

MEDIA RELEASE

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St John of God Subiaco Hospital celebrates 120 years and commissioning of new clinical command centre

St John of God Subiaco Hospital, founded by the Sisters of St John of God on 19 April 1898, is celebrating its 120th anniversary this week.

This special milestone will be marked with a number of activities that recognise the hospital's heritage, community and significant contribution to medical and surgical advances.

St John of God Subiaco Hospital CEO, Professor Shirley Bowen, said the 120th anniversary was about celebrating the enduring contribution the hospital has made in caring for generations of Western Australians and recognising the many caregivers who have carried on the Sisters' legacy.

"St John of God Subiaco Hospital is an iconic landmark in our city. Most people in Perth know someone who was born here, someone who has been cared for here or someone who has worked here."

"The hospital has positively impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of people over the last 120 years. In 2017 alone, we admitted more than 80,000 patients, supported more than 800 doctors and employed more than 2,500 caregivers across all areas of the hospital," Professor Bowen said.

"Commemorating our 120th anniversary is a time to reflect on our heritage, on the many people who have a connection with the hospital, and on our contribution to medical research. It is also a time to feel inspired about our future."

Tomorrow the hospital will commission its new Clinical Command Centre, which will further enhance the patient experience by centralising management of main theatres, improving patient flow through the hospital and increasing communication with doctors.

The Clinical Command Centre also offers a one-call service for late bookings, which makes it easier for doctors to get patients in who need to be operated on quickly.

"Our new Clinical Command Centre is a great example of integrating technology and innovation to support our mission of delivering excellence in patient care," Professor Bowen said.

"The past leaders of our hospital, in particular the Sisters of St John of God, all drew on innovation to improve patient experience and create clinical excellence."

"Clinical Excellence and an exceptional patient experience are our highest priorities and the coming years will see further innovation and development. It is a pivotal and exciting time for St John of God Subiaco Hospital," Professor Bowen said.

ENDS

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Background

An overview of our history

The land on which St John of God Subiaco Hospital currently stands was purchased in 1846 by Bishop Salvado. A monastery was built on the land, known as New Subiaco, by Bishop Serra and Benedictine monks between 1850 and 1852. The monastery was moved to New Norcia in 1862.

The original hospital was founded in 1898 and comprised four buildings: a single storey galvanised iron cottage hospital with three large wards; a small brick theatre and doctor's room (for the compounding of medicines); a two-storey convent; and a stone chapel / school room. The site also had a well with a windmill, pump and tanks.

By 1899 there were 13 Sisters of St John of God living in the convent and the school had more than 115 students.

A new two-storey brick convent was completed in 1902 and the original convent was converted to hospital accommodation, bringing the total number of beds to 40. A new convent and chapel replaced the original building in 1980.

In 1911 a School of Nursing was established for the Sisters of St John of God, who undertook training for qualifications of membership of the Australian Trained Nurses Association. A midwifery training school was established in 1949. The nursing school remained active until 1984.

In 1961, maternity services were expanded with the opening of a new building with 100 beds, known as the Maternity Hospital and Obstetrics. This addition saw St John of God Subiaco become Perth's leading private maternity hospital.

Throughout the 1960s our medical and surgical services were expanded and St John of God Subiaco Hospital was at the forefront of innovation. New services included a new radiological centre (1965), psychiatric ward (c 1968), dedicated pathology building (1969), the introduction of nuclear medicine and a theatre recovery room.

The hospital remained under the management of the Sisters of St John of God until 1972 when Dr Theodore Morely, a specialist anaesthetist at the hospital, was appointed Medical Superintendent. He was the first man to hold the top administrative medical position.

During the 1970s and 1980s the hospital established its prestigious surgical and medical teaching units, and opened coronary care and intensive care units. In 1978 a major redevelopment saw further expansion including the addition of the current North Wing.

In the late 1980s specialist colonoscopy and laser clinics, a cardiology clinic, dedicated oncology ward and a mother and baby drop in centre were added to the hospital's growing services.

In the early 1990s the existing South Wing was opened, along with Pomegranate café and the Memorial Rose Garden. Maternity services continued to advance and in 1994 our surgeons performed the first neo-natal operation on a premature baby outside of KEMH.

The Respiratory and Sleep Centre opened in 1996 and the first MRI machine was installed at the hospital by SKG.

In 1998 the Subiaco Clinic was opened to coincide with the hospital's 100th anniversary. The Clinic comprises 121 medical suites, a fully integrated day surgery unit and conference centre.

That same year the first satellite transmission of a medical procedure in the southern hemisphere was performed at SJG Subiaco by Dr Alan Crockard, a British surgeon, and SJG Subiaco's neuro specialist team – and beamed to London's Royal College of Surgeons.

Further development saw the opening of our GP After Hours service, SportsMed clinic, hydrotherapy pool, chest pain clinic and new paediatric unit in 1999.

Throughout the early 2000s our outreach services expanded with the introduction of the Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network (DAWN). Cancer care, continence care, day surgery unit, short stay ward and Raphael Centre that helps families affected by pre and post-natal depression.

In 2005 another major redevelopment saw the addition of five new operating theatres, refurbishment of the maternity wards, new front entrance and foyer, new short stay unit, first stage of Subiaco Clinic extension including reception and waiting area.

The hospital has continued to grow its services and facilities, including the opening of the Bendat Family Comprehensive Cancer Centre in 2009 and St John of God Wembley Day Surgery in 2015.

Research remains a major focus with 262 studies currently underway at St John of God Subiaco Hospital. Oncology, pain and anaesthesia, intensive care, thoracic care and irritable bowel disease are key areas in which our research is contributing to the global knowledge base.