

A WORLD OF Healthcare

Monash Health builds on a 160-year tradition of delivering a high level of care thanks to its focus on innovation and research, a strong set of values, and strategic vision.

Images by Paolo Benini

Shelly Park never dreamed she would have such an illustrious career in healthcare when she left school aged 16 and started working in the clerical field. With no qualifications, she enrolled at university as a mature-age student and studied nursing, earning a degree and then later her masters. From there, she worked her way through a variety of positions before joining Monash Health in 2005, being appointed chief executive less than two years later.

Shelly is passionate about her role and believes it is an “incredible privilege” to be able to provide healthcare to people who are often at their most vulnerable. She talked to *The CEO Magazine* about the important role Monash Health plays in caring for more than one million people and managing the \$1.4 billion spent to deliver its first-rate health services in the south-east of Melbourne.

***The CEO Magazine:* What is the philosophy behind Monash Health’s business operations, and how are its core values instilled in 14,000-plus staff members?**

Shelly: We are a values-driven organisation. We have five values that we ask every person who works with us to embody in everything they do: integrity,

compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence. Wrapped around that we have a vision of exceptional care and outstanding outcomes. All these things are inherent in our strategic plan and in everything we do. The way that we instil these in staff is, first, to make sure they sit comfortably with our leadership team and staff; then, second, manage our communication channels to ensure the organisation is informed about relevant information and key messages.

We have a significant geographic footprint—more than 40 sites, including six public hospitals—so communicating with one voice and ensuring we embody our goal to be one Monash Health is vital. We try to ensure that we have the resourcefulness that connects us and keeps us moving forward but also supports our employees. It’s about bringing compassion and our core values into all of our operations. We give out awards every quarter for people who demonstrate the values, as nominated by their colleagues, and we have an annual award winner as well.

The safety of patients and staff is our number one priority. Just over a year ago, we initiated a significant safety-culture campaign. Apart from our focus on patient-centred care and safety,

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we want every person who comes to work in the organisation to go home healthy.

What gives Monash Health its competitive edge?

Our people. I think that we attract some of the best people in the industry. The fact we are strong in our values and our vision gives us an advantage; the fact we have grown rapidly over the past 10 to 12 years; the fact we do so much research with our partners—we are now among the top attractors of money within Australia for clinical research. We have worked hard on our brand and speaking with one voice. We provide service from pre-birth to aged care, and embrace the great diversity across our organisation. We have won multiple awards—for example, at the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards—for things like innovation in healthcare, diabetes, refugee health, medicine for our cancer patients, and our children’s cancer service. We are focused on consistently becoming better and ensuring that quality is part of absolutely everything that we do.

How is Monash Health continuously changing and evolving to provide the best care for its patients?

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are building a new translational research facility because of the strong relationships we have through our partner institutions with Monash University. We have a very strong patient-centred care focus and have really strengthened our IT framework. In the past six months, we signed off on an electronic medical record, which will move us forward a long way.

If I look at our infrastructure, we are establishing the Monash Children's Hospital; we are planning a new heart hospital; we have award-winning, state-of-the-art new mental health facilities on our Dandenong campus; and we have built a new emergency department. We are planning a new tower block at our Casey Hospital, and have built a new aged-care and rehabilitation centre at our Kingston Centre for mental health aged care.

In and among that, we have kept the focus on sustainability and living within our means. We are an organisation that has moved from

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where there was a deficit to always meeting budget and ensuring that we try to innovate around how we deliver care to increase our capacity and the value for taxpayers. We are one of the highest performers in Victoria in ensuring that we have the majority of our patients through our emergency departments within four hours.

How does Monash Health collaborate with other organisations to reinvent, innovate, and offer more to its patients?

It's incredibly important to have those relationships. We work with our local partners and look at how they do things; but we also look to the overseas health industry and outside of health. We look at the aviation industry, at banks and other industries to see what they are doing around sustainability and strategic modelling. We want to take the best practice from other industries and bring that into health.

Looking forward, what vision do you have for the future of Monash Health?

We will continue to strengthen in the area of innovation and research, along with our health partners—including Monash University and the Hudson Institute of Medical Research. We know that our future is not alone; we have to continue partnering. That will absolutely be crucial as we go forward. We will be implementing the electronic medical record strategy and be looking for more reform in the way we deliver care. We will continue to recruit the best and brightest people who are aligned with our organisational strategy, vision, and values.

There is a steady increase in demand for healthcare, and the industry has to transform to meet that demand. We can't just keep doing what we are doing—we have to find new ways to deliver the best care. •

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