

Mater Hospital

Intensive Care Unit Timeline

1950

The concept of an intensive care unit (ICU) and the specialty of intensive care medicine first started in Copenhagen, Denmark the 1950s during the polio epidemic.

1970

In the 1970s, a coronary care/high dependency unit was established in the old Mater Private Hospital (Aubigny Building). The 1970s also saw a 4-bed area in the old Mater Hospital Brisbane (Whitty Building) designated for



monitoring and care of patients needing respiratory and cardiovascular support from the operating theatres and the casualty department.

1981

In 1981, the new Mater Adult Hospital opened, and a 6-bed combined ICU/coronary care unit was commissioned on level 5 of the building. In the early days intensive care units were staffed by anaesthetists and physicians who recognised the value of intensive care. In 1981, Dr Ian Airey was appointed as the first Director for the MHB ICU. During his tenure Dr Airey was able to foster collaboration between MHB ICU and other tertiary ICUs in Brisbane in an effort to improve safety and quality in intensive care.



1983

By 1983, the 5-bed unit was capable of providing mechanical ventilation to support patients undergoing neurosurgical and vascular procedures, among others.

1984

Dr Peter Lavercombe took over as Director of MHB ICU from 1984 when Dr Airey left to pursue a career in private anaesthetic practice. Dr Lavercombe provided his leadership to consolidate the role critical care till 2000.



1993

By the time the new Mater Private Hospital opened in 1993, the MPH unit had grown onto 10-bed combined CCU/ICU on level 7 of the new building.

2001

In 2001, Dr Peter Cook was appointed as the first Complex-wide Director of ICU to provide leadership for both MHB ICU and MPH ICU. Dr Cook was instrumental in the success of this unique and integrated model of public and private intensive care service. He was also a strong advocate for patient safety at the Mater.

2006

In 2006 the unit became a dedicated 10-bed ICU when the MPH Cardiovascular Unit opened with a stand-alone CCU.

2007

In 2007, an 11-bed dedicated ICU was operationalised on level 7 of the Mater Adult Hospital

2010

Dr Shane Townsend took over as Complex-wide Director of ICU in 2010. Among his many achievements, Dr Townsend led the design and construction process of the level 7 MHB ICU in 2007 and oversaw the 2015 conversion of the former paediatric ICU into the current MHB ICU on level 5 of the Salmon Building. It was also during Dr Townsend's tenure that the Mater ICU's advanced training status was elevated from C6 to C12 by the Accreditation Committee of the College of Intensive Care Medicine. Under their collective leadership, Mater ICU grew in clinical service capability, academic portfolio and research capacity.

2015

In 2015, the MHB ICU was relocated to level 5 of the Salmon Building (previously the Paediatric ICU for Mater Children's Hospital) with an expanded bed platform of 16 beds to meet the ever-increasing demand for critical care.

2018

The current Director of Intensive Care Services Associate Professor Nai An Lai was appointed to the role in April 2018 and continues to run the unit today.

