



# FoundationNEWS

Autumn 2022



## NINA YHAP: BARBADOS DREAMING

***“To get here was my biggest challenge, travelling 10,000 miles, alone from Barbados. As any international medical graduate knows, it’s a fairly strict and rigorous process to get here. I came here alone, without family, but I had a goal in mind – my country had a goal in mind for me,” says Nina Yhap.***

Nina had been at Northern Health for the last two years receiving post-fellowship training to be a vascular and endovascular surgeon – the first of her kind when she returns to Barbados.

Iman Bayat, Head of the Vascular Surgery Unit at Northern Health explains that “stories like these need to be acknowledged when they occur in our lifetime.”

He continues on, “Nina was selected through a strict and stringent selection process, which recognised her talents. She came over here, trained very hard, and has taken the knowledge back with her to set up this service. For Northern Health to be part of this journey is just beautiful,” says Iman. “We must cherish these moments, and hopefully fuel further endeavours going forward. Seeing her leave was bittersweet. We will truly miss her.”

Nina takes back more than happy memories of her time here. She said, “I never imagined, two years ago, I would have the opportunity to learn so much. It’s been a complete immersion in the best way, and the experience has been more than I ever imagined. What I know now is something I dreamed about but never thought I would get to do. What Mr Bayat, Mr Rangarajan, Mr Goh and other clinicians at Northern have given me is priceless – they have given me

the opportunity to learn so much; what they have instilled in me is really indescribable. They will always be my mentors and friends,” says Nina.

Nina Yhap was born in Barbados, graduated from the University of The West Indies and completed all of her postgraduate surgical training throughout the Caribbean.

After graduating as a general surgeon four years ago, Nina says, “it was future planning and development by the Barbados government that inspired them to invest in training me as a vascular and endovascular surgeon.”

Nina explained that back in Barbados, the major limb amputation rate, per capita is extremely high and concerning with “major limb amputations happening two or three times a week in my hospital in Barbados.”

“Unfortunately, there are limited minimally invasive and endovascular surgical interventions being performed in my hospital in Barbados,” said Nina. “So, my government had the foresight to invest in future planning for lower limb salvage, where young people – in their 50s and 60s – could have another 20 years of service.”

“As corny as it may sound, Northern Health has become home in a big way. But I’m going back home to Barbados for a bigger purpose.”

Nina’s dream is to establish a vascular surgery unit “and all that it entails – including allied health support and setting up a podiatry unit. I hope to have a hybrid theatre in the future too.”

**We wish you all the best, Nina!**

# HELPING OUR SMALLEST PATIENTS

**Northern Health is one of Victoria's busiest health services. Our population in the rapidly growing northern suburbs is predicted to increase by just under a quarter of a million people by 2031. The need for easily accessible and readily equipped maternity services is vital.**



Our Neonatal Unit at Northern Hospital Epping received a Rad 5 Pulse Oximeter with Neonatal Sensor donation through the Humpty Dumpty Foundation.

The piece of equipment enables a new model of care that will ensure all newborns have their vital signs checked at 48 hours after birth and checked prior to discharge.

Barbara Rischitelli, Nurse Unit Manager Neonatal Unit, said the equipment was crucial, especially at the early stages of life.

"Oxygen in the blood is really quite crucial when babies are born. The baby might need oxygen and, without that monitor we are not able to actually supervise that," she said.

"If the baby has low oxygen saturation, then we would administer oxygen and potentially do mechanical ventilation to be able to bring those saturation levels up."

The new equipment will allow staff to access this much-needed equipment in a more swift and efficient way. The introduction of the Rad 5 Pulse Oximeter with Neonatal Sensor will ensure equipment is on hand and accessible for staff, avoiding the inefficiencies of needing to retrieve equipment from different points of the ward. This will increase safety and also improve the level of service to patients.

"Because it is portable, we can take it to theatre, we can even take it to the wards because sometimes we will have a baby that could be deteriorating, and that is our first initial observation that we know the baby is in trouble," Barbara said.

"We are grateful for this piece of equipment. It will definitely assist in caring for our babies and giving them optimal treatment."

## IT'S RIVERLEE'S SHOUT

**A great way to show someone you appreciate what they do is by shouting them a coffee. It's a simple action that goes a long way. A kind gesture between friends.**

A wonderful friend of Northern Health Foundation is the Riverlee Foundation, a relationship that has spanned many years. Riverlee have funded important medical equipment for Northern Health, and most recently, a three-year PhD scholarship.

Tricia Lee, Riverlee Foundation, and Northern Health Foundation Board Member, paid a special visit to Northern Hospital Epping to shout 1,000 coffees for frontline medical staff during our 'Shout a Coffee' initiative. It just so happened that Katharine See, Head of Respiratory Medicine, was on hand to accept the very first coffee being donated by Riverlee.

The Lee family are passionate about giving back to the community and always willing to support a good cause. "We are very grateful for the hard work of all healthcare workers in Victoria. They are working so hard to keep us safe. We wanted to do something to show our appreciation. When we came across this campaign,



we thought it was the perfect way to connect directly with the staff at Northern Health and to show we care," says Tricia.

Riverlee's donation of \$5,000 purchased approximately 1,000 coffees for staff across all Northern Health campuses. Nurse Unit Manager, Rhiannon Cooper, was extremely grateful for the recognition saying, "being in full PPE for up to 12 hours a day is extremely exhausting. However, it's nice to see the community has seen all our hard work and effort by getting behind the shout a coffee campaign and supporting all healthcare workers across the Northern Health campuses."

***We thank Riverlee Foundation for their continued support of Northern Health, its staff and community.***

# MAKING ALL THE DIFFERENCE TO OUR NEONATES

**The Humpty Dumpty Foundation is a children's charity that has provided essential and often life-saving medical equipment for children in Paediatric Wards, Neonatal Units, Maternity and Emergency Departments across Australian hospitals for more than 30 years.**

After a successful grant application, Northern Health received a generous donation through the Humpty Dumpty Foundation – Babylog Ventilators for our Neonatal Unit. This crucial piece of equipment has already started to make all the difference for our little patients, with Nurse Unit Manager, Barbara Rischitelli saying “they are state-of-the-art new ventilators, allowing us to ventilate babies more appropriately, and are much better for baby's lungs.”

The new ventilators are also easier to use, and the healthcare staff are able to medically treat the babies more suitably. Barbara explains that “it puts Northern

Health right up there to give our patients treatment with the best technology.”

“Without a ventilator, the baby wouldn't survive. The ventilator will keep the lungs expanding as you would normally breathe. These babies may have fluid in their lungs, or are born prematurely, and their lungs haven't had a chance to develop. We need to keep their lungs expanded and keep them alive – which is exactly what these ventilators can do for them.”

The new equipment is a fantastic addition to Northern Health's Neonatal Unit. We would sincerely like to thank Humpty Dumpty Foundation for their ongoing support.

# BRINGING THE CANCER GIVING TREE TO LIFE

**We continue to receive donations from grateful patients and families as their way of showing appreciation and thanks to the Cancer Services team. Through these acts of generosity, the Northern Health Foundation Cancer Giving Tree came to life. It is our way of acknowledging the ongoing support from our community.**

The tree has multi-coloured leaves and teal butterflies, each representing a donation from the community ranging from \$250 to \$10,000. Melissa Gwynne, Day Oncology Nurse Unit Manager, explained the importance of the Cancer Giving Tree. “It provides patients and families with a platform to be able to donate funds to assist Northern Health Cancer Services. By doing so, they can have their donation recognised on the tree.”

Previous donations have enabled the Day Oncology Unit to purchase a range of equipment, including treatment chairs, infusion pumps, vital sign machines, scalp cooling machines, ECG machines, blanket warmers, and care packages for NOAH@Home patients – a service that allows patients to receive treatment in the comfort of their own home.

“This equipment has allowed staff to provide the high standard of care for our patients and provide comfort during treatment. Some patients spend six to eight hours for treatment, so comfort is a big factor,” Melissa said. “We are always in need of new equipment – some to replace older devices and some for any new treatment equipment that becomes available. As we are expanding, the donations from the Giving Tree are vital.”

Pina Di Donato, Acting Executive Director, Public Affairs and Foundation, said, “It has been very rewarding to watch this beautiful tree grow, donation by donation. Every branch, every leaf, signifies a person touched by someone's cancer journey and a life made a little more comfortable through their generosity. We are so grateful for every contribution.”

**For more information, or if you would like to make a donation to our Cancer Giving Tree, please call 8405 2897.**



# PAINTING THE NORTH

The once bare walls at Bundoora Centre are now adorned with five beautiful paintings, generously bequeathed to Northern Health by the husband of a former patient. The paintings showcase local northern landscapes, depicting the works of the late Maria Monzon-White during her last years.

Maria's husband, Ronald White, who passed away in 2020, gifted the paintings to Bundoora Centre to be exhibited for our dedicated staff.

Ronald and Maria had three children together; Paloma, Vincent and Laurence. All very grateful for the care their mum received while a patient at Bundoora Centre, with Paloma saying, "they really cared about her. We were always impressed. Going in there all the time and seeing the same people every week, we always felt we were in good hands. Mum would be really happy that the space has been brightened up."

Maria's life was full of adventure, much like the paintings. Early on in her life, Maria began a law degree only to realise her true passion was art. Paloma reminisced on her mother's life saying, "she underwent five years of study in Barcelona – a Bachelor of Fine Arts combined teaching, drawing and painting course in the late 1950s to 1960s. She worked as an art teacher for quite a few years and then started her own interior design business with a friend of hers. Then while travelling in Italy, she met my father."

The family settled in Murrumbena, Australia, before moving to Ivanhoe in 1973.

There, she worked part-time as an art and Spanish teacher and even had her own studio at home.



"She did a lot of work in the 1970s – a lot of local portraits and landscapes. She loved painting, and she was very much into the natural world. We lived in Ivanhoe, and we had a big backyard that looked onto Donaldson's Creek – our local creek," Paloma said.

"She was in Bundoora Centre quite often. She was there three or four times a year and that was for about ten years. The nursing staff are excellent and were kind and patient with mum. My dad appreciated that and my mother appreciated all the staff there."

During the mid-to-late 1990s, Maria began working on a collection of paintings of local landscapes, including Donaldson's Creek and Darebin Parklands. These are now on display at Bundoora Centre.

Northern Health, particularly staff and patients at Bundoora, are extremely grateful for this very special gift from the White family.

***If you are considering leaving a Gift in Will to Northern Health, please get in touch with Northern Health Foundation on 8405 2897 for more information.***





## JOSIE MINNITI'S OAM ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER DANCE

**It's been a long three years between dances, but Josie Minniti's Dinner Dance Cancer Fundraiser is finally back!**

Heels were kicked up in celebration of an incredible 25 years of fundraising for vital equipment for Northern Health's Day Oncology Unit. This equipment continues to give cancer patients a more comfortable experience while receiving treatment – a cause very dear to Josie and her family, who have been touched by cancer many times.

"This year, we celebrated 25 years of hosting our Annual Dinner Dance. After having rescheduled the event four times due to COVID-19, we were really looking

forward to coming together with family, friends and the community to raise funds for an important cause."

"On this very special milestone, we raised money for medical equipment for the Day Oncology Unit at Northern Health as we want to make a difference to the lives of people battling cancer. That's what it's all about, improving the quality of life for patients undergoing treatment," Josie said.

Thank you Josie for a wonderful 25 years of fundraising for our Cancer Services.

## TRUDI HAY'S VIRTUAL HIGH TEA

**Trudi is passionate about supporting patients who are undergoing cancer treatment and has been raising funds for our Cancer Services for many years, with the total raised over the past 11 years close to \$95,000.**



In 2021, for the second year in a row, Northern Health Foundation Board Member and Patron, Trudi Hay, hosted her annual Cancer High Tea virtually.

"I was overwhelmed and touched by the incredible reaction and generosity to my virtual events over the last two years, especially during difficult times. If anything, we wanted to circulate the message that cancer treatments have continued throughout lockdown and

to acknowledge the amazing work our frontline staff are doing to protect our community," says Trudi.

With another successful High Tea completed, Melissa Gwynne, Nurse Unit Manager Day Oncology, was delighted to announce that they were able to purchase a new bladder scanner.

Thank you, Trudi, for your ongoing support and dedication to Northern Health Cancer Services.



## BEV CARMAN KILMORE RACE CLUB EVENT

**For the past 15 years, Bev Carman, Northern Health Foundation Patron, has been hosting events in support of purchasing life-saving equipment for Northern Health.**

Last year, Bev hosted her event at the Kilmore Racing Club where she's done so for the past ten years.

"Everybody kept telling me how much they enjoyed themselves. It was like having a beautiful luncheon with friends," Bev explained.

With incredible support from Kilmore Racing Club, Bev raised \$7,000 and was able to

purchase a blanket warmer for Northern Health's Day Oncology Unit.

A special thanks to Mitchelton Winery and Kilmore Racing Club, and of course, to Bev Carman for yet another successful event. Bev has been an incredible support to Northern Health over the years, and the Foundation is thrilled to see how her next event will bring our community even closer together.

# thank you

Thank you for your ongoing commitment, support and generosity to help us achieve our vision of building a healthier community together.

*We'd like to acknowledge our recent donors and supporters of Northern Health Foundation.*

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*Our Patrons:*  
Bev Carman, Josie Minniti, and Trudi Hay

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