of the heart and lungs during surgery, maintaining the circulation of blood and the oxygen content of the patient's body.

Someone who has been on the receiving end of this evolution is Ken Sing. Ken, who is now in his 75th year, was one of the first people to have received a paediatric open-heart procedure at The Alfred in 1959 — with his 10th birthday forever commemorated after featuring in *The Sun*, three weeks after his operation.

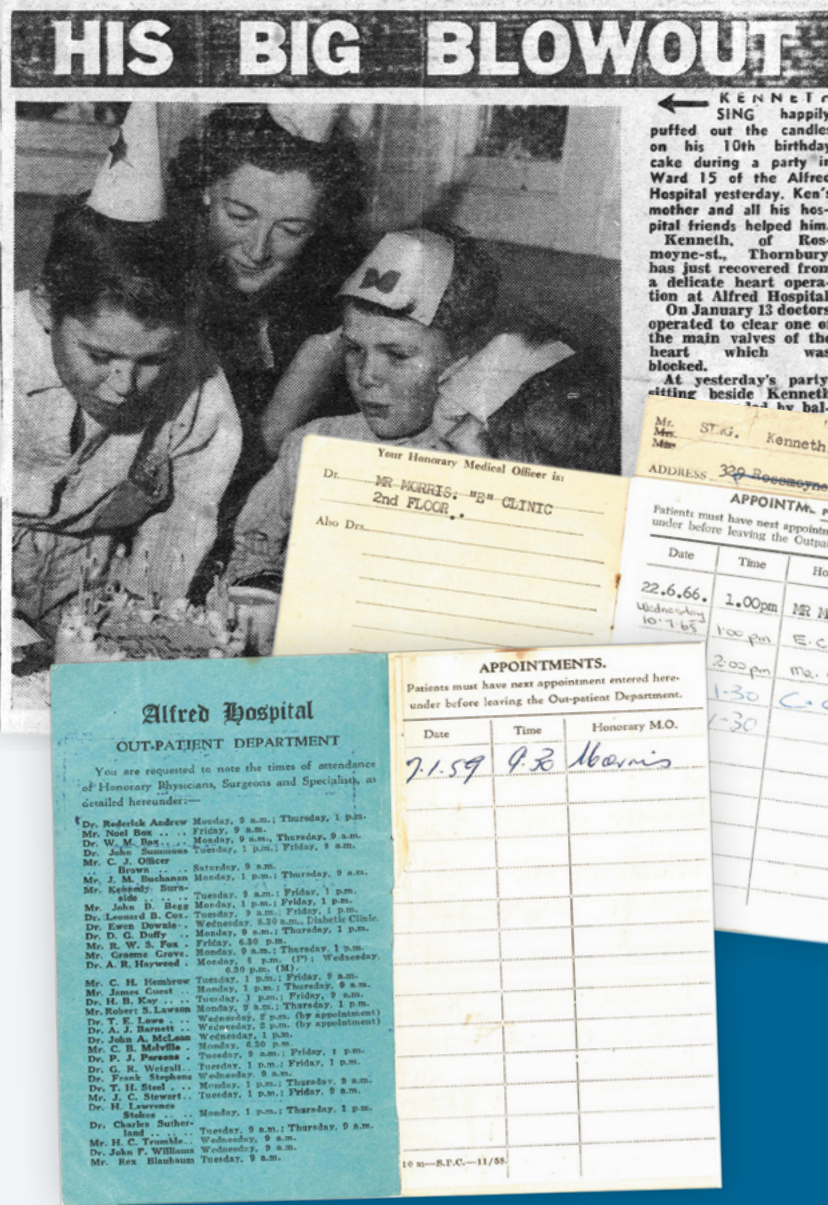
He regards himself as extremely lucky, with Sir James Officer Brown, Dr Kenneth Morris and Dr James Gardner among those responsible for him — just two years after they were involved in the first open-heart operation in Australia.

Ken was born with atrial septal defect and his parents were thus told that he was not expected to live much past 21 — he is now more than 50 years beyond that deadline.

"I am one of the lucky ones," he said. "I'm very lucky for the simple reason that I've got a wonderful life, met a wonderful woman, have three wonderful kids and five wonderful grandkids. Although I lack the energy to play with the grandkids, I'm still going strong.

"Now it is nearly 65 years after the operation — how lucky can one individual be? I've led a really good life. Although I've had two stents installed, my heart is as strong as ever, all thanks to The Alfred's surgeons and medical staff.

"The Alfred saved my life, so I will always love The Alfred. Not only that, but when I hear an ambulance and know that they are going to The Alfred, I think that's the best hospital ever to go to."



Thank you to all our wonderful supporters who took the time to share their feedback in our 2023 Supporter Survey. We had an amazing response and have been humbled by some of the gratitude expressed and the heartwarming stories shared.

As well as being an opportunity to express your thoughts, the survey really helps us to understand you and to help us better meet your needs — **THANK YOU.**

**Did you miss our survey this year? Reach out to Feygl or Sue to share your thoughts by phoning (03) 9076 3222.**

ABOVE

Ken Sing kept some of the documentation from his time at The Alfred more than 50 years ago.



## Vale Ian McInnes

With profound sadness, we farewell Associate Professor Ian Edgeworth McInnes OAM, who passed away in his 93rd year.

Ian — or as he is better known, ‘Cas’ — started at The Alfred in 1956 as a Junior Resident Medical Officer, in what would be the beginning of an illustrious career.

A consummate general surgeon with special interests in breast, oesophageal, liver and portal hypertension surgery, Ian initially worked as an orthopaedic, thoracic, paediatric and general surgeon. He was appointed Head of the Unit at The Alfred in the early 1980s.

Ian was Sub-Dean and Dean of the clinical school and funded the McInnes Prize for Clinical Excellence for fourth-year medical students at The Alfred. He also made a significant contribution to the establishment of the William Buckland Radiotherapy Centre.

Thank you Cas, we value your immense contribution to medicine as a clinician, mentor and teacher.

### FEATURE

## All aboard for the Critical Care Appeal

We experienced a great response from the community for our annual Critical Care Appeal in early September.

Held on the Friday before Father’s Day, the major appeal of The Alfred Foundation has been going strong in coordination with 3AW 693 for more than two decades. This year for the first time, the appeal was located at Melbourne’s Southern Cross train station, alongside the live all-day broadcast of 3AW 693. Another of our major supporters, Bulla, also provided thousands of complimentary ice creams on the day.

This year’s Critical Care Appeal is supporting cancer care, with the Paula Fox Melanoma and Cancer Centre set to open its doors in 2024.

The day featured many staff and patients talking about the extraordinary ongoing work at The Alfred, caring for our community. This included Associate Professor Victoria Mar, who spoke about the role of AI in melanoma identification and Professor Mark Shackleton, who talked about a drug breakthrough with ocular melanoma and also about the new cancer centre.

The day was also notable for Neil Mitchell announcing his decision to step down from the morning program on 3AW after 53 years of daily journalism. He said he couldn’t “think of a better time or place” to make the announcement, while “raising money for a great (hospital), The Alfred”.

## Thank you to our corporate partners

Thank you to our Critical Care Appeal corporate partners, 3AW, Bulla Family Dairy and The Alfred Café for their ongoing support. This year the Critical Care Appeal was held in the main public activation space at Southern Cross Railway Station, one of the busiest railway stations in the country.

We’d like to thank Infranexus Management, who enabled us to have the activation at Southern Cross, which is a site they manage. Showcasing the appeal in a busy public arena has hugely increased awareness of our partners and the appeal, which this year was

supporting cancer care at The Alfred. QMS Media supported the appeal again by providing us with some fantastic billboard advertising. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Bank First, The Alfred Café and HealthSmart Pharmacy, who again funded two Alfred Nursing Scholarships.

For more information about corporate partnerships or how your business can support The Alfred, please email Nairn Miller at [n.miller2@alfred.org.au](mailto:n.miller2@alfred.org.au)



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FEATURE

## Alessia jogs in support of her dad

**With her dad facing a challenging road back to full health after an abrupt and distressing illness, Alessia was determined to channel her gratitude for the hospital and step out of her comfort zone in solidarity with her dad by taking up running at nearby Fawkner Park while he received lifesaving treatment.**

The lives of Alessia and her family were quickly turned upside down when her dad, John, became unwell. Three months after receiving an end-stage diagnosis of interstitial lung disease, which causes scarring of the lungs, John received a double-lung transplant in the care of the specialist Alfred Lung Transplant team, one of the largest and most successful lung transplant units in the world.

Returning from a work trip to Sydney, John struggled to breathe and was taken to a hospital upon his plane landing.

“It was all so quick,” Alessia said. “He was 100 per cent dependent on oxygen at all times.”

Following the transplant, John was in ICU for two weeks — surviving an organ failure — and an additional three months of rehabilitation and doctors’ visits. Alessia was one of her dad’s carers during his recovery and thus spent a lot of time with the respective teams, helping her dad get ready physically — and emotionally.

During the times that John was having treatment, Alessia started to run around Fawkner Park to decompress. Meanwhile, John was struggling emotionally at his reduced capacity to be active.

“So in solidarity with him being out of his comfort zone, I told him that I would commit to running 10km for him at Run Melbourne — and he laughed at first,” Alessia said. “I used to play soccer and was (goalkeeper), that’s how much I hate cardio, and he knows that.”

“When I started, I couldn’t run 100m, so 10km seemed unfathomable.

ABOVE

John and Alessia with two of John’s nurses while he was recovering from his double-lung transplant at The Alfred.



“But it turned out to be an incredible tool for me to cope with the stress of his diagnosis. I would drop him off for rehab and just run laps of Fawkner Park.”

In a full-circle moment, the Run Melbourne course took Alessia through Fawkner Park, close to the hospital.

“I was so emotional running past The Alfred and up a hill,” she said. “I was crying and couldn’t breathe at the same time.”

“There was so much stress, knowing that he was getting incredible care ... but he was still in ICU. I was overwhelmed and emotional to be back there again.”

The Run Melbourne day capped off an emotional time for Alessia and her family with Alessia raising more than \$1800 for the transplant rehabilitation program and ICU.

“It was the most enjoyable run I’ve ever had. Meeting some of the team at The Alfred, hearing everyone’s inspiring stories, I just felt like I was part of a community that I didn’t know I was a part of,” she said.

“Having my dad and family there to support me was another full-circle moment. We all had to come together to care for dad, so it was nice to be all together celebrating a positive thing.”

Run Melbourne was a massive success for the Foundation, with a huge increase in participants and funds raised.

## Yes, I would like to donate to The Alfred

\$35  \$60  \$100  \$250  \$1,000

Other \$

**OR**

I want to give a regular monthly gift of \$  to The Alfred to be deducted from my credit card on the 10th of each month. (I can cancel at any time by giving 14 days notice)

Please find enclosed my:

Cheque  Money order (payable to The Alfred Foundation)

OR, please debit my:

Visa  MasterCard  Amex

Name on card:

Card number:

Expiry date:  /

Signature:

**From:**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

I have already included The Alfred in my Will

I would consider including a gift to The Alfred in my Will

**To make your gift, complete and return this coupon in the enclosed reply paid envelope, or send to:**

**The Alfred Foundation**

PO Box 2021

Prahran VIC 3181

T: 1800 888 878

[alwaysalfred.org.au](http://alwaysalfred.org.au)

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible

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# Make the Impossible Possible

Donate to The Alfred today



## COMMUNITY

# Our community making the impossible possible



## Funds teed up at golfing event

A golfing fundraiser left its organiser in tears after its completion, thanks to the generosity of participants. Steve, who had a double-lung transplant at The Alfred, raised money for the hospital at a Social Golf Australia event at Barooga in July.

With 52 players taking part in the competition, a hat was passed around at the end of the event, gaining about \$750. Combined with Steve's donation, it took the tally to about \$900.

Steve was rapt with the response at the event. "I couldn't believe it," he said. "I was in tears. It was terrific. I really appreciate what's been done for me at The Alfred, from the kitchen staff to those at the top. I cannot praise The Alfred enough.

"It has just been magic and now I am also a volunteer there and I enjoy that immensely."

## Dry July challenge a hit at mocktail event

Dry July was a great success this year, with more than \$26,500 raised by Team Alfred. Part of this year's efforts included a special 'mocktail hour' for staff, which involved Etch Sparkling coming to the hospital to share non-alcoholic alternatives with staff.

Each year, The Alfred treats thousands of people living with cancer, allowing for close clinical coordination with a range of cancer specialists. All funds raised help cancer patients at The Alfred, for projects including patient transport, scalp-cooling equipment to help reduce hair loss during chemotherapy, patient wellbeing and music therapy for people affected by cancer.

**To read more, visit <https://www.dryjuly.com/beneficiaries/thealfredmelbourne>**

## Nike Melbourne Marathon

Following on from an enormously successful Run Melbourne event in July, members of Team Alfred were set to come out in force again for the Nike Melbourne Marathon on October 15. More than 135 staff, patients, family and friends signed up to represent The Alfred at the event, taking part in either the full or half-marathons, 10km or 5km events.

**To find out more information about any events that support fundraising for The Alfred Foundation, please visit [fundraising.alfredfoundation.org.au/whatsonatthealfred](https://fundraising.alfredfoundation.org.au/whatsonatthealfred)**

## Are you interested in creating your own fundraiser?

Organising your own fundraiser is a great way to take action and support The Alfred. You could take on your own unique physical challenge or ask your friends and family to give to The Alfred in lieu of gifts. You could also create a tribute page to celebrate the life of a loved one.

**Head to [fundraising.alfredfoundation.org.au](https://fundraising.alfredfoundation.org.au) and create your own page today.**

## The Alfred Foundation

PO Box 2021, Prahran VIC 3181  
T: 1800 888 878  
[alwaysalfred.org.au](https://alwaysalfred.org.au)

## ABOVE

The Alfred staff took part in a special mocktail event as part of Dry July.

