

# Medic gastro outbreak

Rebecca Borg

## Second group fall ill after dining at venue

A second major gastro outbreak at The Park Melbourne is being probed after 70 people fell violently ill following a conference dinner – three days before the venue hosted a wedding which left dozens of guests with food poisoning.

Doctors, nurses, researchers, rehabilitation and emergency services staff were among 280 guests staying at Pullman Melbourne Albert Park last week for an annual Australian and New Zealand Burn Association (ANZBA) conference.

The four-day event – which was scheduled to finish on Friday – was forced to go virtual

on its last day after 70 guests were believed to have come down with gastroenteritis symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting.

Some delegates were so ill they sought medical treatment at nearby hospitals, prompting organisers to cancel the final conference function.

It's not known how the conference guests fell ill, but they dined at The Park Melbourne on Wednesday night – the venue at the centre of a gastro outbreak among guests at the wedding three days later.

At least 30 wedding guests, ranging in age from one to the elderly, became unwell in the days following the reception, with symptoms including a high fever, nausea, vomiting and even hallucinations.

A source revealed that the medical conference guests were three days earlier served gnocchi or lamb shoulder for entree, chicken or salmon for main course and a chocolate tart or rice pudding for dessert.

While most of them felt fine that night, several medical professionals started to feel vio-

lently ill the following afternoon and evening while staying at Pullman Melbourne Albert Park.

It's understood some sick guests had afternoon tea while at the hotel on Thursday morning.

It's not yet known whether the illness's origin was The Park Melbourne, Pullman Melbourne Albert Park, or somewhere else.

Both venues said they were liaising with the Department of Health, which is investigating both incidents. The depart-

ment said in a statement on Tuesday that the illness outbreak among the wedding guests was gastroenteritis.

An Accor Hotels spokesman said in response to a query about the conference guests: staying at Pullman Melbourne Albert Park: "The health and wellbeing of our guests is our greatest priority."

"The source of the issue is unknown, and our understanding is that the Department of Health is working with a number of venues to identify this."

"We follow industry stan-

dards to ensure all appropriate measures are in place."

Meanwhile, Bahaa Harb, venue manager for The Park Melbourne, confirmed that he and his team were investigating both outbreaks.

"In conjunction with the City of Port Phillip Council and the Department of Health, we are continuing to investigate an outbreak of illness occurring after events at The Park on Wednesday September 13 and Saturday September 16," Mr Harb said.

The Herald Sun contacted ANZBA for comment regarding the outbreak at the conference.

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## Trial to thwart a killer

Annie Liu

Victorian researchers are leading a new international clinical trial to improve the outcomes of treatment for two rare and aggressive women's cancers.

A team from Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Monash Health are leading the trial called EPOCH.

It will investigate a potential life saving treatment for ovarian and uterine cancers.

For the first time EPOCH will combine the chemotherapy drug Eribulin and an immunotherapy drug Pembrolizumab to help improve treatment outcomes.

Lead researcher Dr Holly Barker said chemotherapy drugs could minimise the invasion of a tumour and reduce its growth.

"We hope the promising results we saw in our initial research will be emulated in the trial to improve outcomes for these women," Dr Barker said in a statement.

The trial will expand to Queensland, New South Wales and to Canada and the UK in coming months.

## 'Dangerous' near misses

Melbourne Airport has confirmed two planes narrowly missed several airport tarmac workers on the runway in two "dangerous" incidents this month.

Workers on the tarmac were completing runway pavement works on Monday evening when a Boeing 787 took off "further down the runway than expected".

It was the second incident of its nature this month. An earlier similar incident took place on September 7.

No one was harmed in either incident but investigations are under way.



## Ancient royalty to grace the NGV

Samantha Landy

Artefacts connected to ancient Egypt's most famous kings – including Tutankhamun and Ramses II – are coming to the National Gallery of Victoria as part of an ambitious and exclusive exhibition.

The 2024 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces showcase, Pharaoh, will be the largest exhibit ever toured internationally by the British Museum, featuring more than 500 treasured objects spanning 3000 years.

Victorians will be the first in the world to glimpse several of the artefacts in a museum

setting, says British Museum international touring exhibitions curator Marie Vandenberg.

"A lot of (the items) have never been displayed in Australia; some of them were never displayed in London," she said. "We really tried to build something unique for the Australian public."

The exhibition would explore ancient Egypt "through the lens of the iconic figure that is the pharaoh", she said. It will comprise sculptures, tomb and temple architecture, coffins and funerary objects and jewellery, and items linked to historical figures including Great Pyramid of Giza builder

Khufu and Alexander the Great.

Dr Vandenberg said a specialist British Museum team had "already started packing" items to transport to Melbourne for the June 14-October 16, 2024, exhibition.

NGV director Tony Ellwood said Pharaoh had been more than eight years in the making. [ngv.vic.gov.au](http://ngv.vic.gov.au)

Alice Raymond at the 2024 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition Pharaoh, on display next year at NGV International; and (inset), a statue of god Amun-Ra from ancient Egypt. Main picture: Eugene Hyland