



## **THE CONCORDIANS NEWSLETTER ISSUE 4 WINTER 2024**

*Bringing together past and present staff of the hospital to share and exchange experiences in a collegial, supportive and relaxed atmosphere.*

*Our Mission is to embrace and articulate the origins and history of the hospital, to promote its unique culture of communications and compassion and to nurture and support our members*

### **2024 AGM and Dinner**

More than 50 members were present at the Annual General Meeting held at the Five Dock RSL on May 10th. Secretary Alice Kang and President John Cullen gave reports which are detailed later in the newsletter.

The meeting was followed by members catching up over a fine three course meal. Professors Pierre Chapuis and Ron Newland gave an address on the history of The Concord Hospital Colorectal Cancer Registry and its significant role in advancing the diagnosis and treatment of colorectal cancer.



## More scenes from the AGM and Annual Dinner



L-R: Gail Simpson, Pierre Chapuis, Ron Newland, Matt Rickard and Charles Chan of The Concord Colorectal Cancer Registry

## A Year of Progress for the Concordians

In her annual report, Concordian secretary, Alice Kang, outlined the progress that the Concordians made during the first full year after the hiatus caused by the Covid-19 epidemic.

The total number of Concordians on the database is a record 250. Much of the work this year has been revitalising the E M Lane Museum with the enthusiastic co-operation of the hospital executive. The museum will open in the larger site of the old discharge lounge next to the Cafeteria and storage space has also been provided in the Rusty Priest building. The hospital will contribute significantly to the cost of the rebuild and donations have also been received from:

City of Canada Bay Community Grant	\$2,000
Five Dock RSL	\$5,000
Bankstown RSL	\$5,000
Ashfield RSL	\$15,000

Many thanks to our generous supporters. Other applications for grants are pending.

## Keep the Date - for our next get together

Our next Concordian dinner will be on

**6 PM Friday November 8 at**  
**The Concord Community Club**  
(the newly refurbished old Concord RSL)  
Nullawarra Ave  
Concord

Members \$70  
Non-Member \$80

Our former President , Prof Peter Haertsch will speak on his experiences with Interplast Australia— volunteers providing reconstructive surgery to the third world.

Tickets will be available soon at <https://www.theconcordians.com/events-and-agm/>

## Membership

Following the incorporation of the Concordians, annual membership fees are due from December onwards. The fees remain a very low \$10 and members receive a newsletter four times a year and reduced prices for Concordian functions.

Make sure that you are up to date and that we have latest details by visiting the new membership page at <https://www.theconcordians.com/membership/> The web site now accepts credit card payments, which makes renewal very easy.

**Encourage your friends and colleagues to join.**

## E M Lane Concordians' Museum

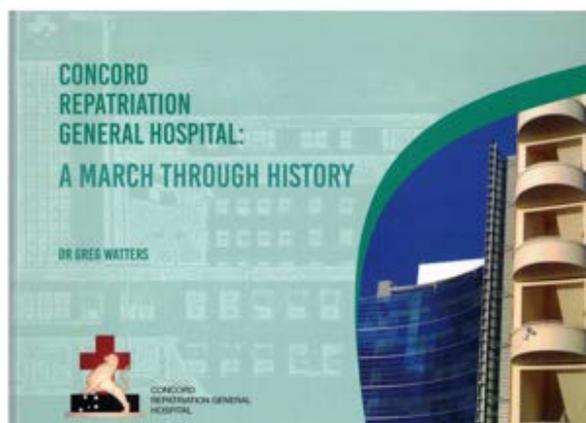
Preparations for the re- opening of the museum are continuing with Volunteers assisting Jan Bell in revitalising and curating the exhibits. Work has also commenced on preparing the museum's new site in the old discharge lounge. Look out for your invitation to the re-opening in the next few months



If you are interested in becoming a museum volunteer, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Jan Bell on 0418410612 or at [theconcordians@outlook.com](mailto:theconcordians@outlook.com)

## Concord History

Some copies of the hospital history, which was commissioned by the Concordians, are still available. Make sure you get copies for yourself and your friends before they run out. <https://www.theconcordians.com/book-publication/>.



## Hospital History - The Green

The Green has been a hub of hospital life throughout Concord's 83 year history but its current use is far removed from its original purpose.

The area was developed in 1944 through donations to the 113rd Australian General Hospital from the Federated ironworkers' Union, the Australian Red Cross and Woolworths employees. The dominant feature was a six rink lawn bowls green surrounded by the cafeteria, male and female hairdressing salons (recently used as the E M Lane Museum) and a lounge (the old discharge lounge). The bowling green was one of the many resources in the hospital that were needed to occupy the fit, young soldiers whose length of stay was often extraordinarily long. Army policy, for example, required a 3 week admission for the repair of a simple hernia. Other resources included a cinema/theatre, tennis courts and a 3 hole golf course.



Patients contesting a close point

The green was opened in March 1945 by Princess Alice, the Duchess of Gloucester and the wife of Prince Henry, the Governor-General, who noted that the bowling green had been built because bowls was "above all games, the most suitable for convalescents". Lawn bowls remained a popular recreation for both patients and staff for the next 4 decades.

Among the staff, a men's club was formed in 1950 and a corresponding women's club in 1961, with the Matron as patron and a "club house" in a small office next to the hairdresser. Saturday and Sunday were club playing days, but during the week, the rink was usually full of convalescing patients and staff practicing their shots or putting together a scratch game among themselves or against volunteer visitors from local women's clubs, who wore the full "White Leghorn" uniform.

## Hospital History - The Green (cont.)

The lunchtime bowling experience was further enhanced by a recital given once a month, for many years, by the New South Wales Police Band.

The decreasing popularity of lawn bowls and the retirement of many members led to the disbandment of the clubs in 1980, and the gutters and formwork of the green were removed in 1985, although it still had some resemblance to a bowling green until the late 1990s when it took on its current landscaped appearance.



The Resident Doctors Championship in the late 1970s. Note the hairstyles, shorts and long socks and flared trousers



Princess Alice opens the Green, 1945.  
The soldier on the left is wearing a prosthetic mask to hide his facial injury

## Professor John Cullen AM

All Concordians will join us in congratulating our President, Professor John Cullen, who became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the King's Birthday honours list, announced in June. John received the honour for "significant service to geriatric medicine as a clinician, researcher, health innovator and advocate".

John was a medical student at Concord and was initially employed as an intern here in 1978. He then undertook training as a physician specialising in geriatric medicine and became the SLHD director for Aged Care, Rehabilitation, General Medicine and General Practice in 1997. John has seen many changes at Concord in the last 5 decades. Under his stewardship, Concord has become a leader in innovative geriatric care, most recently through the commissioning of the Rusty Priest Building replacing the 80 year old upper ramp wards. John, in his usual modest way, sees the award as a tribute to the efforts of the many great people who contribute to patient welfare at the hospital.

## Vale

### Associate Professor Siri Kannangara AM— 7 June



Siri had a 47-year association with Concord RGH starting as a VMO in 1977. Siri was very much part of life in Concord as a clinician, teacher, mentor and for a significant period head of department of Rheumatology. He was instrumental in setting up the Sports Medicine Institute at Concord and brought many high-profile sporting identities into contact with CRGH. While he had an outstanding career at Concord, Siri developed a stellar presence nationally and internationally in the field of sports medicine, particularly with the Australian Soccer and Cricket teams. For all his achievements, Siri remained a humble human being and was a major figure in the Sri Lankan community.

A Tribute to Siri by Professor Meng Ngu can be found at <https://www.theconcordians.com/vale/>

### Professor ABX (Tony) Breslin AM 1st August



Tony was appointed to Repatriation General Hospital Concord in 1974 as the Head of Department of Thoracic Medicine, a position held for over 25 years. Tony was an innovator in the provision of clinical care and at Concord he developed the largest Lung Function Laboratory in Australia and established regular Lung Cancer multi-disciplinary team meetings. He played a key role, as Chair of the Medical Staff Council, in the transition of the hospital to the state system and helped turn Concord into NSW's first smoke free hospital. Apart from work, Tony was a loving family man and had a keen interest in his old school, Riverview and the Catholic church, particularly the Jesuit order. He read widely including theology and philosophy.

A Tribute to Tony by Matthew Peters can be found at <https://www.theconcordians.com/vale/>

## Vale

### **Nancy Steel**

Many of us remember Nancy as the super-efficient ward clerk in the Intensive Care Unit in the 1970 and 80s. After retiring she became a hospital volunteer and patient escort for many years before moving to Queensland.

### **Carol O'Keefe**

Carol was a student nurse in Group 103 (1972) and worked as an RN at the hospital for some years before moving to the USA. A tribute will be included in the next newsletter

### **Peggy Dickenson** 5 August

Peggy passed just 4 days before her 101st birthday. She was a tireless volunteer and patient escort who rarely, if ever, missed a Concordian function and continued to support the hospital into her late 90s until the restrictions of Covid-19 curtailed volunteer activity. Peggy had a bench seat unveiled in her honour at the hospital last year. A tribute to Peggy will appear in the next edition of the newsletter.



Peggy with Jan Bell at a volunteer appreciation lunch

## Contact Us

The Newsletter is a great way to let fellow Concordians know what is happening. Let us spread the word on any approaching reunions or personal milestones. We also welcome any personal reminiscences and photos of life at the hospital

Send your contribution to [theconcordians@outlook.com](mailto:theconcordians@outlook.com)

## Website

The Concordians website is regularly updated and can be found at: <https://www.theconcordians.com/>

**All the best, until we next meet**

