

Integrating teaching and research for improved patient care

What an exciting day it was on 10 March this year, when we officially re-launched our Midwifery and Women's Health Nursing Research Unit. Beginning in 1996 as the Centre for Women's Health Nursing, the unit has promoted and supported research, practice development and education in women's health care for over 15 years.

And now, with the relaunch, it's a special collaboration between the University of Sydney and the Royal Hospital for Women, with plenty of support from the Royal Hospital for Women Foundation.

Led by Sally Tracy, the Professor of Midwifery at the University of Sydney, the Unit's aim is to promote better healthcare outcomes for expectant mothers, their babies, and other women, and to work closely with maternity professionals to deliver research outcomes with more family-friendly and women-centred care.

"We're the envy of many nursing and midwifery research units because of our proximity to the day-to-day activity of the women's health and maternity service", commented Sally. And, "Being on site at the Royal, with support from the Foundation, allows research and teaching to be fully integrated in a very special way to build great relationships and inter-professional collegiality."

With so many talented people working together, we can't wait to see the outcome! And its first project is already well underway, aiming to enhance midwifery and patient care. It's a randomized control trial evaluating the safety of continuity of midwifery care through collaboration between midwives and obstetricians.

And what a formidable team – with funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council – Sally is



Helen Gunn, Professor Jill White, Amy Monk, Professor Sally Tracy, Dr Terry Clout, Professor William Walters at the Launch 2011

Chief Investigator working with research leaders Donna Hartz, Bev Hall and Anne Lainchbury. Already, this research has put the Royal at the forefront of maternity system reform: more than 50% of women booking as public patients at the Royal are offered Midwifery Group Practice care with the same midwife for pregnancy, antenatal care, labour, birth and postnatal care.

What's certain is that a very able captain is leading this ship - Professor Tracy has extensive experience as a midwifery leader and is internationally renowned in her field. And, as Professor Jill White, Dean of Sydney Nursing School, says "We're delighted to have a research leader such as Professor Sally Tracy who will promote and lead research that is really designed to improve patient care." We couldn't have put it better ourselves!

Warmth and comfort for our tiny babies all the way from South Africa

The kindness and generosity of people within the community, both near and far, never ceases to amaze us at the Royal. Although televised in Australia a few years ago now, it seems that Saving Babies, our special TV series showcasing the work of the Royal's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, is still making a global impact.

"You can imagine how surprised and curious I was to receive a parcel in the post covered with stamps from South Africa! After enormous excitement opening the parcel, I was overwhelmed when I saw the beautifully knitted beanies for our precious babies", said Penelope Hess, Chief Executive, Royal Hospital for Women Foundation.

Inside the parcel was a letter from May van der Merwe of Durban, South Africa which said "After watching the program Saving Babies and seeing the good work that is being done, I set myself a goal to knit beanies and send them to you. I sincerely hope and pray for the little lives that are saved daily and that these little beanies will bring warmth and comfort to them"

Thankyou May and Carol for your beautiful beanies. They certainly will bring warmth and comfort to our precious little babies, and will be treated with as much care and love as you have put into knitting them.

