



Craig Everitt

Sunshine Centre will care for patients in Melbourne's west

SPECTRUM REPORTS ON NEW TOP FLIGHT FACILITY

Craig Everitt, head of radiation therapy services and deputy site director at the brand new Sunshine Hospital Radiation Therapy Centre in St Albans in Melbourne's western suburbs says that 30th March was a highpoint in his career as a radiation therapist – that was the day on which the first patient, a prostate case, was treated. The Centre was opened officially on 10th March 2011.

The physical, administrative and medical aspects of the Centre break new ground for both Western Health and the high profile Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Peter Mac). It's a partnership that recognises the complementary strengths of the two organisations.

Western Health owns the building and equipment, and employs the nursing, allied health and facility support staff, while the radiation therapists, doctors, physicists and administration staff are employed by Peter Mac.

The Centre will provide public radiation therapy services for the first time in Melbourne's west and cancer patients will no longer have to travel out of the area to Geelong, Ballarat or East Melbourne for treatment.

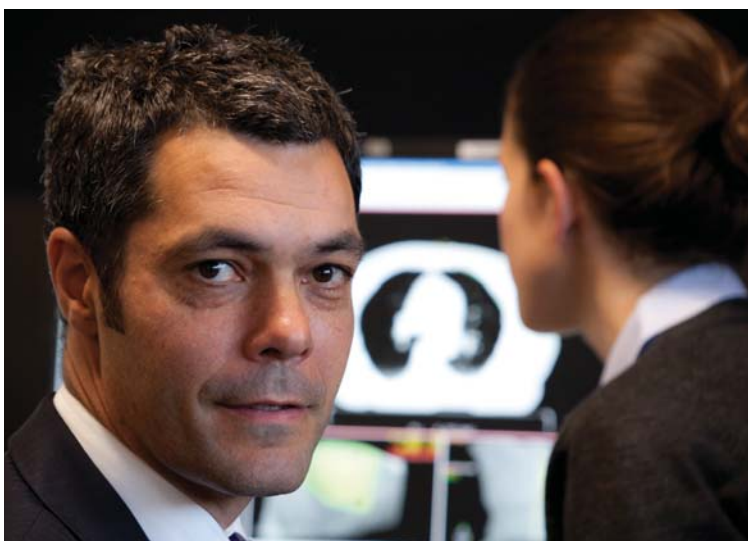
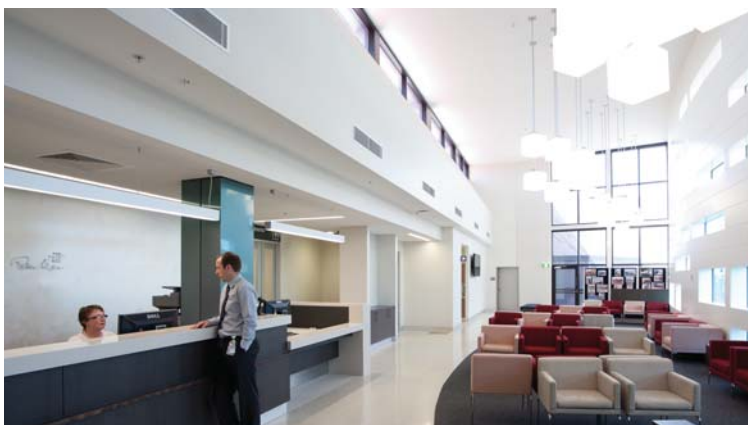
Costing \$40.50 million to build and \$10.5 million to buy the equipment and fit-out, the Centre is key part of the redevelopment

of Sunshine Hospital as a major teaching hospital serving the 700,000 residents of Melbourne's western suburbs. The hospital has the second busiest emergency department in Victoria and 4000 babies are born in the maternity unit each year.

The redevelopment is a \$200 million, three-stage project. The state government has provided the bulk of the funding with contributions from the Commonwealth government, University of Melbourne, Victoria University and Peter Mac.

Western Health has partnered with the University of Melbourne and Victoria University to develop the \$51.6 million Western Centre for Health Research and Education. The University of Melbourne will operate a clinical school to provide undergraduate and postgraduate training of doctors, while Victoria University will train nurses and allied health professionals.

The third stage will be complete by the end of 2012, when the four-level Acute Services Building is handed over by the developers. This will have 128 inpatient beds; new outpatient clinic rooms; a 26-cot special care nursery; 30 same day medical beds; diagnostic labs and clinical support offices.



Clockwise: Reception; new Varian Clinac; Dr John Violet Radiation Oncologist, Site Director

The Radiation Therapy Centre is a visually arresting structure designed by architects Silver Thomas Hanley and built by Cockram Constructions. The horizontal panels that clad the concave façade have been finished in colour bands that range from rust at the roofline, through earth shades, to blue-greens at ground level. Horizontal windows penetrate the façade to provide natural light in the two-storey reception area.

The building features a range of initiatives aimed at minimising its environmental impact. Natural and fixed external shading and high performance glazing reduce heat gain; low energy smart lighting with motion sensors turn off lights when rooms are unoccupied and after hours; high efficiency air conditioning systems function only during operating hours; and solar water heaters are used for domestic hot water. Rainwater is harvested and used to flush toilets and irrigate the garden, which is planted with drought resistant natives.

Acknowledging the stressful nature of cancer treatment, the facility has been designed to provide a high level of comfort and amenity to patients and visitors. In the reception and waiting areas, the neutral colours used on the walls, seating and floor coverings create a sense of calmness and there are generous displays of indoor plants throughout.

In the windowless CT rooms and linear accelerator bunkers, where one would expect to see featureless ceilings and utilitarian lighting, backlit panels of day and night skies give patients something to look at while they are receiving treatment.

The radiation therapy facility has four bunkers, with two linear



accelerators installed in the first stage and two bunker spaces constructed to allow for future need. The linear accelerators are Varian Clinac iX systems with IGRT, IMRT, gating and VMAT capabilities.

When both are “up to capacity” Craig Everitt says that up to 900 patients can be treated annually but he anticipates that it may be 24 months before the number of patients reaches that level – at which point the third and fourth machines will be needed.

The first of two planned CT machines is a Philips Brilliance wide bore 16 slice CT.

The centre also has an Orthovoltage x-ray machine – Gulmay D3225 250KeV dual modality unit with Mosaik interface; CMS Alphatech planning system including XiO, Monaco (MonteCarlo TPS) for IMRT and VMAT planning; Focal 4D/Focal BroadBand (Remote

Career Moves

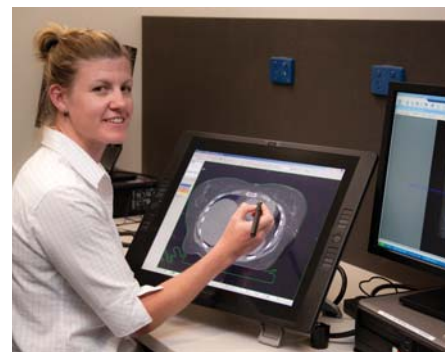
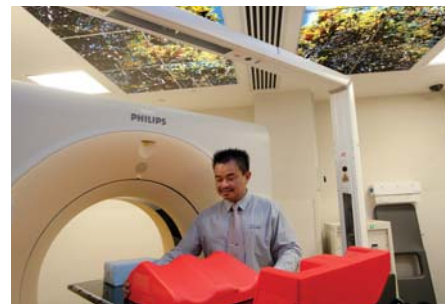
Craig Everitt graduated from RMIT in 1991 and completed his professional development year at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. He joined the permanent staff after completing his PDY and worked at the East Melbourne facility for the next 10 years in various roles including clinical educator.

With his wife Sarah, also a radiation therapist, he spent a year in Canada in 2000, working first at the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton and then at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre in Calgary.

They returned to Melbourne in 2001, both rejoining the Peter Mac group.

They moved with their daughter Amelia* to the NSW North Coast in 2006 when Craig Everitt joined the North Coast Cancer Institute to assist in setting up cancer treatment centres in Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. He managed the Port Macquarie centre for four years until December last year when he rejoined Peter Mac to become head of the Sunshine Hospital Radiation Therapy Centre.

*Amelia has since been joined by siblings Hugo and Rupert.



Clockwise: Sally McInnes Deputy Charge Radiation Therapist; top right: Eric Nguyen Charge Radiation Therapist; bottom: Lil Muir Deputy Charge Radiation Therapist


Access); ABAS (Atlas Based Contouring) and a large scale storage system.

The ethnically diverse population of the western suburbs speaks as many as 15 main languages, bringing with it potentially a number of culturally sensitive issues for staff to deal with. Craig Everitt says: "our workforce is also culturally and ethnically diverse bringing experience from many countries such as Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and China and will be well equipped to support our patients."

In the last five years 4,120 people from western and central Melbourne have been diagnosed with cancer, the most common being: 12.5 per cent breast; 13.9 per cent bowel; 13.5 per cent prostate; and 10.6 per cent lung. Cases that cannot be treated at the Centre will be treated at the Peter Mac facility in East Melbourne.

An aspect of his job that Craig Everitt is looking forward to is developing research opportunities at the Centre and facilitating research partnerships with the Western

Centre for Health Research and Education.

He says: "There is vast research potential. Capturing data from the first day is one of the advantages of starting off with a blank sheet. Radiation therapists at Peter Mac have a strong tradition of research... at Sunshine, our Volumetric Arc Therapy, image guidance capabilities and integrated information systems will give us the opportunity to undertake contemporary research." 

2011 Australasian Elekta User Meeting 9th - 11th September 2011, Sydney Registrations now welcome!

