

# + CLINIC TO THE STARS

*Around the Grounds finds out a bit more about one of Australia's leading sports clinics*



**DOCTOR SWAN**  
Tom Cross and  
Swans captain  
Josh Kennedy

**T**HE Stadium Sports Medicine Clinic isn't your average facility. It's the place that looks after some of Australia's biggest sporting stars including Buddy Franklin and Israel Folau.

It's also a popular choice for the mere mortals who frequent the precinct and the clinic is ready, willing and able to look after members and the general public for their orthopaedic conditions and injuries.

The team of experts, led by Sydney Swans Head Doctor Tom Cross and NSW Waratahs Head Doctor Sharron Flahive, have been treating the best in the business for the past 20 years. Renowned pioneering Orthopaedic surgeon and former first grade Rugby League player, Dr Mervyn Cross (Tom's father) established the Stadium Clinic in 2008.

It's a "one-stop shop" offering patients first-class care in sports medicine, orthopaedic surgery, radiology (X ray, CT, MRI and Ultrasound), physiotherapy, sports and general nutrition, podiatry and many other allied health and specialist services.

Tom has seen sports medicine come a long way. He was on the sideline for Tony Lockett's 1300th goal in 1999 and is now the go-to-man for all 46 Swans players. He's been there for some of Australia's biggest sporting events including AFL and NRL grand finals, State of Origin deciders, Bledisloe Cups and the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

He's also taken care of touring cricket, rugby league and football teams and international powerhouses such as the San Diego Chargers, Los Angeles Dodgers and even Cirque du Soleil performers when they tour Sydney.

"I didn't hesitate to accept that job," Tom says. "It's been a pleasure meeting and working with the entire Swans squad - they're extraordinary athletes and great people."



#### LEADING HAND

Sharron Flahive, the Waratahs' long-time doctor assists Izzy from the field for head injury assessment

**"We're a family here at the precinct. We already see a lot of members who use the facilities at the stadium gym and we're delighted to look after them."**

**TOM CROSS**



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## STADIUM CLINIC

"Every game is two hours of aerobic activity, they are absolutely spent at the end. They may not be as powerful as rugby players but their aerobic ability is far superior. Buddy Franklin for example, runs 10-14 kilometres every game and didn't miss a single fixture in 2016."

The clinic's location, on the ground floor of the Sheridan Building, is unique to Australian sport. Players can be assessed on the field of play, taken to the sheds and then driven by golf buggy to the clinic in a matter of minutes to begin accurate diagnosis and treatment.

"We're a family here at the precinct," Tom says. "We already see a lot of members who use the facilities at the stadium gym and we're delighted to look after them. We treat professional athletes the same way as we would a member, side by side with the general community."

Long-time Waratahs doctor

Sharron Flahive has seen her fair share of heroics as well. Since 1999, she has been running the sideline for club legends like Phil Waugh, Matthew Burke, Dave Dennis and Kurtley Beale.

"There's been plenty of memories with the team over the years," Sharron says. "The excitement and relief of winning the title in 2014 is what stands out for me – it was a victory for all of the NSW players who came before that team as well."

"What people see on the paddock is only a small part of what goes on. Making it to the top of a sport is something that only a few get to experience – injuries have taken away plenty of opportunities."

"You get to go through a small part of the highs and lows that athletes experience. For example, Kurtley Beale's injury before he went to the UK was an incredibly emotional time. All of a sudden, you're not sure what the next few

months of your life are going to be like. It's very different to what we experience in our daily grind."

A big part of Sharron's role is managing not just the player but their general well being. Every athlete has their own 'thumbprint when it comes to how they're feeling and what they're thinking on any given day.'

"You get exposed to different athletes and that is part of the challenge. Over time you get to know the players and how they recover or react to different situations. Sleep, external stressors and overall fatigue are important indicators for recovery and training methods."

"The best thing about being based at the stadium is that I can give my everyday patients and members the same level of care that I would for a professional athlete. I think that's an insight that people appreciate when they come to the clinic."

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