

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Officer, Mercy Health

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Mercy Health Pastoral Carers recognised for excellence at Catholic Health Australia Awards

The Pastoral Care teams at Mercy Hospital for Women and Werribee Mercy Hospital have been recognised for their work in maternity and neonatal services at the Catholic Health Australia (CHA) Awards presented in Hobart on Tuesday 29 August 2017.

The Pastoral Care teams provide care to a wide variety of people, such as antenatal patients, the parents of a premature baby, patients with complex health and psychosocial issues and women who have experienced a miscarriage or stillbirth.

Mercy Hospital for Women Pastoral Care Manager Mary Klasen said pastoral care is part of the multidisciplinary team in a hospital, which attends to the spiritual and emotional dimensions within person-centred care.

“In Australia’s multicultural society it is important pastoral care responds respectfully to patients’ diverse cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices,” Mary explained.

“Research shows that at times of illness or crisis people seek to make meaning. Pastoral care seeks to facilitate meaning by making and building inner strength with our patients and their families.”

The CHA Excellence in Pastoral Care Award honours an individual, team or initiative that contributes in an innovative way to the integrity and effectiveness of the Catholic ministry of health and aged care through a particular project, program, strategy or outstanding effort.

Tragically, around one in 130 pregnancies in Australia ends in stillbirth and one in 10 babies are born premature (before 37 weeks). Pastoral carers often act as ‘guides’ for families and staff through these difficult times.

Werribee Mercy Hospital Pastoral Care Manager Sr Trudy Keur RSM said it is an honour to be trusted by patients and their families who are going through a challenging time in their lives and to know that you can make a difference.

“We attend to mothers, partners and often complex family units through their grief journey, engaging, explaining, offering emotional guidance and meaningful rituals,” Sr Trudy said.

“We also highlight to staff the importance of acknowledgment and information about ongoing bereavement care.”

Linda Mellors, Chief Executive – Health Services, said the Pastoral Care teams receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from patients and staff.

“Pastoral carers are a crucial part of the health system and provide invaluable support across our hospitals,” Adjunct Professor Mellors said.

“Our pastoral carers’ creative approach to providing spiritual support, including using the Reverie Harp as a source of peace and comfort for some of our smallest and sickest babies, has received wide approval and been welcomed by parents.”

The CHA Award is the second time the Mercy Hospital for Women and Werribee Mercy Hospital Pastoral Care teams have been acknowledged for their outstanding contribution to health services in 2017. The teams were also recognised at the Spiritual Care Australia Awards in May when they received the Best of Care Award.

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