There is a remarkable object in the collection of the Medical History Museum—a pocket surgical kit in a leather case. Its significance lies in the names embossed in gold on its cover: ‘Herbert Hewlett from W. Snowball’ (see page 69). In 1896 a young doctor, Herbert Maunsell Hewlett, returned home to Melbourne after graduating in Edinburgh. Under the guidance of the recognised founder of paediatrics in Australia, Dr William Snowball, Hewlett established in 1897 the first radiology unit in a Melbourne public hospital—at the Children’s Hospital. This gift is evidence of the culture of collaboration and innovation at the Children’s Hospital that is at the heart of the history of this venerable institution.

The publication and exhibition The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne: 150 years of caring celebrate and commemorate the history of RCH (established in 1870), and its strong connections with the University of Melbourne (established in 1853) through teaching, research and shared alumni. The various events organised by the Royal Children’s Hospital Foundation to celebrate the 150th anniversary were spread over 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlights included the RCH150 anniversary postage stamp release with Australia Post; Me and UooUoo: The RCH150 Anniversary Art Trail; Celebrate. Create. Connect. The RCH150 Aboriginal Art Project. The present exhibition and publication are part of the University of Melbourne’s contribution to this special anniversary.

The genesis of RCH was a meeting convened in September 1870 to form a committee, whose first resolution was ‘to establish in Melbourne a hospital for children to be called the Melbourne Free Hospital for Sick Children’. This was followed by the appointment of a committee and staff. George Britton Halford, inaugural professor of anatomy, physiology and pathology at the university, was appointed as consulting surgeon. The relationship with the University of Melbourne had begun.1

The university and the hospital have since been connected through clinical teaching, practitioners, researchers and projects over RCH’s 150-year history. This exhibition and publication highlight important events in RCH’s history. The book is not a comprehensive chronicle, but a series of essays and vignettes written by historians and individuals drawn from the league of professionals in many fields who have cared for children’s health at RCH in recent decades. It builds on Peter Yule’s comprehensive account, The Royal Children’s Hospital: A history of faith, science and love, published in 1999 in the lead-up to the hospital’s 130th anniversary.

Cat. 21. Melbourne Hospital for Sick Children, Training School for Nurses (active 1889–1987), Nurse’s certificate for Edith Florence Ochiltree, 25 March 1891, leather, gold, ink, print on paper; closed 22.5 × 15.0 cm, open 31.0 × 22.5 cm. MHMA0837.1, Medical History Museum, University of Melbourne.

Introduction
The project team was led by Professor Sarath Ranganathan and Professor Glenn Bowes, with Dr Jacqueline Healy, director of museums in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, who consulted with the RCH Foundation, Royal Children’s Hospital Alumni Group, League of Former Trainees, and Royal Children’s Hospital Archive and Collections Department. Staff from the foundation and the Archive and Collections Department—in particular, Lucy Beatrice Hughes and Emma Dacey—contributed to the selection of material.

From its origins as an outpatient clinic in a small house in the city in 1870, the hospital has evolved into one of the world’s leading paediatric hospitals. It is therefore most fitting that Dame Sally Davies has written the foreword to our publication. Dame Sally was part of the international panel that reviewed the Melbourne Children’s Campus, acknowledging the importance of collaborative research between the Royal Children’s Hospital, the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and the University of Melbourne to drive innovations in health care and cost effectiveness to improve the health and well-being of children, and families, in Victoria, Australia and worldwide.2

Professor Glenn Bowes’ introductory essay covers the long and entwined relationship between the hospital and the university in teaching and clinical research, culminating in the Melbourne Children’s Campus, and then Peter Yule summarises the hospital’s early history, up to the 1940s, marking the commencement of the modern era. Professor Sarath Ranganathan puts forward the vision for the future of paediatrics, one of strengthening the hospital’s dual purpose of caring and curing children, and families, in Victoria, Australia and worldwide.2

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There have been many symbols over the years that epitomise the values of RCH. The most enduring has been the coat of arms designed in the 1950s by the College of Arms in London and Peter Jones, a leading paediatric surgeon. His daughter Sarah Jones shares the intricacies of this process. The symbol of the boy and girl has been reinvigorated in the 150th anniversary celebrations included major art projects, with works commissioned from Indigenous artists. Elders Aunty Joy Murphy and N’Arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs underline the cultural power of the RCH150 Aboriginal Art Project.

Hospital founders William Smith, John Singleton and Frances Perry were three individuals with a shared sense of social justice. Their contributions are examined by James Angus, director of the RCH Foundation, and historian Ann Westmore. These founders established a hospital that was to be transformed by William Snowball, now considered the father of paediatrics in this country.

Like many public hospitals in Melbourne, RCH began in houses built for residential purposes. The grandest of these was its third home, the Carlton mansion of leading Melbourne citizen and judge Sir Redmond Barry—Peter Yule relates its significance. By way of contrast, Mark Healey from architects Bates Smart describes some of the environmental, technical and patient-welfare features of RCH’s current home, which opened in 2011.

Many remarkable individuals contributed to the evolution of RCH and its relationship with the University of Melbourne. Those highlighted here are exemplars, representing the achievements of countless talented and committed people in all fields who have created the extensive range of health, teaching and research services at RCH. Individuals of particular significance include pioneering women such as Dr Mary Cowan, the first woman doctor to be employed there: Dr Sarah McNab, the first female director of general medicine at RCH, writes about the challenges that Dr Cowan faced. Further employment of women was slow to achieve, but it was the foresight of William Upjohn II in the 1920s that broke the glass ceiling at RCH by enabling women to enter the field. Kate Campbell and Jean Macnamara as residents. Recipient of the Upjohn Medal in 2002, Professor Richard Larkins, comments on this initiative. Professor Dinah Reddihough, director of child development and rehabilitation, pinpoints Macnamara’s extraordinary achievements in developing an efficient and comprehensive system of care for children with poliomyelitis.

It was Dame Elisabeth Murdoch and Dr Vernon Collins who led the hospital into a new era on the Parkville site in the late 1950s. Penny Fowler describes her grandmother’s achievements, with Dr Kevin Cowan, the first Commonwealth Professor of child health. In the realms of clinical practice, research and teaching, there were many turning points at RCH, of which but a small selection can be examined in this publication. For example, Dr John Colebatch revolutionised the treatment of children with cancer. Professor Henry Ekert surveys Colebatch’s achievements, as they laid the foundation for his own work with childhood leukaemias and other cancers, transplantation, and haemostasis. Professor James Wilkinson shares the pivotal moment of performing, with colleague Roger Mee and team, RCH’s first heart transplant operation, on 14-year-old Michael Sofoulis in 1988.

RCH led the trajectory of the emergence was physiotherapy. Anne McCoy, a physiotherapist at RCH for 37 years, stresses the importance of its development under the leadership of Dr Jean Macnamara.
Over the last 150 years RCH has continued to respond to community needs, and has often been at the forefront of social issues and changing community perceptions. Professor Ian Anderson discusses Indigenous children’s health, while the pivotal change achieved by the establishment of the Wadja Aboriginal support unit is explained by Shawana Andrews and Dr Jane Miller. Associate Professor Michelle Telfer outlines RCH’s leadership in providing medical care for trans and gender-diverse children and adolescents. Many of these initiatives have received funding through the RCH Foundation, Sue Hunt enumerates the foundation’s four funding pillars of leadership, education and training; patient- and family-centred care; equipment and technology; and ground-breaking research.

It is interesting to speculate what health care for children and adolescents might look like in another 150 years. The future will be shaped by research conducted by the Melbourne Children’s Campus—Royal Children’s Hospital, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, and University of Melbourne—supported by new technologies. The ‘transformative shock’ of the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly increased the use of telehealth consultations, and Professor Harriet Hiscock’s research has examined the response of patients and their families to this new type of service. But telehealth is just one of the emerging technologies that will radically change health services in coming years. The Hon. Rob Knowles, chair of RCH, speculates that the way of the future lies outside the walls of the hospital, with telehealth, digital care coordination and remote monitoring linking patients, clinicians and the wider community. Many forms of care will be available at the patient’s home or in the community, as well as at the hospital. The Royal Children’s Hospital, in partnership with the University of Melbourne, will continue to serve the wellbeing of the community in innovative ways, just as it has done for the last 150 years.

Professor Mark Cook
Chair, Medical History Museum Advisory Committee

Dr Jacqueline Healy
Director, Museums, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

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Cat. 65 Dr Jean Macnamara (Melbourne, 1899–1968) (designer); manufactured in Germany, *Mannequins and papoose board*, c. 1935, cotton and other fabric, elastic, plaster and wood; mannequin 6.7 × 32.5 × 11.8 cm; papoose board 6.3 × 37.7 × 13.8 cm. MHM02116, Medical History Museum, University of Melbourne.

This articulated wooden mannequin rests in a papoose board to illustrate deformity prevention. Designed and used by Dr Jean Macnamara to demonstrate the principles of splinting paralysed limbs to avoid deformities in poliomyelitis patients.