



ST JOHN OF GOD  
Accord

# iAccord





## Lisa Evans

CEO, SJG Accord

Welcome to the autumn edition of iAccord. Since our last edition so much has changed. Along with the rest of the world we're now navigating and responding to the effects of pandemic flu COVID-19. The COVID-19 situation escalated very quickly in March, and in response to that escalation SJG Accord implemented measures to protect the wellbeing of all our clients, their families and our caregivers. The decisions to suspend group services and prevent visitors from entering our accommodation homes are saving lives. I want to thank you all for your willingness to cooperate with us at this time.

We reached out to our families and now we're supporting many clients from our group services in an Individualised Services capacity. Our support coordination, allied health and employment teams have quickly transitioned to a telehealth model of service which is being well received. During this unprecedented time our caregivers have been supportive and willing to work in other settings so we can continue to support our clients during this time

St John of God Health Care (SJGHC) our larger entity continually provides expert advice and medical resources in assisting us to navigate the situation for SJG Accord. Having access to these resources at such a time has in my opinion enhanced our position to respond with such agility to COVID-19.

In keeping in line with the restrictions, I'm now working from home, and apart from a skeleton staff at our corporate office all the other executive, corporate, and admin teams are also doing the same thing. It's quite an adjustment for everyone, and I'll be the first to say, it's not always easy, but it is necessary at this time.

It's really encouraging to learn that the restrictions and social isolation measures that are in place across Victoria are achieving a successful flattening of the curve. I still believe it will be some time before our lives return to exactly how it use to be at SJG Accord, however, we are already discussing and planning how we will return our group services once we are confident and we have the organisational and government support to do so. We will continue to keep you informed and updated of any further changes.

**In the meantime I hope you  
all stay safe and well.**

# Neal Murphy

Director of Mission Integration Community Services



## The Joy of **together**

What strange times we find ourselves in! Over the past few weeks COVID 19 has invaded so many aspects of our daily life, with some having to face over whelming tragedy with the loss of a loved one. Others have been challenged by the loss of normality as we once knew it; going shopping and actually being greeted with full shelves; going on scheduled holidays; enjoying the thrill of sporting events and having the freedom to attend parks, cinemas, concerts and host parties. To quote Mr Spock from the Star Trek television series,

**“Its life Jim,  
but not as we know it!”**

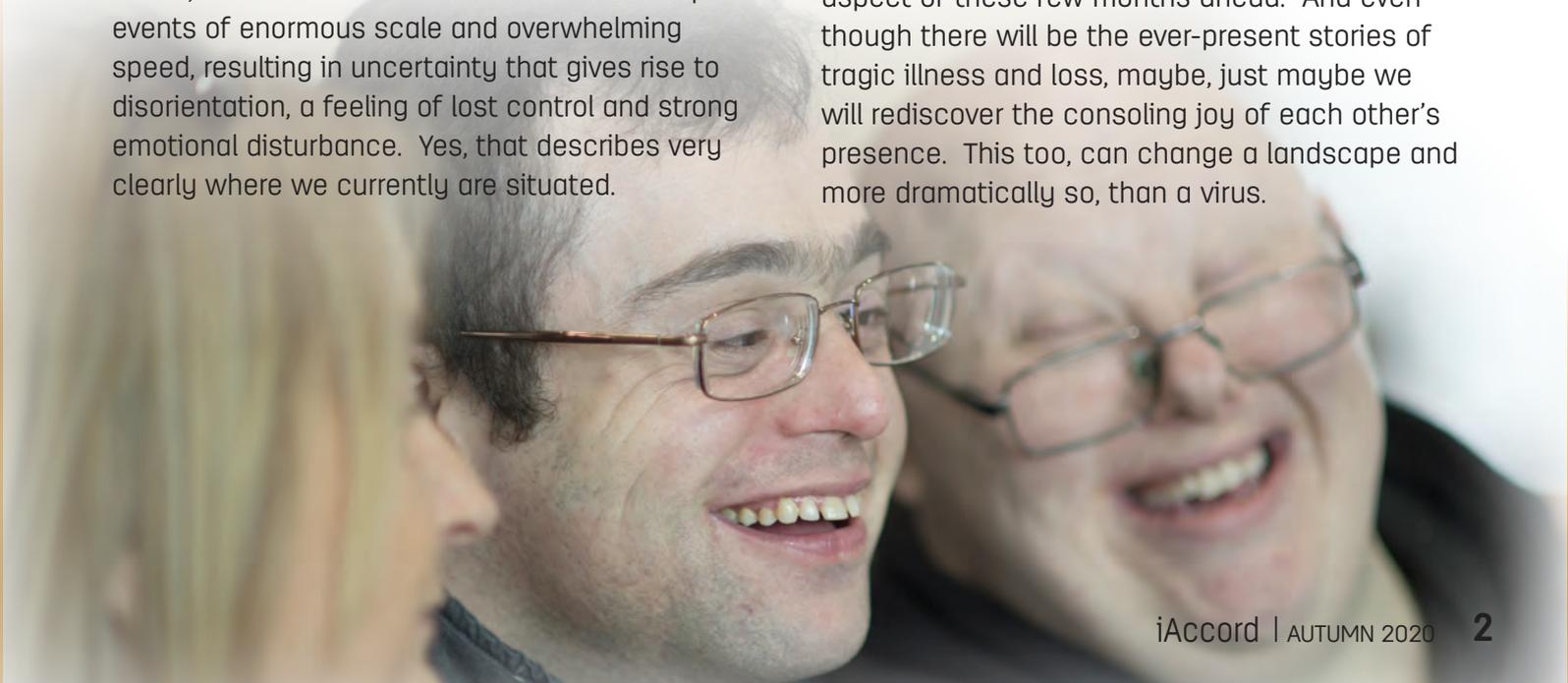
Yes, this is life, but not as we once recognised it, and its changed so fast!

The coronavirus pandemic has placed extraordinary demands on leaders within the community, business and beyond. We are now in 'landscape scale' crises, a business term which describes unexpected events of enormous scale and overwhelming speed, resulting in uncertainty that gives rise to disorientation, a feeling of lost control and strong emotional disturbance. Yes, that describes very clearly where we currently are situated.

**Though we are not  
without hope!**

Within all this pressure and change there are wonderful examples of generosity found within this new landscape. These can be found in the dedication of the healthcare and community services who continue to reach out to others, the many examples of neighbourly generosity and even examples of political unity as together we seek to support each other and work through the emerging complexities of life.

So, we agree, these are indeed strange times! But maybe what makes these times really strange is the fact that we are now having to face each other and spend time with each other due to the restrictions we are currently enduring. Going for walks together, cooking meals together, gardening together, walking the dog together! Rediscovering togetherness may well be the most positive aspect of these few months ahead. And even though there will be the ever-present stories of tragic illness and loss, maybe, just maybe we will rediscover the consoling joy of each other's presence. This too, can change a landscape and more dramatically so, than a virus.



# Group Programs at

Before the suspension of group programs due to COVID-19 clients from SJG Accord's three campuses, Greensborough, Sydenham and Moreland were participating in their existing programs as well as some exciting new activities for 2020:

## Introduction to Horticulture for All Abilities

In February clients from both Greensborough Community Campus and Moreland Community Campus joined together and commenced an 8-week short course on Mondays at Edendale Farm called "Introduction to Horticulture for All Abilities".

Topics covered in hands on sessions included:

- **Intro to Edendale farm, OH&S, Seeds**
- **Farm and garden tour, worms**
- **Nursery work, making cutting, pricking out and potting up plants**
- **Safe use of hand tools, pruning**
- **Path maintenance, laying mulch**

Clients were required to wear appropriate clothing for outdoor work in various weather conditions and enjoyed both helping out on the farm along with a few visits to the café on site!

While the course was unfortunately suspended before its completion, clients will be able to make-up any missed sessions when Edendale Farm opens again.

Clients from Greensborough Community Campus were Dexter Ranasinghe, Mckenzie Charles, Michael Minniti, Rachael Wiseman and Daniel Johnson and clients who participated from Moreland Community Campus were Jason Phelps, Lucia Ranallo and Shereef El Tayab with caregiver Alison Gawler.



# SJG Accord in 2020

**Chris Milton** Program Coordinator

## Lino's Dance Hall

Clients from both Sydenham Community Campus and Moreland Community Campus were meeting up each Thursday for an amazing dance through the decades with Lino, one of Australia's hardest working, well respected acts in the entertainment industry. He performs songs from the 50's to today's current charts and our clients loved singing and dancing

with him. Music and dance is a great way for people to express their emotions and feelings, as well as being great exercise, and is very therapeutic.



## Learn to Cook



*Siew McNamara (caregiver),  
Natasha Fernandes*



*Sam Tannous, Thanh Truong, Matthew  
Paul (caregiver), Siew McNamara  
(caregiver), Natasha Fernandes*



*Thanh Truong,  
Natasha Fernandes*



*Natasha Fernandes*

Clients at Sydenham Community Campus started two new cooking programs this term: Learn to Cook and Kitchen Living Skills. The focus of Learn to Cook is to prepare, cook, serve and clean-up after a meal using the Easy Cookbook SJG Accord has purchased, whereas Kitchen Living Skills program has a goal to develop or maintain independent living skills such as planning, shopping for, preparing, cooking, serving and cleaning up a complete meal from start to finish.

The Learn to Cook program began by repeatedly making the same recipe each week, chicken burgers, and learning skills such as grating, cutting, lighting the hotplates and frying. Clients were shown videos on food safety and how to safely cut with knives before their hands on session. As the year progressed clients elected to vary the recipe and make taco's instead which were very popular and in line with a goal to create healthy meals according to Traffic Light Nutrition (Red, Orange, and Green rated foods).

# Volunteering

Since 2019 clients at both Sydenham Community Campus and Greensborough Community Campus have been volunteering at the Helping Hands Op Shop in Airport West, alternating with each other every 2nd Thursday.

Some of the duties they performed included:

- **Organising shelves (clients were allocated an area they were interested in, e.g. books, toys, clothes, CDs/DVDs)**
- **Packing gift bags**
- **Tidying clothes racks**
- **Hanging jewellery on stands**
- **Unpacking and sorting new deliveries**

Clients also began working on a few projects for the Op Shop:

- **Creating an outdoor Op Shop sign for the front fence at Helping Hands**
- **Restoring and re-purposing old furniture, e.g. sanding and staining**
- **Managing the garden and planter boxes in the kid's playground**

This year the group at Sydenham Community Campus spent their alternate week working on literacy, numeracy and work-readiness activities such as OH&S and how to complete forms and paperwork.

The group from Greensborough Community Campus commenced volunteer work closer to home at Vinnies Op Shop in Briar Hill on their alternate weeks in 2020. The Greensborough Community Campus program group also began to visit the Eltham Montmorency Uniting Church Op Shop after their volunteering to join the church for their weekly Coffee Club. Clients really loved the opportunity to be welcomed by this community and enjoy a cuppa, biscuit and a chat while also fitting in a little more bargain hunting at the church's op shop.



Above: Dexta Ranasinghe, Michael Minezzi, Mackenzie Charles and Rachael Wiseman with caregiver Alison Gawler enjoying morning tea with staff from the op shop.

Below: Andrew Melli with a fellow volunteer from the op shop.



Top: Chris Milton, with Richie Cooper and a fellow volunteer.  
Above: Fiona Steart with Andrew Melli and Dexta Ranasinghe enjoying morning tea with volunteers from the op shop.

# Ready, Set, Barista Course

Five clients from Sydenham Community Campus completed a 2-day Barista course in March at the Sydenham Neighbourhood House. The training was provided by Jesuit Social Services which SJG Accord formed partnership to run more pre-accredited courses for our clients. Prior to commencing the course clients attended an enrolment session where they filled in all required paperwork by hand supported by our caregivers.

This government-funded practical course was designed to prepare people for work, volunteering or training in the vibrant café scene. Some of the topics covered included:

- **Operating a commercial espresso machine safely**
- **Learning about the origins of coffee**
- **Making a range of coffees**
- **Improving your job ready skills**
- **Increasing your confidence**
- **Serving customers a range of coffees**
- **Barista techniques**

As well as making and drinking plenty of coffees, clients received a Statement of Participation at the conclusion of the course.

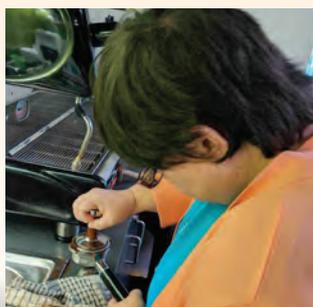
SJG Accord was also able to make an arrangement with the Sydenham Neighbourhood House that our Barista-trained clients could volunteer in future on a regular or ad-hoc basis to run their coffee machine and serve coffees to the many and varied community groups attending the hub. This opportunity will enable clients to continue to practice and perfect their new skills in the future.

Prior to the Community Campuses suspending services there were many more new programs in development to both engage the interests of our clients and support them to meet their NDIS plan goals. We look forward to beginning these new initiatives and resuming our day programs in the future.

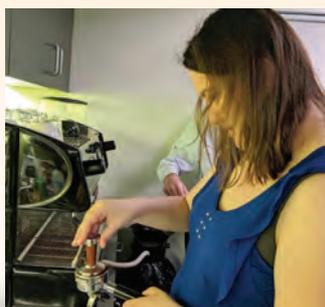
*Bottom: Clients Steve Taleski, Aaron Gonsalves, Chloe Begg, Sandra Sabo and Mustafa Oksuz with the trainers of the barista course.*



Aaron Gonsalves



Sandra Sabo



Chloe Begg



Steve Taleski



# Peter Newsome

Director of Business Development & Employment Services



I write to you our clients, families, carers and our local community, together we are facing a truly unprecedented situation. The global coronavirus pandemic is affecting all of us at SJG Accord, our business operations, and our way of life. During this time, I highlight our commitment to continuing to focus on the client and family experience as we develop and pivot our service offerings to new demands due to this current environment. Exploring new technologies and finding more efficient and innovative ways of delivering personalised, client-centred solutions for people with disabilities and their families and carers.

Furthermore, an update on my directorate responsibilities at the organisation. Since February of this year my portfolio now includes the addition of Employment Services with marketing and engagement activates throughout SJG Accord. Our Employment Services helps job seekers with a disability along their journey to a rewarding career. Our job seekers are as diverse as the general community and have all types of abilities. We assist qualified professionals, enthusiastic assistants and hardworking school leavers.

## *Information regarding our management of COVID-19 and our services*

The Disability Employment Service (DES) continues to support job seekers to stay motivated and optimistic about finding a job. We use remote servicing (by phone and videoconferencing) and job seekers welcome the ongoing support, interest and regular contact with our DES case managers. We also continue to support our clients who are working, although around one-third of them have been stood down due to the impact of COVIC-19 on local businesses.

The School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) service continues to support clients to develop employment skills, confidence and experience, some in individual work experience and others by in-home or remote supports. The team also delivers a range of training and supports by videoconferencing, such as learner-driver education, money handling and budgeting, social skills, health and safety, and employment “discovery” activities (exploring industries, jobs, skills, rights).

*If you or someone you know requires support with employment as a goal please reach out to us so we can assist to navigate through this space;*

**1300 002 226 [PRESS 1]**

*or email; [MySupports@sjog.org.au](mailto:MySupports@sjog.org.au)*

# Danny Boy and me



This is my story.  
I love animals,  
they help me  
stay calm.'

Evelyn Alexander has been engaging with Psychologist Michelle at the Equine Therapy for several years now and loves her interactions with horses. Her natural affinity with animals and in particular horses, provides a calming experience for Evelyn to alleviate any frustrations she experiences at any given time. You'll find Evelyn in the stables or out with Wilma washing and grooming and moving the horses around the paddock.

Evelyn over a period of time created a special bond with one of the horses and called him Danny Boy. You'll often catch them lying together in the paddock especially when the weather is good, spending quiet time together.

**'In Evelyn's own words;'**

***'I love Equine Therapy, Michelle helps me with my anger and feelings. I need Equine Therapy and sometimes I can't always go. I don't ride the horses, but I look after the horses. One horse I named Danny Boy and I love him. I love washing him when he gets rained on and it makes him better. I have a trust between Danny boy and me. He follows me around. '***

**Kris Stevens**  
Individualised Services –  
Disability Support Worker

# Anyone for Tennis?

## Sydenham Community Campus

**Steven Williams** Sydenham Community Campus Manager

Sydenham Community Campus plays host to a vibrant cohort of clients. These bright young individuals pride themselves in participating in activities that promote inclusion and engagement. An accomplished activity they all participate in, is tennis. Director of Coaching, Chris Singh and his iTennis Coaching Academy run a very successful inclusion program in Sydenham that develops skills for each person to experience their personal best.

The success of the iTennis Coaching Academy inclusion program didn't go unnoticed. Being able to demonstrate inclusiveness effectively is a powerful affirmation. Tennis Victoria reached out to Chris Singh, Director of Coaching to formally recognise the great work achieved collaboratively with SJG Accord, and to the overall success of the program. A prestigious honour only ever given to one other coach in all of Victoria.

These bright young individuals pride themselves in participating in activities that promote inclusion and engagement.

As a result our clients, their families and caregivers were invited to a private tour of Government House and play tennis on their exclusive on natural grass court.

Unfortunately while the weather conditions on that Thursday, in March was not favourable it didn't curb the enthusiasm of the group. We didn't get to play tennis on the grass lawn that day, but the experience of seeing and touring Government House allowed our clients to realise their own achievements in accepting this honourable recognition.



Back row: (second from left) Jennie Michelsen (caregiver), Robert Clarkson, Thinh Hoang, Symon Chamula, Chloe Hauth (caregiver), Annette Attard, Melissa Caggegi

Front row: Director of Coaching Chris Singh from iTennis Coaching Academy, Steve Williams SCC Manager.

Below: Symon Chamula in the Long Room.



# Margaret Gibson

Director of Accommodation,  
Respite and Infrastructure



## Supporting our accommodation clients through COVID-19

The safety and wellbeing of our clients in our accommodations homes has always been paramount, more so now than ever. At the beginning of March it became very clear we had a pandemic on our hands, and COVID-19 was about to stop us all in our tracks and quite literally it has. We at SJG Accord manage 32 group homes and two Respite facilities across the metropolitan area of Melbourne. We also support a group of elderly at risk clients in several of these homes.

Of course our immediate concern was the safety and wellbeing of each client living in our accommodation homes. At this point all our clients were asked to stay home.

As an organisation we acted swiftly and put strong measures in place to ensure that we were adhering to all the restriction handed down by the State Government. Also, St John of God Health Care's Infectious Control Team provided instant and accurate information daily.

Having access to all this accurate information informed the Accord Executive Committee (AEC) each morning to continually identify how best to keep our clients safe and engaged at the same time.

It was evident that the social distancing and hand hygiene played a crucial part of the overall measures taken to ensure our clients safety. We limited visitors and unauthorised persons from coming to visit our accommodation homes. All our caregivers are screened regularly and undergo constant training, access to online training and are adhering to all the restrictions implemented. While this has been difficult for the clients we also know it has been difficult for the clients' families and friends and we appreciate their willingness to support us in keeping everyone safe.

We are exploring remote engagement options and some of our clients have accessed services. Many of the clients are enjoying ringing their loved ones or getting calls on app's such as What's App and House Party, even our Pastoral Care Practitioner Tania Rose has been making contact this way and everyone is really enjoying this.

All the caregivers, team leaders and accommodation managers are working very hard each day in keeping our most vulnerable safe. For this I'm most grateful to them and very proud of the effort everyone is going to, to keep everyone safe and well.

*So thank-you to everyone  
as this is a huge team effort.*



George (left) with Richie (right)

## You can and hear Richard Cooper barracking for his favourite Carlton, Blues team around the gardens, corridors and edges of SJG Accord.

Known as Ritchie to caregivers and clients around him, he makes up the very fabric that SJG Accord is.

He lends his abilities to maintaining the herb gardens, campus gardens and overall landscaping while he's at Greensborough Community Campus.

When the NDIS was introduced Ritchie availed of the individualised support options. This allowed him to make decisions to create his own social schedule. Like most sporting people, Ritchie enjoys nights out and thoroughly enjoys his visits to the Epping Plaza Hotel Sports Bar where he watches multiple sports screens, has dinner from counter meals and a few drinks to hand. He is regarded as a regular patron and is highly valued by all the staff as an avid sports fan and vocal supporter.

Being a regular at the Epping Plaza Hotel Sports Bar Ritchie didn't go unnoticed. George also a regular patron recognised Ritchie as a young boy that he and his wife Jackie fostered some years ago. Ritchie from the ages of four to seven was fostered by George and Jackie and took him on several outings.

Ritchie recalled the times when George and Jackie went to the drive-in movies in George's car. They shared many memories together.

As a support worker I felt the emotional connection of what this meant to Ritchie. While Friday nights are still Ritchie's social escape, he's now rekindling his relationship with George in his favourite sports bar.

# Keeping the fun at Wairoa Road

## ...through COVID-19

**Leeanne Forrester** Team Leader

While being in the midst of COVID-19 with level three restrictions in place our clients' health and wellbeing is centre to how we support them in their accommodation home at Wairoa Road.

To reduce the isolation feelings for Anna, Gina, Jane, Sophia and Marise, the caregivers and I are continuously looking at novel ways to find activities to keep the momentum and the spirits up.

The home is generally a bustling hive of activity and now more than ever Anna, Gina, Jane Sophia and Marise are keeping busy with us all thinking outside the box to create new activities.

We work hard to create entertaining projects to help navigate each day and promotes a sense of fun as well as achievement in these challenging times. Sophia enjoys jigsaw puzzles while Gina and Anna enjoy art. We've recently got the ladies into beading, making beaded keyrings. Another day the arts and crafts teams make paper flowers.

Some other days we get in to the garden and do lots gardening, and then fire up the Barbeque. Fortunately for Sophia she now can use her wheelchair to move around. Isolation isn't easy for our clients, and thus far we're fortunate we're getting through it with lots of smiles and laughs.

*From top: Sofia in the garden;  
Anna and Jane eating hot cross buns;  
Anna (large pic);  
Gina colouring in;  
Anna and caregiver Leeanne*

# Silvana Gugliandolo

Director Individual and Specialist Services



## *Supporting our clients through COVID-19 at our campuses and Individual Services*

In March we made the difficult decision to suspend our group programs and day services across our three campuses, Greensborough, Sydenham and Moreland.

The safety and wellbeing of our clients, their families and our caregivers was at the forefront of our decision making. Acting swiftly we minimised the spread the COVID-19 virus.

Navigating our services through a pandemic is truly challenging, as we're acutely aware of the impact the mental health issues this represents to our clients and their families. Our Pastoral Care Practitioner, Tania Rose has recently engaged with clients, providing an outlet for each client to have a private conversation confidentially with Tania.

We reached out to families and a number of our clients are now being supported through our Individual Services. And where possible we support some clients in an individualised

capacity at our campuses. With social/physically distancing and hand hygiene firmly in place, we are seeing great results.

Our specialist services allied health team have moved to offering remote learning services to better support our clients with Zara Thompson, Music Therapist experiencing excellent outcomes.

Each day the Accord Executive Committee meets to discuss what measures to put in place to better support our clients. We are constantly looking at ways in the future we can safely and securely offer programs again. Our individualised caregivers are working very hard right now ensuring that each client is receiving support in a safe environment.

*If you require additional information on any of our services please call*  
**1300 002 226 [PRESS 1]**



## FLEETWOOD MAC

Attending the Fleetwood concerts are Clients, Jamie Dawes, Samantha Melli & Kimm Walpole, with Community Support Workers Carol Conway and Denae Clow.

# THE BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN

*Coronavirus is visiting, it is not here to stay.  
The battlelines have now been drawn and it shall not get its way.  
My face is battered from my mask, I have bruises on my nose and cheeks.  
I wonder what I will look like, at the end of months and weeks.*

*But I will not give up, I will soldier on each day,  
This virus shall not beat me, I am here and here to stay.  
My life is dedicated, to all the souls on Earth.  
I knew this was my calling, from the moment of my birth.*

*My body is so weary, I collapse when I get home,  
But I awake with new resolve, my patients are not alone.  
You are the reason that I work, you are the dawn in every day.  
I am here to serve every one of you and work I shall, no time for play.*

*This virus is so treacherous, it sneaks up on one and all,  
But I am standing fierce, my friend, I will not let you fall.  
You come with faith and trust, to this hospital where I work,  
I shall greet you with a smile, my duties, I do not shirk.*

*So, virus I am telling you, you will not get your way.  
Australians are fierce, bold and caring and I will fight you every day.  
Back at work in mask and gown, I look at all the folk lying there.  
There is a reason why I was placed on Earth and now you are in my care.*

*I cannot let you leave; I will not let you die.  
You are my human family, placed on Earth, on Eagle wings you fly.  
One patient, two, five now ten, now one hundred souls I see,  
The battle lines are drawn, for all my colleagues and for me.*

*I stand here in my mask and gown, to many have already died.  
I will drive this virus from this land, I have science on my side.  
With battered face and steel resolve, I return from work each day  
And tomorrow in my mask and gown, I shall fight another day.*

**With love, appreciation and gratitude  
to all hospital and clinic teams,  
General Practitioners and front line staff,  
on behalf of all Australians.**

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