

Northfacing

Your community. Your impact.

Northern Health
Foundation



**Your
support is
creating
healthier
futures!**

What's inside?
Spring/Summer Edition 2026

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of surgery** **Page 4**

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+ much more



Welcome!

We want to begin by celebrating you, our wonderful supporters

Melbourne's North is a growing community that deserves the very best care. But providing that care is only possible with the generosity of people like you – thank you for all you do!

What do you think of our new-look newsletter? The name Northfacing reflects our passion for driving world-class health care forward for people across the North.

Earlier this year, we held our annual Gala Ball, raising an impressive \$140,000. The event was the culmination of months of generosity that helped bring an innovative robotic-assisted surgical platform to Northern Hospital Epping. You can read more about this wonderful achievement on pages 3 and 4.

Also featured in this issue is a snapshot of our PANDA project, exploring the role acupuncture can play in

pain relief. Plus, you'll find several other heartwarming stories of generosity – from gifts in Wills and corporate partnerships to the incredible commitment of the Busy Fingers Auxiliary.

It truly takes a community to achieve what we do every day – and we're so grateful you're part of ours.

Thank you for helping create healthier futures across the North!



Warm regards,
Peter McWilliam
Foundation Board Chair

A night where art meets healing

On 9 May 2026, the Northern Health Foundation welcomed 430 guests to the 1 Hotel Melbourne Ballroom in Docklands for its most ambitious Gala Ball yet, and the results speak for themselves.

The evening raised \$140,000 for equitable healthcare in Melbourne's North, making it one of the Foundation's strongest fundraising results to date.

This year's event, *Where Art Meets Healing*, was built around a Renaissance theme honouring the arrival of Northern Health's new da Vinci Xi Surgical System; a milestone that gave the night real meaning beyond the celebration.

From the opening moments, guests were immersed in an experience that wove together art, innovation, and the human stories behind modern medicine.

**A big thank
you to everyone
who supported
this incredible
event!**



Your support is driving innovative research forward

What if an Apple Watch could help doctors better predict which chronic kidney disease patients are at risk of a heart attack, stroke or serious blood clot?

That's exactly what Associate Professor Hui Yin Lim and her team are exploring through the ICONIC project – made possible with support from the 2026 Northern Health Foundation Research Grant.

Thanks to the generosity of people like you, each year a \$50,000 grant is awarded to a high-impact research project with the potential to improve patient outcomes at Northern Health and beyond.

This year's grant was awarded to Associate Professor Lim for the ICONIC project – the Integrated Cohort Study Evaluating Novel Coagulation Assays and Digital Technology in Chronic Kidney Disease.

A haematologist specialising in thrombosis and blood clotting, Associate Professor Lim is working to improve how doctors predict which people with chronic kidney disease (CKD) are at risk of serious complications.

The ICONIC study will test the team's earlier findings in a much larger group of CKD patients from across Northern Health. Alongside regular blood tests, the study will introduce an innovative new element: wearable technology.

Patients will use an Apple Watch to provide information about factors such as their heart rate, physical activity, sleep and other day-to-day physiological changes.

Essentially, the research will bring together what is happening inside a patient's blood with what is happening in their body and everyday life. By combining these two sources of information, Associate Professor Lim and her team hope to develop a much more personalised and accurate way of predicting each patient's individual risk.

The ICONIC project is a wonderful example of Northern Health's commitment to innovative research with the potential to transform patient care.

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Thanks to your generosity, researchers like Associate Professor Lim have the funding and resources they need to test new ideas, build the evidence and take promising research to the next stage.

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Winners of the 2026 Northern Health Research Awards

The 'Rolls-Royce' of surgery has arrived in the North – thanks to you!



How
this will
transform
care:



More than **200 patients** will benefit each year across the North.



This **cutting-edge** platform can be used for complex cancer surgery, including prostate, kidney, bladder, lung, and bowel.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, Northern Hospital Epping is now home to a \$2.5 million robotic-assisted surgical platform – a groundbreaking innovation that is already changing lives.

Dubbed the ‘Rolls-Royce’ of surgery, the da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgical System enhances the skill and precision of our brilliant surgeons.

For patients, this means fewer complications, shorter hospital stays, and a quicker return to daily life.

Rex is just one of our Northern locals who has benefitted from this cutting-edge technology.

Thrown into a world of uncertainty and tests, Rex was diagnosed with prostate cancer at 69 years old.

“It was a nasty cancer,” Rex said. “They thought it had spread.”

Fortunately, Rex was a candidate for robotic surgery – giving his surgical team a highly precise, minimally invasive way to remove his prostate.

The result for Rex was astonishing. After traditional surgery, Rex would have stayed in hospital for almost a week to recover. With the help of robotic surgery, he went home the very next day.

Rex has had other major surgeries in his life, but he says this was different. *“I’ve had two open-heart surgeries,”* he told us. *“But what I’m looking at now... it just goes to another level. At a public health system, it’s remarkable.”*

Northern Health Divisional Director of Surgery, Dennis Gyomber, sees the real-life impact of this technology every single day.

“For me, this robot is about one thing: equity,” Gyomber says.

“For years, if patients in the North wanted robotic surgery, they had to bypass our hospital and go elsewhere. That is not something we can accept. We must be able to service the needs of our local community.”



For Rex, access to this technology meant a more precise surgery, close to home – which meant he avoided months of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

At Northern Health, we believe our community deserves access to the very best in healthcare.

But with government funding only going so far, innovations like this are only possible with the support of people like you.

“

From individual donors and corporate partners to everyone who generously supported our Gala Ball in May, thank you for helping bring the ‘Rolls-Royce’ of surgery to the North – and giving more local patients like Rex access to world-class care.

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It can also be used for **urgent conditions** such as hernia repairs, organ prolapse, obesity surgery, and endometriosis.



Scan here to check out the Da Vinci Surgical System in action:



What do pandas and pain relief **have in common?**

A collaboration between Northern Health and RMIT University, the PANDA project is an exciting research initiative exploring the role acupuncture could play in relieving pain in Northern Hospital's Emergency Department.

Known for their calm, relaxed nature, pandas are the perfect mascot for the PANDA project – otherwise known as the Personalised Add-on Acupuncture service at Northern Emergency Department for Acute pain.

With around one in three people presenting to the Emergency Department in acute pain, the project aims to explore how acupuncture, delivered by registered acupuncturists, could be safely and seamlessly integrated into the fast-paced emergency care setting.

Emergency Physician and Principal Investigator, Dr Heng Cheok, is currently undertaking further study with the Australian Medical Acupuncture College as part of his sabbatical to deepen his understanding of acupuncture and its application in healthcare.

The generosity of our community was instrumental in establishing PANDA, including supporting acupuncturist, Amy O'Brien, to work two days a week

in the Emergency Department. Cognis Technology have since made a generous \$50,000 donation to further investigate the benefits of acupuncture and support the roll out of the program.

Continued support will be critical as we seek to expand the service, including funding a second part-time acupuncturist so that even more patients can benefit from the pain-relieving power of acupuncture.

“

Thank you to everyone who has supported the PANDA project so far. Because of your generosity, we can give more people in pain the opportunity to experience the benefits of acupuncture.

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Dr Heng Cheok, Emergency Department Physician and Site Principal Investigator for the PANDA project and Ms Amy O'Brien and Emergency Department Acupuncturist



Keeping busy for Bundoora Centre

For more than 50 years, the Busy Fingers Auxiliary has been finding creative ways to support patients and aged care services at Bundoora Centre. Their latest contribution is a new bladder scanner worth \$17,701.

What began with a group of determined women has grown into an extraordinary fundraising legacy. Since the Busy Fingers Gift Shop opened in 1993, the Auxiliary has continued to raise funds for vital equipment through the shop and other activities.

Their latest contribution is a new bladder scanner that allows clinical staff to quickly and painlessly measure the amount of urine in a patient's bladder, helping them make important treatment decisions.

We spoke with Busy Fingers Auxiliary President Kerry Wall, whose connection to the group goes right back to its beginnings.



What is your family connection to the Busy Fingers Auxiliary?

My mother was a foundation member, and my father upon his retirement also became a member.



How did the name "Busy Fingers" come about?

A competition was held to name the shop. Someone had said to my mother that "her fingers were always busy knitting", so she thought she would put in an entry of "Busy Fingers" – which ended up being the chosen name!



How does the group decide what to fund?

As funds build up, we request a "Wish List" from the Site Manager and then choose items to fund. In the past we provided the icing on the cake items, but now we are funding essential equipment.



What motivates you to keep volunteering for the group?

I believe the elderly can be very much neglected, and they deserve the right

to quality care as much as any other individual in society. And if I can help make someone's life that little bit easier or brighter, or assist in providing quality care, then what I do is worthwhile.



Is there anything you would like to say to your community of supporters?

The saying 'it takes a community to raise a child' rings true here too. It takes a whole community to achieve what we do. So many people contribute – from those who generously donate handmade quilts, knitting and other goods to our shop, to the volunteers who give their time to sell them and keep everything running smoothly.

Many people, both at the forefront and behind the scenes, have played a part in raising the funds for this bladder scanner. To each and every one of them, we extend our grateful appreciation.



What's next for the Busy Fingers Auxiliary?

Keep making money!



Ligi Jomy, Nurse Unit Manager Percy Cleland wing with Busy Finger volunteers Alison Denman, Kerry Wall, Carol Tenace and Elizabeth Dossor

Generosity that lives on



Bruce Batten, Trustee of the Muriel and Les Batten Foundation with his daughters Elizabeth and Emily, and Rebekah Barker, Paediatric Emergency Physician

Although Muriel and Les Batten passed away 34 years ago, the impact of their legacy lives on through the Muriel and Les Batten Foundation. Their generosity will now help some of our littlest patients, with funding for two Panda Warmers and a Sonosite ultrasound machine.

While the best place for a newborn is in the loving arms of their parents, sometimes babies need extra care and support in their first moments of life.

Panda Warmers are designed to provide that care with gentle, consistent warmth. Their innovative hourglass heat profile provides even coverage across the entire mattress, helping keep vulnerable newborns warm and safe. Ultimately, Panda Warmers play a critical role in ensuring a safe transition from the womb to the outside world.

Thanks to the Muriel and Les Batten Foundation, Northern Health have received two new Panda Warmers – one for the Emergency Department and another for the Children's Unit.

The Foundation has also generously funded a new Sonosite Ultrasound machine – a portable ultrasound designed for obstetric and neonatal care.

With an increasing birth rate and more complex pregnancies, the addition of the Sonosite Ultrasound to our fleet will make a significant difference to the care we can provide, particularly in emergency situations.

The incredible legacy left by Muriel and Les Batten is a powerful example of the lasting impact a gift in a Will can have. More than three decades after their passing, their generosity is still helping care for patients today.

The healing power of music

Inspired by the care his wife received in the Northern Health Palliative Care Unit, Neville Scarlett made a powerful decision that would one day help kickstart Northern Health's Music Therapy program.

Julius Quiring, Nurse Unit Manager, Palliative Care, has long believed music therapy could provide significant benefits for patients. So, when he began exploring the possibility of introducing a music therapist to the hospital, he was thrilled when the Northern Health Foundation came forward with Neville's generous gift in his Will.

Julius believes music therapy is much more than entertainment. It complements the unit's holistic approach to care.

"Music can become a starting point for deeper conversations," he explains. "By talking about songs, memories and experiences, patients may begin discussing their lives, fears and concerns. The music therapist can identify potential 'red flags' and bring these back to the broader clinical team, helping them better understand and support the patient."

Like Julius, Northern Health's Senior Music Therapist, Dr Lucy Forrest, believes music can play a powerful role in care – particularly as a way to support rest and healing.

Working in the Palliative Care Unit two days a week, Dr Forrest uses live music to create therapeutic soundscapes and individually tailored programs that enrich the experience and promote rest for patients, families and staff.

"Rest plays a key role in healing and emotional wellbeing. Yet hospitals are often bustling and noisy, which can make patients and families feel stressed or overwhelmed." Dr Forrest explains.

She believes music therapy offers a unique and inclusive way to create a positive, calming and relaxing environment within the hospital.

"When we hear music, it can switch our brain from fight-flight, problem-solving mode into relaxation-mode, and help promote feelings of calm, safety and wellbeing, all of which can help support good rest."

The positive feedback and results of the program have been so encouraging that Northern Health will fund music therapy on an ongoing basis from September 2026.

Initially, the service was concentrated in palliative care. Now, we have our sights set on broadening access across Northern Health to other areas such as paediatrics and oncology.

It's incredible to think that a selfless decision made by one generous man all those years ago has led to the creation of this wonderful service. And now, with the continued generosity of our community, we can bring the power of music to even more patients and families who need it.

The power of music therapy:

- Provides comfort and reduces anxiety and distress
- Supports symptom management
- Encourages connection between patients and loved ones
- Prompts memories and reminiscence
- Helps clinicians understand patients more holistically
- Creates meaningful moments for patients and families
- Brings warmth, enjoyment and human connection into the hospital environment

Your generosity can live on, too! If you're interested in leaving a gift in your Will to Northern Health, scan for more information:



Senior Music Therapist, Dr Lucy Forrest and Julius Quiring, NUM Palliative Care Unit

Thank you, for supporting our healthcare champions



Awarded in celebration of International Day of the Midwife and International Nurses Day, congratulations to Ayesha Masood, Clinical Care Manager at Ian Brand Residential Care, for receiving this year's BankVic Nursing Scholarship.

Since 2024, BankVic has partnered with Northern Health Foundation to provide a \$5,000 scholarship to an outstanding Northern Health nurse or midwife, recognising their valuable contribution and dedication to patient and resident care.

Ayesha's standout application demonstrated her deep commitment to placing residents at the centre of every decision.

"It is about seeing beyond medical conditions to understand each person's story, culture, and identity, and using this understanding to deliver truly person-centred care," she said.

"Empowerment means having the confidence and clinical expertise to advocate for residents, especially when they are unable to speak for themselves."

The BankVic Nursing Scholarship will support Ayesha to pursue further education, attend a national conference or undertake a professional development opportunity.



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Thank you to BankVic for your generous support and ongoing commitment to supporting our healthcare champions!

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A safe place to stay when it's needed most

When patients and families are facing some of life's most challenging moments, having a safe place to stay can make all the difference.

We are grateful to Quest Epping for their generous \$5,000 in-kind accommodation donation, continuing a valued partnership with Northern Health Foundation since 2023.

In that time, over 58 families have been given a comfortable room when they need it most. Their ongoing support enables our Social Work team to provide emergency accommodation for rural patients and visiting families, helping ease the burden of needing to be in hospital or having treatment.



Partnerships like this remind us that kindness extends far beyond the walls of our hospital, ensuring families can remain close to the care and people who matter most.

QUEST
APARTMENT HOTELS

A generous donation helps newborn babies breathe

The Kilmore Hospital Maternity Ward is now home to a brand-new bubble CPAP machine, thanks to the generosity of Novamed and Conundrum Holdings.



Mel Riseley, NUM Maternity Services

Used for babies experiencing respiratory distress, including those born prematurely, the bubble CPAP machine delivers gentle, continuous pressure to help keep a baby's airways and lungs open.

By supporting breathing and oxygen levels, this life-saving equipment helps stabilise vulnerable babies during the critical period before they can be transferred to a higher-level neonatal service.

Our maternity care team now has an additional tool to provide timely, urgent care close to home – helping ensure babies born at Kilmore can receive the care they need from their earliest moments of life.

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Thank you to Novamed and Conundrum Holdings for your generosity and commitment to the health of the youngest members of our community!

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WIN

a Mercedes-Benz A200
Special Edition

Valued at \$64K



\$50
a ticket

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to buy
yours



Drive for Little Smiles!
Every dollar goes to
refurbishing the paediatric
playroom and outdoor play
area at the Northern Hospital.

Only
5000
tickets
available

Grab your ticket and support the kids of the North.

Scan the QR code above OR visit nhfoundation.org.au

Raffle permit number: MG-R26347117. Tickets sales close 16 October 2026. Prize to be drawn on 19 October 2026, 02:00 pm AEDT at Northern Hospital, 185 Cooper Street Epping, VIC 3076. Prize value (RRP): \$64,033 driveaway. Proceeds to: Northern Health Foundation, ABN: 39150242855, 185 Cooper Street, Epping, VIC 3076. There is an agreement with Glacier Park Group Pty Ltd (ACN 670 432 185, trading as Raffle Link) to promote or sell tickets for this raffle for reward. For full T&C's scan QR code above or visit www.rafflelink.com/r/northern-health-foundation/drive-for-little-similes

Northern Health Foundation works to support the varied and growing needs of our northern community by raising vital funds towards the purchasing of life-changing equipment, capital works, research and training. Your incredible support improves care, experience and outcomes for thousands of patients each year.

For more information or to make a donation, contact us on:



(03) 8405 2897



foundation@nh.org.au



nhfoundation.org.au/donate



Northern Health Foundation

Northern Hospital Foyer, 185 Cooper Street, Epping Victoria 3076



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