



Bone marrow and stem cell treatment outcomes have improved significantly since Arrow held its first meeting in February 1987. Back then, it was unimaginable that transplants would one day be used to treat Australians suffering from autoimmune disorders, anaemia and other non-malignant disorders.

Arrow is proud to have contributed to the medical research advances that helped to save the lives of thousands of Australians over the past 30 years, and we thank you for your support.



## Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC) reaches its 40th year milestone



John Kelly and HCC President Kent Heazlett

"We took a long time to get there but getting there is really all we want to achieve!" said HCC President and veteran paddler Kent Heazlett after paddling his 23rd Classic in October.

The HCC presented Arrow with \$150,000 at its 40th anniversary presentation dinner in November 2016, bringing the total raised to a huge \$3.85 million since Kent paddled his first Classic. Continued page 2.

## New bone marrow transplant ward within reach

We are excited to report that construction work on the new bone marrow transplant ward at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, will commence in June 2017, with estimated completion for the new 24 single bedroom facility in the first quarter of 2018. Continued page 3

## Autologous stem cell transplantation for multiple sclerosis – investigating new management options

For adults, most stem cell transplants are used to treat blood cancers. Autologous stem cell transplantation is a promising strategy for the management of patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) who do not respond to conventional measures. However, this is still an investigational treatment and carries significant potential risks and side effects.

MS is an autoimmune disease that attacks the central nervous system, with no known cause or cure. It is usually diagnosed in patients aged between 20 and 40 years, and is most common in females. The symptoms and progress of MS are unpredictable and vary from person to person,

but according to MS Australia 50-80% of people with MS cease to work full time within 10 years of diagnosis.

St Vincent's Hospital Sydney has been treating MS patients with autologous stem cell transplantation as part of a prospective phase II trial from 2010-2016. The results so far show that this treatment appeared safe and effective, with improved function as measured by the Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS), and improved quality of life, especially for patients with relapse remitting type MS. The treatment is part of an ongoing clinical trial.

## donations in memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge donations received in memory of:

- Katherine Robertson

## 2017 events

**Arrow's 30th Anniversary Celebration**  
Date and venue to be confirmed.

**ASX Thomson Reuters 2017 Charity Horse Racing Day**  
Rosehill Gardens Racecourse  
Saturday 26th August 2017

**Weekend in the Country, Mudgee**  
Friday 1st – Monday 4th September, 2017  
Reserve your place at:  
<https://www.trybooking.com/OXWN>

**Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC)**  
Saturday 28th – Sunday 29th October, 2017

**Arrow AGM**  
Friday 17th November, 2017





Colleena Presnell

# Colleena's Gift of Friendship

His name was Mischa, a Romanian Gypsy Prince, he assured us. He played the piano like no one I had ever heard before. Skipping from one piece to another, whether classical or musical theatre, he knew every musical score ever written yet he could not read music and had basic education. Mischa spoke six languages and had many tales to tell of the history of his father, a King among The Roms people who originated from Pakistan before scattering throughout the world. Mischa was just one patient we spoke to each week through our voluntary project, Gift of Friendship.

Every Thursday my friend Kerry and I visit patients on various wards, patients who have a life story like Mischa who spend twenty-two hours weekly on dialysis; although most of our time is spent with haematology patients and those having a bone marrow transplant.

After receiving two bone marrow transplants fourteen years ago, and supporting patients over the past ten years, I realise only too well that cancers of the blood (or any cancer) is an insidious disease that has no boundaries. We have spent time with professional people, tradies,

professors, male, female, young and old. Those who have led a healthy life and those who have not. Their journeys are similar, but never the same.

Many patients make contact when they return home from having a bone marrow transplant to say thank you, and tell us how comforting it was to have us travel with them through their journey – from diagnosis to treatment and recovery. I realise how every step can be frightening, so to talk through their feelings with a survivor gives patients the hope they need to travel that journey. Thanks to generous donations and members of the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation who pledge money to research, support and education, the velocity of development in treatment and recovery has progressed not only for patients with blood related cancers, but is rapidly spreading to help patients with many other diseases.

I consider it an honour to support patients going through a bone marrow transplant and feel extremely lucky to have the opportunity to do so with Gift of Friendship.

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# HCC reaches its 40 year milestone



Kent has since paddled with a number of Arrow directors, including Arrow Chairman Mark O'Hara, who paddled his 17th Classic last year in memory of his good friend, Greg Neate.



Kent Heazlett and Mark O'Hara

"The HCC is not just a race, it's like family," said Arrow/HCC PhD scholarship recipient Alexander Martyn at the 40th annual Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC) presentation dinner where Arrow was presented with \$150,000 in support of Research Scientist, Dr Melinda Tursky; and two PhD



Alexander Martyn

students who are making excellent progress in their respective areas of bone marrow transplant research.

This year Arrow celebrates its 30th anniversary – a milestone that could not have been achieved without the generous ongoing support of the HCC.

Matthew O'Hara and Chris Neate paddled for the first time in memory of Chris' father Greg, and completed the 111km overnight paddle in under 12 hours. They raised \$4310 in support of medical research.



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## St Vincent's Hospital's Facilities Department provided the following report:

The building of the new ward within an occupied health care facility with acute care wards above and below the site has required additional rigor and risk mitigation. One of the significant infrastructure challenges is the installation of state-of-the-art mechanical air conditioning and ventilation systems needed to achieve the required negative pressure clinical environment and circulation allowance. Adding to the complexity of the project, the building work will require concrete cutting and drilling into both the floor and ceiling concrete slabs.

The decommissioning of the current ward, Xavier 9 South, which includes contingencies for ongoing service delivery and disruption to patient flow and alternative arrangements for BMT patients, has been an additional operational component of the planning process to date. This decommissioning planning has been occurring in parallel to the capital works and service planning. St Vincent's Health Network Sydney have applied the highest level of detail in its assessment and planning to ensure patient, visitor and staff safety are the utmost priorities.

## Project timeline:

- Scheme design Clinical User Groups are scheduled to commence with the Principle Design Consultants in February 2017
- Existing ward decommissioned May 2017
- Engage building contractor May 2017
- Construction works commence June 2017
- Construction works are estimated to take twelve months to complete – first quarter of 2018 expected completion.

With the generous support of our donors, Arrow has now raised \$270,000 of the \$300,000 needed to fund a patient room in the new ward.

We thank our generous individual donors and:



Megan and family

## The Dave 'Coke' Wards Memorial 2016

Last year's Dave 'Coke' Wards memorial raised \$9184.15 towards the new ward. A huge thank you to organisers Wayne King and Chris Beeby, and Megan Balfour (pictured with her family) for the tremendous effort that she has put into the trivia night for the past 3 years.

Please complete the donation form or visit [www.arrow.org.au](http://www.arrow.org.au) to help us raise the final \$30,000 needed to fund a room in the new ward

## Thembe spends the holidays learning

Registered Nurse at Nepean Hospital, Thembekile Muhango, kicked off the New Year studying Blood and Marrow Transplantation and Haematology Nursing at the Australian College of Nursing thanks to the Trace Richey Nursing Scholarship program.

"This study will give me a full understanding of blood and marrow transplantation and haematology nursing, and equip me with knowledge that will build my career pathway, working towards my goal of becoming a Clinical Nurse Consultant. I will also learn to manage chemotherapy side effects and complications, and further my understanding of haematological disorders and management," said Thembekile.



Thembekile (Thembe) Muhango

## Serafina makes her public speaking debut

Shaun Rosen Nurses' Scholarship recipient Serafina Levak is the Clinical Nurse Educator on ward Xavier 9 South at St Vincents Public Hospital, Sydney. She was invited to speak at the HAA (Haematology Society of Australia and New Zealand, Australian and New Zealand Society of Blood Transfusion and the Australasian Society of Thrombosis and Haemostasis) conference at the Melbourne Convention Centre in November.

In her address, she discussed the Changing Indications for Autologous HSCT at St. Vincent's Hospital and The Impact of Severe Auto-Immune Conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis and Scleroderma at the General Ward Level.



Serafina Levak

Serafina said: "The conference was of benefit. It is a forum that allows me to listen to all the nursing initiatives that are surrounding haematology. It was an honour to be asked to speak at the conference following the submission of my abstract. Although extremely nervous prior, it was definitely an experience I will cherish and would like to do again.

As the Clinical Nurse Educator on the transplant ward I will definitely encourage my staff to attend next year's conference as these forums are always interesting to listen to, or speak at. It's an opportunity to see what other transplant units are doing and also a way to obtain ideas and innovations to bring back to the ward.

I am grateful for the Shaun Rosen Nurses' Scholarship for giving me this opportunity to attend the conference," said Serafina.

