



THE COMMON GOOD NEWSLETTER JULY 2023

# THE GOOD NEWS



## MILESTONE MARKED:

# 1000th ROBOTIC-ARM-ASSISTED SURGERY PERFORMED AT TPCH

Orthopaedic surgeons at The Prince Charles Hospital have performed their 1000th robotic-arm-assisted joint replacement surgery. This state-of-the-art machine was fully funded by The Common Good in 2019. It allows for surgeries that are more accurate than manual procedures, and as such, it promotes faster recovery and less pain.

"For some people with arthritis or an injury, a joint replacement is the best solution to ease chronic pain or to help them get back to moving normally or doing activities they love," Dr Simon Perkins said.

"This machine's cutting-edge technology allows for virtual planning before the operation. This personalised surgical

experience reduces the chance for soft tissue damage and the size of the exposure site, which in turn helps to optimise the outcome and recovery for the patient."

The Prince Charles Hospital is the only public hospital in Queensland with this machine. Currently, the hospital's surgeons use the machine for 100 per cent of partial knee replacements and 60 per cent of full knee replacements.

**"If the Foundation did not fund the machine, I don't think we would have it. I am incredibly grateful to the Foundation and their supporters for providing the technology and ensuring that the patients of The Prince Charles Hospital have what really is next-generation surgery," Dr Simon Perkins said.**

### About The Robotic Joint Replacement Surgery

Before surgery, a patient will have a special CT scan to create a 3D model of their joint.

This means the optimal implant size, shape, and position can be templated prior to surgery.

Once in theatre, technology is placed on the patient and used to map out the bone. That is cross-referenced with the CT scan and from there the 3D imagery helps to determine where the machine can and cannot cut.

The surgeon controls the robot, but the machine's cutting arm cannot move outside the designated boundaries. That means the incisions will be precise, occur at the correct angle and will measure the correct size.

**"It negates the need for having some of the more invasive retractors and instruments used. We can also use the robot to perform surgeries where traditional instrumentation wouldn't work," Dr Perkins said.**

"We are always working towards improving patient outcomes by funding equipment and medical research, and our success is only thanks to the generosity of everyday people who share our desire to help others live healthier for longer," said Steve Francia, CEO of The Common Good.



Dear Friends,

As we move into the new financial year, it's natural for our focused attention to be on the plans, activities and outcomes we are striving to achieve - outcomes that provide evidence of our simple endeavour to "help people live healthier for longer".

So, while our team continues to look forward, I think it is important to occasionally glance back and reflect on the work and significant achievements made during the past year. As the newly appointed CEO of The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation, taking over from long-term CEO Michael Hornby, the obvious standout is the enormity of the impact that supporters of The Common Good have had on patient care and research programs.



Our supporters - our community - have been instrumental in paving the way forward, and I thought it appropriate to select a few of the many projects to highlight the depth, breadth and significance of our collective achievements. Things that just shouldn't be forgotten, including:

- The construction and unveiling of the ICU of The Future, two state-of-the-art ICU bedspaces at The Prince Charles Hospital specifically designed to optimise healing and recovery while ensuring clinical efficiencies remain at the highest standard. Our medical staff and researchers have begun carefully assessing the benefits for patients, both short and long-term, and the interest these new ICU bedspaces are attracting from Australia and across the globe is a testament to all involved.
- The appointment of the inaugural Director of Research at The Prince Charles Hospital, Assoc Professor Michael Nissen. This new role is helping to steer and propel the strategic research priorities of the hospital.
- Learning that 37 lives have been saved to date (as of June 2023) due to "The Living Heart Project" - an initiative culminating from pre-clinical research made possible through supporters of The Common Good.

We also have lots to look forward to in the year ahead. Our Tradie Health Institute continues to gain support in its quest to tackle occupational lung diseases, including the deadly disease silicosis. We are working to refurbish and improve the Paediatric Area of the Caboolture Hospital. Also, our research programs are due to expand in the year ahead, with a particular focus on inspiring new scientists and clinicians to work in a research capacity and ensuring the support and mentoring to further develop this is provided.

I guess you can tell from the above that I'm excited to be leading The Common Good team. I'm lucky to have them - authentic and hard-working. Our organisation is in a good space to continue and increase our aim to "help people live healthier for longer". This is our "why". Thank you to those who are part of the wider team. If you want to join our journey, give us a call or email us. The rewards are incredible.

Stay safe,

Steve  
CEO, The Common Good

## CONGRATULATIONS DR OBONYO WINNER, FORTY UNDER 40 AFRICA AWARDS

Critical Care Research Group (CCRG) Research Fellow, Dr Nchafatso Obonyo, has been acknowledged in the prestigious Forty Under 40 Africa Awards, winning the Science, Technology and Innovation category.

**Dr Obonyo's groundbreaking research into septic shock, backed by The Common Good, has enormous life-saving potential.**

With over 49 million cases annually, mostly in children, the knowledge he's uncovered could be invaluable in battling sepsis and saving lives.

The Forty Under 40 Africa Awards seek to identify and honour a cross-section of the continent's

most influential and accomplished young business leaders, who are committed to professional excellence, exceptional leadership, and community service. By shining the spotlight on these young achievers, the Awards offer a strong platform for recipients to work with emerging industry pacesetters while building a positive attitude in younger generations across many African cultures.

Dr Obonyo travelled to South Africa earlier in the year, representing CCRG and the Kenya Medical Research Institute Wellcome Trust (KEMRI-Wellcome), to accept his award.



With your help, Dr Obonyo received an Innovation Grant and Research Fellowship from The Common Good, which has now transpired into global recognition!

## LIVING LEGACY

The Common Good has many incredible supporters who make the life-changing, globally significant research we support and facilitate possible. Some of them, like our cherished current supporter Maureen, have ensured that their living legacy will continue by nominating a charity to leave a gift to in their Will.

Maureen made her first gift to The Common Good in 2017, and in the years since, the impact of her generosity has been profound. In late 2022, two new Intensive Care Unit bedspaces were opened in The Prince Charles Hospital, dubbed the ICU of the Future. A world-first initiative, these bedspaces use the latest technology and innovations to reduce the environmental factors like light and noise that can lead to delirium and other mental health conditions for patients.

The ICU of the Future was only made possible through the

generosity and kindness of our community, including people like Maureen who enjoys visiting The Prince Charles Hospital to see the impacts of her support.

Maureen extends her support to several charities across Australia as they are causes close to her heart, and with friends and family impacted by several health conditions over her lifetime she understands the importance of continuing medical research.

"Research can make a huge difference in people's lives, and it takes a lot of time and resources for breakthroughs to happen. One person thinks of something that somebody else hasn't thought of, or they can build on work that's already been done."

Maureen is grateful that she is able to make a positive impact for causes she cares about now and into the future.

Congratulations to Maureen, who recently received the 2023 Community Philanthropist of the Year Award at the Queensland Philanthropy Awards (QCF).



"If you haven't got someone to leave your legacy to, why not consider a charity? Even small gifts can make a big difference. I know that my support of The Common Good will help to facilitate the work of incredible researchers and help to fund important equipment," Maureen says.



**Leaving a legacy for The Common Good** - The Common Good has partnered with Gathered Here, Australia's top-rated Will-writing platform. Would you like to learn more? On the back page of this newsletter, you'll find a scannable QR code that will direct you to online resources.

# WHEN TIME STOPS, RESEARCH STOPS

Time is a universal currency and something we can all relate to. It drives the most significant milestones in our lives.

The time we are born, the first time we fall in love, the time we get our first job, the time our children are born, and the time spent celebrating precious family moments like weddings and birthdays.

However, for those who suffer a serious illness like lung and heart disease, dementia, or even mental illness, time seems to stop.

And when the time for life-saving research into these diseases stops, the progress towards cures and medical advancements stops too.

Sadly, for some people, that means their world as they know it stops.

Recently, we asked a number of our supporters to share their experiences or their loved one's experiences with a chronic condition that our researchers need more time to investigate.

We were blown away by the incredibly open and honest responses we received. Here we have shared some of these stories. Thank you to those who have contributed.

## TRACEY

Person with Cardiac Arrhythmia/ Blocked Arteries

*"I had open heart surgery at The Prince Charles Hospital, having a triple bypass surgery brought on by blocked arteries. The condition was a racing heartbeat at 225 bpm with some slight pain over my chest. Light headiness and unable to move from my chair. My husband called an ambulance. After my surgery, I was in hospital for nearly three weeks. I have had a long recovery with other complications afterwards. Getting better now, but it has been a long road. Heart problems are hereditary in my family, but still, I would not have thought I would have heart problems."*

## SUSAN

Daughter of person with Alzheimer's and Vascular Dementia

*"My father was diagnosed a number of years ago. The reluctance to seek medical advice when the symptoms were evident, up to the point of diagnosis, was gut-wrenching and heartbreaking. With much resistance, weaving through the machinery from diagnosis to assessments, treatments, medications and care options or lack thereof, you are faced with the four D's: denial/disbelief, delay, doubt and distress. The Common Good's research efforts, along with a pointed campaign to garner community support, are steps towards acceptance, proactiveness, hope and comfort to those inflicted with this disease and their carers/loved ones."*

## LEANNE

Person with Pulmonary Hypertension

*"Diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension at aged 29. Treated at The Prince Charles Hospital for this condition until undergoing a double lung transplant on Easter Sunday, 2015 at The Prince Charles Hospital. Still under the care of the Lung Transplant Team."*

## DOUGLAS

Father of person with Congenital Heart Disease

*"Born with dextrocardia in 1972. With 13 additional conditions in the heart. He had a Blalock shunt at 13 months and then a major operation at age 18 performed by Dr Stafford. Had regular outpatient visits for 44 years. Anthony was married and had a daughter, and lived a full, happy life. Anthony thought of The Prince Charles Hospital as his second home. Anthony passed away at The Prince Charles Hospital from multiple organ failure on 19/12/2016. It is not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."*

## JUNE

Daughter of person with Vascular Dementia

*"My father was an intelligent and busy man. He was a Bank Manager of the Bank of New South Wales and then taught Law and worked for the Society of Accountants. He completed Crosswords daily to keep his mind active well into his 90s. Then Vascular Dementia became obvious.*

*At about 94, he became forgetful and confused, and much later illogical and suspicious. It was obvious that he could not continue living independently as Mum was also very needy. They moved into aged care but very much against his will, and the changes necessary exacerbated his decline. When he wandered in attempts to return to work, he was moved to a secure wing and away from his wife.*

*There he lived his life as he had always done, preparing lectures to give and trying to assist with evacuations when the patient alarms sounded. He always introduced me to his fellow residents as his family and was always happy to answer any questions on financial advice for anyone or to assist the receptionist. The staff were exceptional in their respect for him, and he was not unhappy only believing that his wife had left him and although they met at church services, "she would not go home with him". He also believed that he "hadn't a penny to his name". He also hid things for safety and was sure that he was around 60 years old. Despite the signs of dementia, he kept an amazing vocabulary until his death.*

*I believe he taught me everything that he would have tried to teach me in my life during his last two years in aged care. He made many mistakes, but they all came from the very best of intentions, and his motives were always pure. At 99 years old, he developed severe arthritic pain in one knee, so he could no longer walk and severe pain in one elbow, which was excruciating if moved. With strong pain relief, he slowed down and stopped eating. He was semi-conscious for several days while I sat with him and read to him from his life story and the bible. Early one morning his heart stopped.*

*He was a good Dad and a great example for life. Dementia did not take him away from us. It made us read between the lines to find him behind his actions and words. His years with Dementia were precious to all of his children, and although frustrating to him, he characteristically made the most of them, and we loved and respected him all the more for it."*



When you donate to The Common Good, you are giving more time to researchers to understand conditions and develop new treatments, drugs and techniques, which ultimately gives more time to the ones we know and love.

Give more time today at [tcg.org.au/give-research-time](https://tcg.org.au/give-research-time)



# DIAGNOSING DEMENTIA EARLY:

## THE RESEARCH UNDERWAY STRIVING TO DO JUST THAT

Alzheimer's disease has heart-breaking impacts that ripple through families across the country and the world. Yet even as the most common form of dementia, accounting for approximately 70 per cent of dementia cases; there is currently no single diagnostic test that definitively concludes a person has the condition.

A group of health professionals in Brisbane – including Dr Eamonn Eeles, a geriatrician at The Prince Charles Hospital, is working hard to change that. They have been dedicating their time and skills over the past few years trying to create

This research program, called the Dementia Tracer Program, is also known as Sterling's Dream.

According to Dr Eeles, if they create a better diagnostic tool for the condition, the positive impacts would extend beyond earlier diagnosis and could potentially also include earlier treatment intervention, improved quality of life for those with the condition and their families and better trials for new treatments options which are surfacing around the world.

So far, close to 20 individuals have completed this study, which is supported, in part, by The Common Good and its generous donors. It involves brain function testing, specifically Position Emission Tomography (PET) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) brain scans.

**"At The Prince Charles Hospital, the patients and the control group go through a rigorous clinical, physical, bloods and cognitive assessment to detail what their cognitive profile is. Then they go to the Herston Imaging Research Facility (HIRF), where they have an MRI scan to show the structure of the brain. After that, they have a PET scan, where radioactive tracers are injected into the patient's vein, and when those bind to parts of the brain, it lights up and shows up as colours on the scan," Dr Eeles said.**

During this testing, two tracers are used. The first tracer is a standard research tracer that picks

up amyloid in the brain, which is the abnormal protein thought to be responsible for Alzheimer's. In saying that, some people have amyloid on the brain and don't have dementia, while some don't have amyloid on the brain and do have dementia.

It is the use of the second tracer, specifically concocted by talented radiochemists based at the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital, that has shown some interesting results.

Dr Eeles says this new tracer binds to the memory-forming part of the nerves in the brain: "That's shown already that there is not as much uptake of this tracer in the memory-forming parts of the brain. It has nowhere to go. Those nerves are knocked out, not working."

"The next stage is to do it in a larger sample to investigate if this is reproducible and generalisable, to zone in on the early stage as well to see whether it's an early marker and to investigate whether it tells us anything about how patients will respond to treatments. So, it might be a prognostic marker either for disease progression or for response to treatments."

He added: "Because there are a lot of new treatments coming up for Alzheimer's disease, the more accurate a marker of Alzheimer's disease we have, the better trials will be. If this test even provides a small degree of accuracy and can diagnose the condition earlier, then treatment can begin earlier, or those people could be involved in trials for new treatments so we can more accurately know how effective they are."

We know that many of our supporters have been impacted by dementia personally or through family, and it is something close to their hearts. We thank you for your ongoing support of this important project to help with a diagnostic tool for this insidious condition that affects so many.



## MEET THIS YEAR'S PhD SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



### LUKE CHURCHILL

PhD Scholarship Recipient

#### What is your research focusing on for your Doctor of Philosophy?

My research will investigate whether lung ultrasound can predict poor lung outcomes in high-risk adult patients undergoing open heart surgery and guide decisions for optimal oxygen delivery and breathing supports in intensive care.

#### Why is this area of research important to you?

Post-operative pulmonary (lung) complications (PPCs) frequently occur following cardiac surgery. Incidences in patients undergoing open heart bypass surgery range from 5-90% and contribute significantly to increased time in hospital and ICU, and increased rates of disease and death. For patients with prior lung conditions, incidences of PPCs may be three to four times higher than in other patients. Therefore, identifying risk factors for developing PPCs and early diagnosis in the cardiac surgery population is vitally important.

#### How do you feel about the support from The Common Good and its community of donors?

The impact of The Common Good and its donors' support is immeasurable. Many researchers, driven by a passion for improving patient outcomes, kindly devote portions of their own time to assist with research. However, by and large, research studies are only made possible through funding sources that provide wages and resources for the team members to successfully complete projects. As a full-time clinician, the research within my PhD and evaluation of patient outcomes simply would not be possible without the support of The Common Good and the generous donors who provide crucial non-clinical time to complete these studies.



### SAROEUN VEN

PhD Scholarship Recipient

#### What is your research focusing on for your Doctor of Philosophy?

For acute palliative care (APC) patients, their critical condition and progressing illness make them vulnerable to hospital-acquired complications such as pressure injury (PI). Pressure injuries cause patients physical and psychological distress but are preventable and considered a safety and quality priority for hospitals.

The primary outcome of this research program is the identification and development of an appropriate PI risk assessment tool for use in APC, with the identification of appropriate PI preventative interventions matched to the assessed PI level of risk.

#### Why is this area of research important?

For APC patients, PI may lead to further medical complications, increase hospital length of stay and even result in death. Generally, the goal of care for APC patients on admission is to improve their quality of life and avoid aggravating their current medical condition. In this context, hospital-acquired PI prevention is a priority. This research is the first of its kind to address the evidence gap for hospital-acquired PI prevention in APC. The results will inform future research and practice in the context of PI prevention at The Prince Charles Hospital and externally. Importantly, this research has the potential to improve healthcare outcomes for APC patients at TPCH, nationally and internationally.

#### How do you feel about the support from The Common Good and its community of donors?

This scholarship is invaluable; it empowers me as a palliative care nurse to undertake research to improve nursing care to prevent hospital-acquired complications such as pressure injuries. I am deeply grateful for the support from The Common Good and its community of donors for helping nurses like me to carry out research to improve patient care.

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER  
FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS RAISES  
**MORE THAN  
\$12,000  
FOR VITAL  
RESEARCH**

More vital research into the life-altering condition Cystic Fibrosis is now possible following a successful community fundraising event in Seventeen Seventy.

The event called The Tree Party for The Common Good, held under an iconic tree on the foreshore at Air Sea Rescue Park on May 6, was organised by several families impacted by the condition.

The more than \$12,000 raised, thanks to the commitment of those families and the support of the local community, will go towards important research into Cystic Fibrosis carried out at The Prince Charles Hospital.



It's easy to host your own fundraising event for The Common Good, with our new and free fundraising platform.  
[tcg.org.au/get-started-fundraising](https://tcg.org.au/get-started-fundraising)

# WRITE YOUR WILL FOR FREE TODAY

Bequests (gifts in wills) bestowed upon The Common Good by generous supporters like you are one of the most significant funding sources for medical research.

We have partnered with Gathered Here, Australia's top-rated Will-writing platform. It is a free, easy step-by-step online service, and it can take less than 10 minutes to write your legally-binding Will.



Scan the QR code or use this link to receive free and unlimited lifetime updates to your Will:  
[tcg.org.au/create-your-free-will](https://tcg.org.au/create-your-free-will)



By leaving a gift in Will to The Common Good, your legacy could be greater than you've ever imagined.

# \$250K Raffle

## FIRST PRIZE PACK

Support The Common Good and go in the draw to win a \$250K first prize pack.

Tickets are \$10 each, with 50% of each ticket sold supporting life-changing medical research.

Promoter is 50/50 Foundation Limited. Permits and T&Cs at [playforpurpose.com.au](https://playforpurpose.com.au)



**GET TICKETS NOW**

