

IMPACT REPORT 2023

# Your gift of time



Advancing patient care  
and life-saving research





Saving lives through the  
extraordinary power of giving

# Purpose

# Mission

# Impact

Together, we advance  
patient care and  
life-saving research

We create opportunities to connect  
givers to great causes



Watch a  
video about  
Stephanie's  
story

“ At this stage, our level of understanding about heart failure is incredibly low which is why ongoing research is of the utmost importance. It’s unlikely a cure would ever exist but people who are diagnosed should be able to experience a high quality of life, especially considering it is often shortened.”

**Stephanie Alexander**  
RBWH Cardiomyopathy patient



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A celebration of community

### Acknowledgement of Country

The RBWH Foundation would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our services are located. We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the State.



“ I was raised in a very generous, giving and caring family, which is always willing to help others. Now, in my position as a nurse, I see a lot of people in vulnerable and life-altering situations, and I see how important donations are to their life. Having the RBWH Foundation behind us, as staff, really helps us do our job a whole lot better ”

**Tamara Goudswaard**  
RBWH Emergency Department Nurse  
Representative of the Goudswaard Family Foundation

# Thank you for your extraordinary generosity

It is with great heartfelt pride that the RBWH Foundation presents to you the 2023 Donor Impact Report: a testament to the extraordinary power of giving.

One theme which resonates strongly within these pages is **connection**.

For the Foundation, this began with our long-awaited return to Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) after a COVID-enforced hiatus. Our new office, in the bustling heart of RBWH, is now a hub for patients and hospital staff who regularly stop to say hello and provide updates on their treatment or their research and patient care initiatives. They also express gratitude for their experience by joining our community of donors.

It is these connections and stories that inspire **our Purpose, Mission and Impact** in action: to advance patient care and life-saving research by connecting those who wish to give with the most extraordinary opportunities to do so.

In 2023, we were also thrilled to unveil our new RBWH Foundation Grant strategy, doubling funding for brilliant initiatives across the Herston Health Precinct. The Foundation also continued support for the Herston Biofabrication Institute (HBI), Herston Infectious Diseases Institute (HIDI), the WeCU Family Care program for the RBWH Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and the Jamieson Trauma Institute.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our extraordinary supporters.



**Our donors** save lives by supporting new-generation CAR-T cancer treatment



**Our donors** reduce the risk of dementia in Parkinson's patients



**Our donors** have significantly improved outcomes for premature babies



**Our donors** improve the lives of thousands of patients, every year.

Thank you to everyone who supports the RBWH Foundation through philanthropy. Please enjoy learning more about our talented researchers, the patients who inspire their work and the wonderful donors who form part of our generous Foundation community.

With deepest appreciation,



**Susan Buckley**  
Board Chair



**Simone Garske**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Extraordinary impact, created together

At the RBWH Foundation, we believe the greatest impact is achieved by funding extraordinary opportunities in medical research and patient care innovation, developed by clinicians who work directly with patients.

## This has been our mission since 1985.

Established as the philanthropic partner of RBWH, the Foundation now also supports the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS), Redcliffe Hospital and other prestigious Herston institutes and centres.

Our biannual RBWH Foundation grants are a highly competitive and patient-centric scheme which supports bench-to-bedside research and patient care innovation.

Overseen by our independent Impact and Grants Advisory Panel, with representation from RBWH and STARS, the grants fund the most needed and transformational medical projects that allow the best and brightest medical minds to improve outcomes for thousands of patients and their families.

These patient care and life-saving research projects lead to better health, now and into the future, not only for Queensland but for Australia and the world.

## The Power of Giving in action

Across RBWH, STARS and Redcliffe Hospital, incredible things happen each year:



Close to **1,500,000** instances of health care



Emergency care for about **1,600** critically ill and premature babies



Over **200,000** cancer care treatments, consultations and admissions



Over **220** clinical research trials



Almost **700** research projects



Close to **900** published clinical studies



Close to **40,000** surgeries



Just over **165,000** adult and **13,000** paediatric emergency admissions

# Your donations give the gift of time and provide:



Family Support



Patient Care



Research



Staff Wellbeing



Equipment

RBWH Foundation impact on patient care and life-saving research, thanks to the extraordinary power of giving:



**\$80 million**  
invested in health innovation since 1985



**\$2.7 million**  
distributed in FY23



**RBWH**  
**Foundation Grants**

## Growing our grant strategy, now and into the future

In 2023, the RBWH Foundation was delighted to achieve a major strategic objective of doubling our grant funding for patient care initiatives and medical and health research across RBWH, STARS and other prestigious Herston institutes and centres.

In recognition of this milestone, we have renamed our scheme '**The RBWH Foundation Grants**'.

In the inaugural round, the RBWH Foundation attracted almost \$3.2 million in diverse and impactful submissions. The selection process was robust and overseen by an independent panel with representatives from RBWH and STARS.

Unfortunately, we could support just one in seven of these extraordinary projects.

Our commitment is to grow the pool of funding available for these extraordinary opportunities so important projects, and their impact, do not go unfunded.

We know these ideas have the potential to transform thousands of lives. These grants incubate early career researchers with seed funding and support their projects as they grow in scale and significance - either through continued Foundation funding or by seeking external granting opportunities.

**Join with us, today, to seed brilliant ideas into projects with international impact.**



**Donate today**  
to support RBWH  
Foundation grants





“ Donating to medical research is absolutely vital and allows us to find new treatments and implement these into patient care. This makes an enormous difference to patients’ lives. Without medical research, we will not be able to make any progress in the fight against disease.”

**Professor Sandhir Prasad**

(pictured with patient Stephanie Alexander)  
RBWH Senior Staff Cardiologist and Researcher



## Our partners

The Herston Health Precinct, with RBWH at its heart, has grown to become a world-leader in research and innovation. It is our honour to partner with many of the Precinct's institutes and centres to progress patient outcomes, nationally and internationally.

When you support the RBWH Foundation, you support Australia's brightest medical minds at:

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Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH)

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Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS)

---

Redcliffe Hospital

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Herston Biofabrication Institute (HBI)

---

Herston Infectious Diseases Institute (HeIDI)

---

Jamieson Trauma Institute (JTI)

---

Comprehensive Breast Cancer Institute (CBCI)

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## A message from our partners in health innovation



### Message from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH)

At the Royal, we are always looking for ways to better patient experiences and the level of care we provide for them, and the RBWH Foundation is a key supporter of this.

Thanks to the generosity of the Foundation and its donors in funding patient care initiatives, medical and health research and larger projects such as the WeCU Family Care Program in the Intensive Care Unit, we can provide ever-improving patient outcomes.

There are RBWH Foundation volunteers across our facility every day of the week demonstrating the

power of giving to our researchers, health workers and the community.

The Foundation's annual Donor Impact Report really puts in perspective the impact this hard work and dedication has across our campus.

Thank you to the Foundation donors for enabling us to go above and beyond day after day and week after week.

#### **Louise Oriti**

RBWH Executive Director



### Message from Redcliffe Hospital

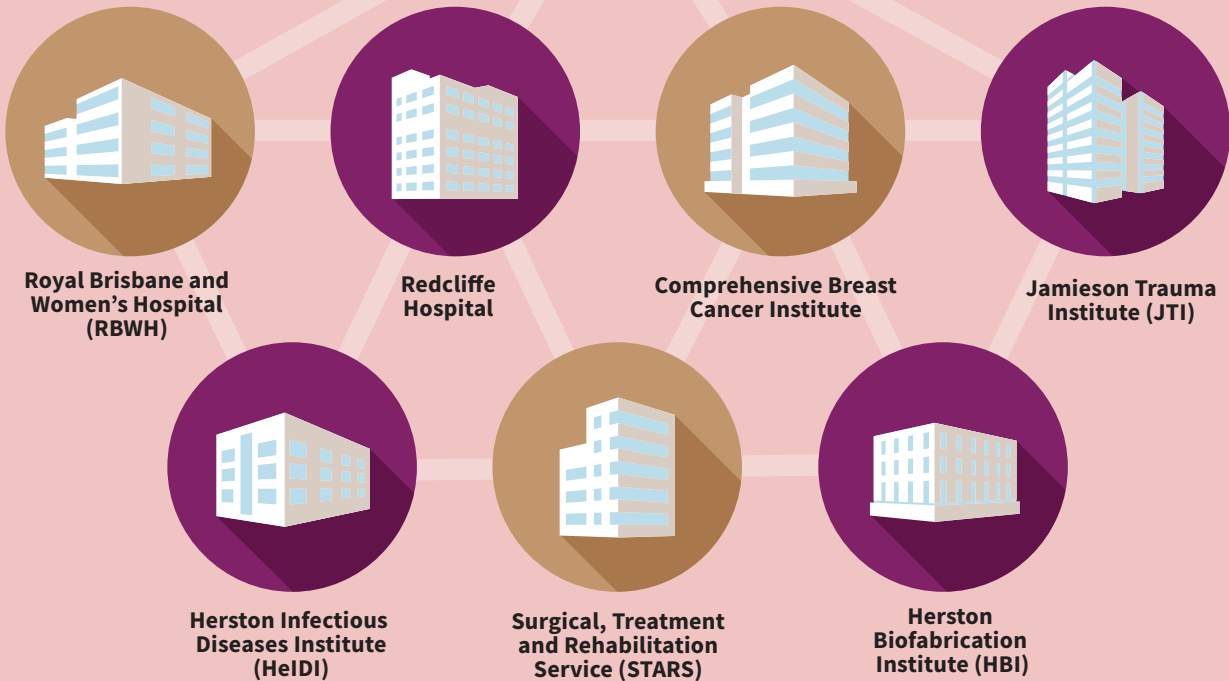
Raise it for Redcliffe Hospital, in conjunction with the RBWH Foundation, has managed to lift so many spirits: from patients in our Rehabilitation Unit who can now socialise in a beautiful courtyard and lounge, to staff who are proud of the cutting-edge research being funded.

We have a major redevelopment underway, and the research agenda will help us attract the high-quality staff we will need in the future.

#### **Louise O'Riordan**

Redcliffe Hospital Acting Executive Director

# The RBWH Foundation



## Message from the Executive Director Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS)

As the Executive Director of STARS, Queensland's newest public hospital, I am grateful for the support the RBWH Foundation has provided to our hospital.

Over the last 12 months, STARS has received funding for several research projects including quality consumer and community involvement in research, a new technology for upper limb neurorehabilitation and returning to work for people with aphasia after stroke.

For those who have suffered a traumatic injury or life-changing medical event, the research being funded by the Foundation will give these patients the very best chance of recovery. By funding innovative and cutting-edge research, the Foundation is ensuring that STARS remains one of the best specialist public health facilities in Queensland.

In addition to funding research, the Foundation also supports initiatives that improve our patient's stay with us, such as a project to co-design patient nutrition videos.

These patient care initiatives make such a difference to the lives of not only our patients but also to our staff who strive to provide the best of care, every day.

I was also very proud to see STARS staff get behind an inaugural cupcake baking competition and fundraiser this year, with proceeds going to the Foundation. This year we hope to grow this event further, providing not only much needed funds for the Foundation but also a fun and engaging event for our staff.

I look forward to working with the Foundation in the future to improve the lives of our patients and their families. Thank you for everything that you do.

### **Dale Dally-Watkins**

STARS Executive Director



**Our community of  
extraordinary researchers**



**Learn more about  
these extraordinary  
research projects**

## Research ideas that begin with the patient

Since our inception in 1985, the RBWH Foundation has existed to advance patient care innovation and life-saving research that translates from bench-to-bedside, conducted by clinicians who deal directly with patients.

All of these brilliant ideas are innovative and change lives.

For Sunshine Coast resident Wes Raddysh, innovation returned his mobility and helped him secure his dream job.

In late 2022, on his way to a job interview, Wes lost his lower leg in a motorcycle accident. The location of the injury meant traditional hand-cast leg prostheses caused further injury and sores. The avid runner and cyclist could walk less than 200 metres.

Wes's experience is not uncommon. At least 50% of amputees experience pain and discomfort from hand-cast prostheses.

About six months after his accident, Wes was invited to join an RBWH Foundation trial of new-generation casting equipment which uses water pressure to cast limbs and prostheses more accurately.

Purchased by an RBWH Foundation grant, the hydrostatic casting equipment is the first of its kind in an Australian public hospital.

“ To give a patient, who otherwise might have used a wheelchair for mobility, the opportunity to walk is extremely rewarding. ”

**Jessica Angus**  
**RBWH Director of Orthotics and Prosthetics**

Wes describes the result, his perfectly fitting leg, as a 'eureka' moment. Wes finally made that job interview and is now 'living his dream' as a Noosa Ferry commercial boat skipper. He also hopes to one day resume cycling.

From Wes and the RBWH Foundation, thank you.



**Financial support from our donors is critical to ensure ideas from the brightest medical minds are never lost.**



“It’s a pretty special thing for your life to be saved. RBWH was a pivotal part of why I was able to recover so well after my injury, supplying the required professionals at any time.

I would hope everyone understands the important research that goes on behind the scenes at the Royal, as without it I don’t know where I would be today.”

**Angus McLeod**  
RBWH brain injury patient



## The impact of extraordinary research

# Using data to stop trauma in its tracks

To reduce the burden on emergency departments and help keep people safe, we need to understand what causes injury and illness and the steps we can take to prevent it.

A partnership between RACQ and the RBWH Foundation means more funding for research into a new frontier of trauma – e-scooter and other e-mobility device-related injury.

Led by Professor Kirsten Vallmuur, Chair of Trauma Surveillance and Data Analytics at Jamieson Trauma Institute, the project delves into the detail of what factors contribute to crashes as well as their immediate and long-term impact.

“I think there’s still a perception in the community that injuries from e-scooters won’t be particularly severe, which sometimes prompts the community to push-back against legislation changes and enforcement.

“ I’m continually shocked by what we’re seeing in our research - **catastrophic trauma**, particularly at the higher speeds, which is having a severe and ongoing impact on patients’ lives.”

**Professor Kirsten Vallmuur**

**Chair of Trauma Surveillance and Data Analytics at Jamieson Trauma Institute**

Data gathered by trained research nurses, located at leading emergency departments across Queensland, including RBWH, will be used to provide evidence which is critical to inform public awareness campaigns and policy interventions.

“It’s a very collaborative approach to improving safety,” said Professor Vallmuur.

**Donations give the gift of time to research  
emerging challenges and shape practice here  
and across the globe.**



**Our community of  
extraordinary researchers**

## Bringing epilepsy out of the shadows

When a patient's epilepsy is medication-resistant, surgery to remove the area of the brain responsible for triggering seizures can be life-changing.

For epilepsy specialists, like RBWH Foundation grant recipient Professor David Reutens, the challenge is to protect eloquent areas of the brain like those responsible for language and motor function.

One procedure commonly used in planning brain surgery is functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), a scan that tracks increases in blood flow in active parts of the brain.

During this 'mapping' process, patients are required to undertake a series of tasks while lying perfectly still inside the confines of an MRI scanner. If a patient experiences anxiety or has difficulty following instructions, this process can be particularly challenging, making it difficult to perform the test or to obtain accurate results.

Thanks to the extraordinary power of giving, Professor Reutens and his team have created a video that stimulates those same cortical regions of the brain, but with minimal active involvement from the patient. It is hoped this will deliver greater accuracy and a much easier and less invasive patient experience.

“With Foundation funding, we were able to create and test a movie stimulus, which incorporates parts of a TV quiz show and specially created scenes, to develop a new AI analysis method that identifies areas of the brain that are activated by language.”

**Professor David Reutens**  
**RBWH Comprehensive Epilepsy Program Director**

“Epilepsy patients in the study found the test easy to tolerate. As well as improving how we investigate people with uncontrolled seizures, the project contributed to the training of three PhD students, our next generation of medical researchers.”

It is also hoped the technique could one day be adapted for other types of neurosurgery, including tumour removal.

**Your support for research affects every  
aspect of community life. Thank you for  
making a difference in so many ways.**





“ We need to keep on improving our diagnostic techniques; so long as the problem exists, more research needs to be done.”

**Professor David Reutens**  
(pictured with patient Elizabeth Young and RBWH Neurologist John Phamnguyen)



## Our community of extraordinary clinicians



# A new era for clinician-led patient care innovation and medical research

In 2023, the RBWH Foundation achieved a major strategic goal: doubling Extraordinary Opportunities funding available for patient care initiatives and life-saving medical research across RBWH, STARS and Herston institutes and centres. To celebrate this milestone we launched the RBWH Foundation Grant Rounds.

This commitment owes everything to the extraordinary power of giving by our supporters, fuelled by their trust and faith in the passion and expertise of our brightest medical minds.

We look forward to sharing the outcomes of the RBWH Foundation Grant Round One with you.



### **MS ALEXANDRA CATION – Kidney Health Service, RBWH**

*Co-designing the future of adolescent and young adult kidney care.*

This project will evaluate the Adolescent and Young Adult Kidney Care Service, co-designing improvements that support the wellbeing of young people with advanced kidney disease.



### **MS HANNAH OLUFSON – Dietetics and Food Services, STARS**

*From documents to digital: Co-designing nutrition videos to improve patient care.*

This project will develop nutrition videos, to support current printed materials widely used across RBWH and STARS.



### **DR KATHERINE WHITE – Grantley Stable Neonatal Unit, RBWH**

*Welcoming beds for babies.*

This project works with community volunteers to create baby bedding with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designs, supporting First Nations' families with babies in our ICU and special care nurseries.



### **DR PANOS BARLAS – Jamieson Trauma Institute**

*Exploring patient's experience of care for acute low back pain.*

Acute lower back pain is the 5th most common cause for an Emergency Department (ED) visit. We will seek feedback from patients in ED for lower back pain, their experience of care, and understanding of information given.



### **MS PENNI BURFEIN – Speech Pathology, RBWH/STARS**

*Return to work for people with aphasia: Experiences and outcomes at six months.*

Working with people experiencing post-stroke aphasia and communication loss, this project seeks to improve treatment interventions to support return to work.



**PROF SAMANTHA KEOGH – Nursing and Midwifery Research, RBWH**

*Appropriate use criteria for peripheral arterial catheters in acute and critical care.*

Critical patients often need intravenous fluid through insertion of a peripheral catheter. This project looks at catheters inserted into arteries, developing clear criteria for appropriate use.



**DR CLAIRE MULLER – Neurology, RBWH**

*Queensland Cerebral Amyloid Angiopathy Cohort: a hidden epidemic.*

Research to improve early detection and inform treatment strategies for the build-up of deposits in brain vessels.



**MS GIOVANNA TORNATORE – Occupational Therapy, STARS**

*Improving outcomes for people requiring upper limb neurorehabilitation.*

This study seeks to identify the improvements of upper limb use, affected following stroke and brain injury, when innovative rehabilitation devices such as robotics and virtual reality are incorporated.



**DR KIRSTEN HEPBURN – Kidney Health Service, RBWH**

*Enhancing patient experience in haemodialysis through digital platforms.*

This project will develop innovative audio-visual information for patients about haemodialysis, the filtering of blood for those with chronic kidney disease.



**MRS LISA ANEMAAT – Education and Research Alliance, STARS**

*Transforming person-centred care through community involvement in research.*

RBWH and STARS recognise the importance of the involvement of patients and their carers in designing care plans and research projects. This project aims to ensure positive partnerships are developed through appropriate training and resourcing.



**MS MIRIAM DILLON – Physiotherapy, RBWH**

*Trauma informed physiotherapy project.*

This project addresses the physical, mental and emotional needs of patients that have experienced trauma and assesses their access to specially designed physiotherapy.



“The staff go above and beyond and the teamwork was brilliant. I will never forget the care Frank received: a credit to all — every staff member on the unit cared.”

**Vanessa Van Bael, pictured with husband Frank**



## The extraordinary impact of philanthropy

# The extraordinary impact of philanthropy

For patients like Frank Van Bael, who was severely burnt in regional Queensland while working on an old car; survival takes a huge team of emergency and medical experts.

But for patients to thrive, as well as survive, post-recovery, takes research and innovation backed by a huge team of supporters.

In 2020, the RBWH Foundation was honoured to partner with global miner, Anglo American, in a multi-year \$1-million program of burns research and patient care innovation. The program is led by the internationally renowned RBWH Professor Stuart Pegg Adult Burns Centre in partnership with the Herston Biofabrication Institute (HBI).

“ The Anglo American Skin, Burns and Wound grants have allowed us to assemble a diverse program of research, with each project acting as a piece of a larger puzzle that improves patient outcomes.”

**Dr Jason Brown**  
Burns Centre Director

These projects are now reaching maturity:

- Testing an enzyme as a non-surgical treatment for upper limb burns
- Inhaled pain relief as an alternative to conventional sedation and analgesia
- Control of bleeding through novel technology incorporating snake venom
- Co-designed outcome measures for hand burn injuries
- A pilot peer support program offering psychosocial assistance
- Analysis of the barriers and enablers to patient mobility
- Wearable sensors to monitor a patient's energy expenditure and requirements.

Every donation to the RBWH Foundation is also a piece of a larger puzzle, that together advances patient care and life-saving research.

Thank you to each and every one of you: our former patients, their family and friends; the philanthropic individuals determined to ease the burden of disease and injury; and like-minded organisations that share our values and mission.

**You make a difference to patients like Frank, each and every day.**



## The RBWH Foundation pays special tribute to our corporate partners who helped make the impossible, possible, every day, in 2023.

Without the generosity of the following organisations, we could not advance patient care initiatives and life-saving research.

<b>Hopgood Ganim</b>	<b>Anglo American</b>	<b>ADCO</b>
<b>BDO</b>	<b>Gouldson Legal</b>	<b>Jellinbah Group</b>
<b>Resly</b>	<b>RACQ</b>	<b>JJ Richards</b>
<b>Lewis Land Group</b>	<b>Turosi Giving</b>	<b>Centra</b>
<b>Crew Legal</b>	<b>GKS Law</b>	<b>BallyCara</b>
<b>Sesame Lane</b>	<b>Redcliffe RSL</b>	<b>My Care Enterprises</b>
<b>Liberty Financial</b>	<b>Lucas Paw Paw Remedies</b>	



## Our community of extraordinary supporters

Connection comes in many forms and for Samuel Steel, co-founder of property management software firm Resly, inspiration to give came through the transformative contribution of fellow RBWH Foundation donors, the Leary Family.

## Why

### ... is philanthropy a priority for Resly?

We wanted to reinforce and embed giving as part of our company and staff culture - to foster a sense of social responsibility and community engagement. Through collective action we can amplify our impact and create lasting positive change.

### ... donate to health?

We are nothing without our health. Health is the cornerstone of our existence, influencing every aspect of our lives. It's not just about the absence of illness; it's about having the vitality and resilience to pursue our dreams, nurture our relationships and make meaningful contributions to society.

### ... choose the RBWH Foundation?

The Leary family's story, particularly Lex's journey, deeply touched me on a personal level. As I became more involved and witnessed the profound impact of the Foundation's work, my appreciation grew exponentially. As someone immersed in the tech field, I was particularly excited by projects that harness cutting-edge technology to revolutionise patient care and treatment.



Pictured above: Resly Co-founders Sam Steel and Rico Chen with office puppy Baelon

### ... is corporate giving so important?

Incorporating philanthropy into corporate values and practices not only strengthens relationships with stakeholders but also fosters employee engagement and loyalty. Additionally, I would encourage corporate organisations to seek collaborative partnerships with nonprofit organisations and leverage their expertise and networks to maximise their impact.

“ We are essentially gifting time to scientists to make discoveries, clinicians to provide care, and patients to spend quality moments with their loved ones.”

**Samuel Steel**  
Resly Co-founder

**If you would like to contribute to advancements that improve the lives of countless individuals and families, contact our team.**



“ The RBWH Foundation’s motto is that ‘Every donation is a gift of time’ and there is no better way to express the difference every dollar raised will make.

There are many people who would not be here now if it wasn’t for previous research. My Reinhard is probably one of them.”

**Irene, pictured with Reinhard**  
RBWH Foundation Donors





Our community of  
extraordinary supporters



Learn more  
about leaving a  
Gift in Will



## Leaving an extraordinary legacy for now and into the future

When Brisbane's Tegwen Howell recently updated her will, she had two main priorities: to provide for her beloved husband and sons and to leave a Gift in Will to the RBWH Foundation, in honour of the hospital that saved her life.

In 1984, Tegwen spent two weeks in RBWH Intensive Care Unit (ICU) fighting for her life. She had been found unconscious by her mother after collapsing with viral encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain caused by a mosquito-borne virus.

"RBWH really is my favourite hospital both personally and professionally and, believe me, I've spent a lot of time in a lot of different hospitals since," said Tegwen.

The debilitating virus left Tegwen with epilepsy, a seizure disorder that changed the course of her life. No longer able to become a pilot, Tegwen pursued health economics: the study of costs, benefits, resource allocation and outcomes of health care.

Her connection to medical research and grant funding became personal and professional.

“ Without research, things don't improve. It was nearly 10 years, give or take, before we found a drug (for epilepsy) that I could tolerate and that controlled the seizures without too many side effects. ”

**Tegwen Howell**  
RBWH Foundation Donor

By leaving a Gift in Will to neurological research, Tegwen is ensuring patient outcomes continue to improve, now and into the future.



Our community of  
extraordinary supporters

## A 35-year giving journey to improve health care



Dr Michelle Lee, DBA, JP(Qual), is as proud today of RBWH's dedication to healthcare as she was 35 years ago when she delivered her two daughters under the hospital's exceptional care. The birth of her first child in 1989 signalled the beginning of this enduring relationship.

Dr Lee's life motto is 'a small effort can make a big difference; we are all able to effect positive change and create a better world'.

Since 2000, as founder of the Global Sustainable Development Vision Innovative Association (GSDVIA), which later became Medical eHealth Australia (MeHA), Dr Lee has been fundraising for many charities and hospitals. Her introduction to the RBWH Foundation began with the Butterfly Ball, an annual event funding life-saving research for babies with birth-related difficulties. MeHA also supports the Herston Infectious Diseases Institute (HeIDI).

“ We support the RBWH Foundation because its mission is to improve health outcomes and enhance the quality of life for patients; it aligns very closely with our values.

We're committed to advancing innovation from infectious diseases research and cancer treatment projects to digital healthcare and programs promoting social and holistic well-being.”

**Dr Michelle Lee**  
Medical eHealth Australia CEO

“We firmly believe we can promote a healthier society and foster sustainable healthcare. Let's continue our charity journey together towards a brighter, healthier future.”

**The RBWH Foundation invites you to join  
this journey, now and into the future.**



Our community of  
extraordinary supporters

## Lighting up Christmas, in memory of Thomas



For Michael and Vanessa Saccasan, being given six short months and one day with their baby boy Thomas was a ‘gift’ – a gift they have sought to repay every Christmas since.

Thomas and his twin brother Nicholas were born in RBWH in 2010. Sadly, Thomas never made it home. But in the years that followed, his family have filled their Deception Bay home with Christmas lights to spread joy and raise funds for the RBWH Foundation, so that other children can have a chance at life.

Thomas and Nicholas experienced twin-twin transfusion syndrome, a condition in which the blood flows unequally between babies that share a placenta. Born at 29 weeks, Thomas weighed just 439 grams and Nicholas 1,327 grams.

“With all the treatment and care Thomas was given at RBWH, he made it to six months and one day. And for that we will be forever grateful.”

**Vanessa Saccasan**  
RBWH Foundation Ambassador

That life-changing experience inspired over a decade of fundraising – and counting.

“Because the boys spent their first Christmas in hospital, we decided to do Christmas lights. Thomas had never made it home with us and would never be able to be with us at Christmas, so we did it for him,” said Vanessa.

“We did it for Thomas, for all the babies like him, and for the kids and families we make smile.”

**If you have been inspired by the Saccasan family, share your fundraising ideas with the RBWH Foundation Team – we’d love to hear from you.**



Scan to  
learn more



**Raise it for  
Redcliffe Hospital**

## Touches of home that help us heal

Raise it for Redcliffe Hospital has celebrated a 3-year campaign to bring a touch of home to the Redcliffe Hospital Rehabilitation and Stroke Unit.

The \$200,000 renovation project was funded by the extraordinary generosity of the Moreton Bay community to Raise it for Redcliffe Hospital, an initiative of the RBWH Foundation.

For former patient, Mark Adams, the smile says it all. In 2020, Mark spent months in the unit recovering from locked-in syndrome. The rare neurological disorder results in complete paralysis of all voluntary muscles except for those which control the eyes.

“My consciousness was still present, but I couldn’t talk. It was terrifying,” said Mark.

“When you are in hospital long-term, you need a space with nice pictures, and a nice area to sit in and enjoy the flowers, enjoy the outside world.”

Those touches of home also help patients heal, explained Redcliffe Hospital Acting Executive Director Louise O’Riordan.

“Rehabilitation care is centred around patients achieving what we call Functional Independence Measures,” said Ms O’Riordan.

“Some of those goals include social interaction, so encouraging patients to use the courtyard and dining room to socialise, eat outside their rooms and meet families is really important.”

**Louise O’Riordan**

**Redcliffe Hospital Acting Executive Director**

An official opening in March 2024 paid tribute to the community leadership of past and present Redcliffe Hospital Giving Day Impact Partners and other key supporters.

“Through their vision and generosity, our local business leaders encourage others to give,” said RBWH Foundation Fundraising Manager – Redcliffe Hospital, Sharyn Tidswell.

“Their inspirational philanthropy improves the lives of patients, now and into the future.”

### Raising spirits, improving patient outcomes

Raise it for Redcliffe Hospital is an initiative of the RBWH Foundation that advances patient care, life-changing research and staff wellbeing at Redcliffe Hospital.

**In 2023:**

**12+**

research  
internships  
funded

**3**

Rehabilitation  
Unit projects  
completed

**2**

Palliative Care  
projects  
started



“When you are in hospital long-term, you need a space with nice pictures, and a nice area to sit in and enjoy the flowers, enjoy the outside world.”

**Mark Adams**  
Former Redcliffe Hospital Patient

**1**

Urology  
research  
grant

**2**

Research  
Fellowships  
awarded

**1**

Senior  
Nursing  
Researcher

**8**

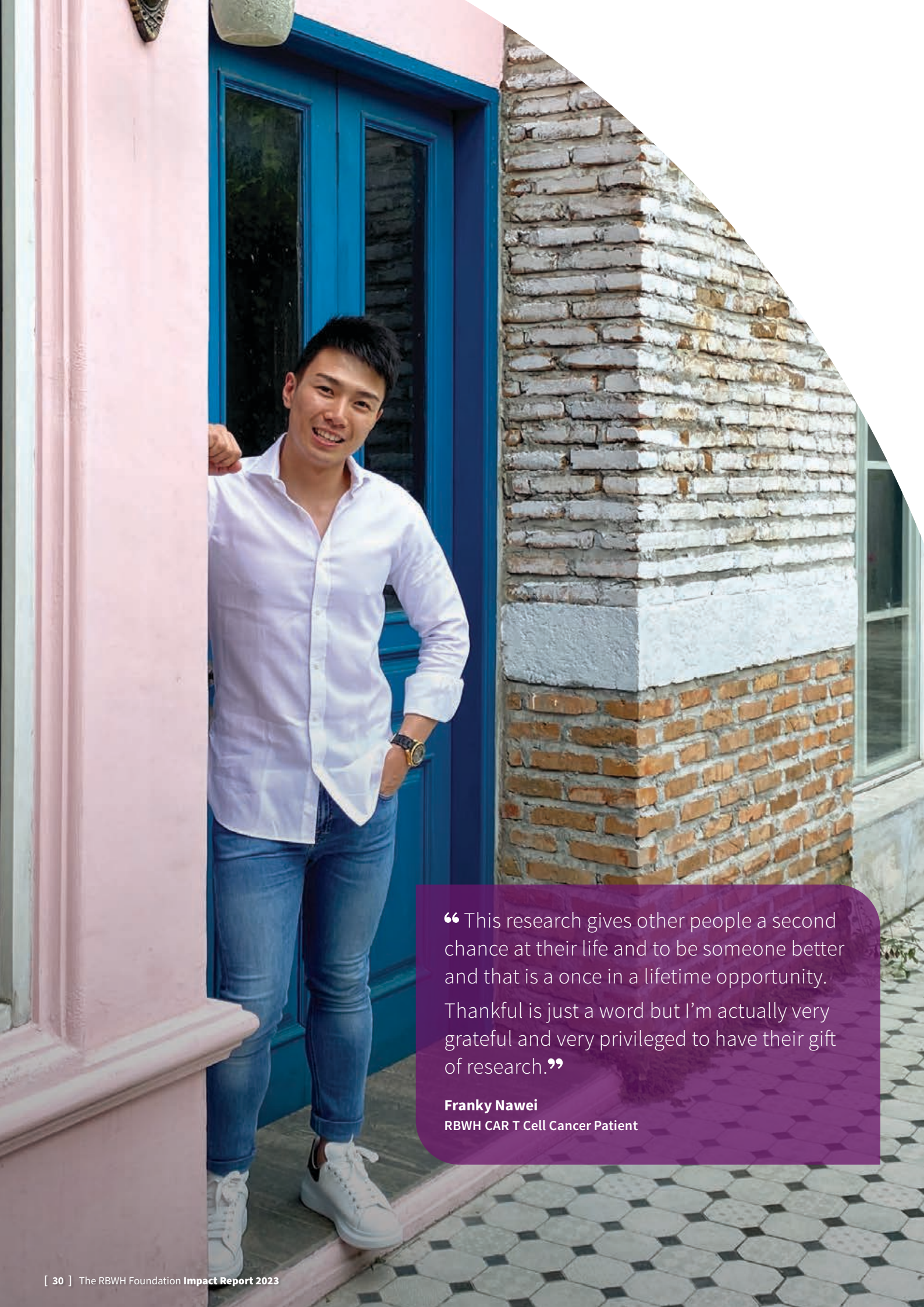
Wishlist  
grants

**7**

Children  
and Families  
grants

**1**

Staff  
wellbeing  
grant



“ This research gives other people a second chance at their life and to be someone better and that is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Thankful is just a word but I’m actually very grateful and very privileged to have their gift of research.”

**Franky Nawei**  
RBWH CAR T Cell Cancer Patient



Our community of  
extraordinary researchers

## 2023 RBWH and RBWH Foundation Project Grants

In 2023, the RBWH Foundation was proud to support the RBWH Study, Education and Research Trust Account (SERTA) Advisory Committee grant scheme. These grants provide financial support to RBWH researchers for highly innovative research projects.

Priority is given to proposals with the potential of being further developed with larger scale external support, and to supporting proposals from early career researchers.

The successful applicants were:



### **Associate Professor Dr Jayesh Dhanani**

Critical Care and Clinical Support Services, RBWH

*Are the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) levels of the medication levetiracetam adequate to prevent and treat seizures following aneurysmal subarachnoid haemorrhage and traumatic brain injury.*

Associate Professor Dhanani's research team suspects that levetiracetam may not be reaching optimal levels in the central nervous system. The goal is to improve dosing strategies and enhance patient care globally by establishing guidelines for the safe and effective use of levetiracetam.



### **Associate Professor Dr Andrea Henden**

Cancer Care Services, RBWH

*Solving problems in Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T cell Immunotherapy*

CAR T is a cancer treatment customised for each patient, by collecting their T cells (a type of white blood cell) and genetically changing them to bind to cancer cells and kill them. This work addresses clinical issues, such as fevers and infections, to spare patients from unnecessary treatments and associated side effects.



### **Dr William Steadman**

Surgical and Perioperative Services, RBWH

*Digital-powered healthcare: Improving communication, engagement and treatment compliance in patients with implant-related infections*

This project will develop a communication app to help those with complex orthopaedic or trauma-related device-related infections; including joint replacements, plates, screws or nails. It integrates wearables data (like smart bands) for remote monitoring and introduces gamification to keep patients engaged and motivated in their treatment journey.



## Revolutionising ‘hospital food’ at RBWH

With the support of an RBWH Foundation grant, RBWH Dietetics and Food Services have partnered with consumer representatives and patients to create a digital solution for real-time feedback on meal quality.

“By creating a simple, anonymous survey – delivered via QR code to your own device – we now have a dashboard that rates every meal at every service, triggering menu adjustments and new recipes,” said Felicity Myers, Service Coordinator.

Healthy eating is critical for our overall health, says Ms Myers, and never more so than when recovering from an acute illness or trauma. Nutrition can even play a key role in decreasing the length of time patients spend in hospital.

“During what can be a really awful, stressful time, getting a meal that’s comforting and enjoyable can make a big difference.

“ We hope that, by having this system well tested and embedded at RBWH, we can help develop a product that could be used to improve nutrition in any hospital, anywhere in the world.”

**Felicity Myers**  
Service Coordinator

Ultimately though, the proof of the pudding is in the eating - or in this case, the eating of a Thai Salmon Noodle Salad. Thanks to ongoing patient feedback and a recipe overhaul, a once dismal rating of 2.7 stars rose all the way to a ‘delicious’ 4.1 stars.

**The extraordinary power of giving,  
potentially changing the way hospital menus  
are managed, internationally.**







“ I think it’s a great development in caring for people. It is a way for the patient’s voice to be heard. Patients are the reason this hospital exists. So, if we don’t have a say, then we’re not getting the care that we really need. It may be something that’s quite small, like the tea bags, or it might be something that’s seriously important.”

**Heather Dent**  
RBWH Patient  
(pictured with RBWH Chef David Abdelnour Melendez)



## Co-designing solutions to preventable illness



Co-design is no longer a buzzword, it is the future of health care design and helping researchers develop an innovative solution to one of Australia's most common hospital-associated complications: delirium.

Delirium is a distressing condition characterised by sudden and pronounced confusion. Carrying an increased risk of poorer health outcomes and even death, this under-recognised condition costs the health system an estimated \$8.8 billion annually.

Consumer advocate Lesley McGee is one of six consumers who partnered with RBWH Internal Medicine and Aged Care, health care organisations and design experts to create a public awareness campaign. The campaign will help families and carers spot the signs and manage its impacts through a suite of resources that empower carers and inform the wider community.

“Co-design is so important; people have different ideas and different ways of looking at things. What would I like to see? What would someone else like to see? What would I understand from this information presented to me, as opposed to what someone else would understand?”

**Lesley McGee**  
Consumer Advocate

“The message needs to come out strong, loud and clear that anybody can get delirium. And the consequences can be catastrophic. A lot of people in the community have no concept of what it is and how serious it can be. And yet it can potentially be preventable.”

The project, led by Professor Alison Mudge (pictured left with Lesley), now needs further funding to turn a brilliant concept into a national solution.

**With your support, we can make  
best practice our everyday reality.**



Providing impact  
through external grants

## Providing support that allows health innovators to focus on research



Not only does the RBWH Foundation offer two highly competitive grant rounds each year, we also leverage our considerable expertise to assist clinicians compete for external funding opportunities.

The RBWH Foundation Impact and Grants team has more than 30 years combined experience in medical research and is able to provide submission support and scientific readership for research submissions to larger funding bodies, including the National Health and Medical Research Council.

This unique service delivery has secured funding through philanthropic partners for patient care projects that would otherwise have no obvious funding avenue.

In 2023, these partnerships included:

- Heart Foundation
- Australian Orthopaedic Association
- Harcourts Foundation
- Australian and New Zealand Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
- Medtronic
- National Health and Medical Research Council
- Perpetual Group
- Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation
- Hospitals Contribution Fund of Australia (HCF) Research Funding
- Department of Transport and Main Roads

**Extraordinary research through the power  
of philanthropic partnership.**



**Donate today to  
support patient care and  
life-saving research**



Our community of extraordinary volunteers



# Our community of extraordinary volunteers

On any given Thursday, enter the RBWH Kidney Health Service and you'll witness patients' smiles of anticipation and delight brightening what otherwise can be a lengthy and monotonous morning. Renal dialysis can take between three and four hours, and a friendly game of bingo can make that time fly.

It is one of the many activities led by the RBWH Foundation community of hospital volunteers (affectionately known as the Compassion Crew), a team of dedicated and caring volunteers who help lift spirits across RBWH and STARS every weekday.

## Compassion Crew achievements in 2023:



6,711  
Hours gifted



43,208  
Patients and visitors helped



810  
Loads of patient laundry



6,489  
Cups of tea and coffee

Our wonderful Compassion Crew volunteer for many reasons: for some it offers the chance to give back, or to make a difference to their community. Others see it as an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience.

Age is irrelevant: one in 3 are university and TAFE students, 2 in 5 are retirees and and one in 10 work full-time or part-time.

**Talk to us to learn more about the impact volunteering could make to the lives of others.**

**It is a Gift of Time that is simply priceless.**

**Learn more about joining our Compassion Crew**





**Our community of extraordinary volunteers**

Learn more about joining our Compassion Crew



“ The idea of being able to make someone else’s day a little bit better, is something that’s really rewarding to me. ”

**Araniya, RBWH Foundation Volunteer**



“ I enjoy being a volunteer now that I’m retired and I feel lost when I’m not here working away. ”

**Ken, RBWH Foundation Volunteer**

“ It means a great deal to be able to help people and to give back to the hospital that helped me. ”

**Neil, RBWH Foundation Volunteer**





**RBWH Foundation**  
**GIVING DAY**

## A celebration of giving

Every year, for one day in June, the RBWH Foundation takes incredible pride in painting RBWH and STARS with splashes of ruby to raise spirits, awareness and funds to advance patient care and life-saving research.

The RBWH Foundation Giving Day is the highlight of our annual calendar, an exciting opportunity to connect with our community of patients, donors, health workers and corporate leaders through the extraordinary power of giving.

In 2023, together, we raised just over \$580,000 to advance patient care innovation and life-saving research.

From the entire RBWH Foundation team, thank you to our matching partners who double every donation received, hospital staff who join in the fundraising fun, and donors far and wide.

**Together, we make a difference  
today and into the future.**

# A celebration of community

OCT



**Official opening of the RBWH Intensive Care Unit WeCU Family Care Program**

L-R: Donors Russell and Belinda Leary, former patient Lex Leary, WeCU Patron Leona Murphy, Health Minister Shannon Fentiman, ICU patient family Mat and Bianca Jones-Umina and (front) daughter Cienna.

SEP



**RBWH Foundation Government House Reception**

APR



**Toowong Village Heart Gallery Art Auction: artist Ann Nguyen with Foundation CEO Simone Garske**

SEP



**The 2023 Extraordinary Power of Giving Gala**

FEB



**Tzu-Chi Foundation Gold Coast Chinese New Year Prayer Gathering**

NOV



**2023 Professional Real Estate Training (PRET) Awards**



## Contact RBWH Foundation

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**RBWH**  
Foundation

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RBWH Foundation is registered as deductible gift recipient (DGR) under the Subdivision 30 BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 and is endorsed by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) as an income tax concession charity (TCC).