



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL MELBOURNE'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

Tuesday 30 October, 2018

The Honourable Sir James Gobbo AC CVO QC, former Governor of Victoria and Patron, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and **Lady Gobbo**

Ms Margaret Fitzherbert MP, Shadow Minister for Health

Monsignor Tony Ireland, Episcopal Vicar for Health representing, the Archbishop of Melbourne

Ms Patricia Faulkner AO, Deputy Chair, St Vincent's Health Australia

Adjunct Professor Toby Hall, Group CEO, St Vincent's Health Australia

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respect to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this evening.

Tony and I would like to welcome you to Government House for this important occasion. Not every organisation has the opportunity to celebrate a 125th anniversary.

It is a testament to the leadership and vision of those in this room today – and the many generations of leaders that have gone before you – that you are able to mark this significant milestone.

Standing here in Government House, it is pertinent to reflect on what happened 125 years ago.

Your opening day was scheduled for 6 November 1893. The Melbourne Cup was held the day prior, which – then, as now – ensured that many notable figures were in town for the event.

Your 'cottage hospital' was ready. A converted terrace house in Fitzroy, the painting was done, the alterations finished.

My predecessor, Lord Hopetoun, Victoria's 8th Governor, had been arranged to officially open the hospital. However, that was not to be.

The Victorian Parliament had been prorogued and the Governor had been called away to fulfil his constitutional duties. How disappointed he must have been. But the well-known philanthropist, Lady Janet Clarke, agreed to stand in. What a fine choice, considering her long-standing commitment and support for hospitals and healthcare in Victoria.

And all the more fitting, because the history of St Vincent's Hospital rested on the shoulders of women: the Sisters of Charity. These 'founding mothers' instilled their values into the hospital. Compassion, justice, integrity and excellence. Values that are as relevant to the hospital now, in 2018, as they were in 1893.

St Vincent's Hospital has remained true to the vision of its founders, while managing to grow and evolve with modern times. When the doors first opened in 1893, the hospital had 30 beds and, in its first 14 months, it treated more than 2,500 patients.

Now, 125 years later, St Vincent's Hospital has more than 880 beds across its services, and treats more than 50,000 inpatients and more than 40,000 emergency cases every year.

You have a history of which you can be proud. You are renowned for compassionate care: for reaching out to some of the most vulnerable people in the community – from those experiencing mental health issues, addiction and homelessness, to refugees and asylum seekers. Fifty per cent of your patients come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In addition to your history, though, you also have a future of which you can be proud. Already renowned for innovation, you are adding the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, bringing together medicine, engineering, science and industry to enhance all aspects of healthcare.

In February of this year, I visited St Vincent's Hospital and was impressed by the innovative BioFab 3D Centre, all you were accomplishing in the Cancer Centre and how you achieved great care amidst the bustle and the demands of the Emergency Department.

Congratulations to the Chair, to the Board, and to the Foundation too, for all that you do to enable the important work of St Vincent's Hospital. I am pleased for the opportunity too to acknowledge the generosity of the donors and corporate sponsors whose support – literally - saves lives.

I thank the national CEO Toby Hall and St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne CEO, Angela Nolan, who is unfortunately unable to be here this evening due to a family bereavement.

And finally, on behalf of all Victorians, I thank the doctors, nurses, specialists, allied health professionals, support staff and volunteers for all that each one of you does, every day, to take care of the health of our State.

So, just one week ahead of schedule, may I, as your proud patron, wish you all a wonderful 125th birthday.