



YOUR FOUNDATION

AUTUMN 2024

FLINDERS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER



How Fun-tastic!

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A fun-tastic day for our 'Flinders kids'!

The sun was shining for an incredible and 'fun-tastic' day at the Flinders Foundation Fun-tastic Kids Fun Fair at the South Adelaide Football Club in December, with nearly 6,000 kids and families registering to attend.

The day was all about celebrating 'Flinders Kids' - those born, treated and cared for at Flinders and across the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network.

Among the many activities, rides, entertainment, amusements and food truck treats, we were inundated with families sharing stories of their own 'Flinders Kids' and giving thanks for the care they have and continue to receive.

Amazing and brave Flinders Kids!



All eight **Schofield kids** were born at Flinders – including the youngest Delilah who was born at 25 weeks and spent 155 days in the Neonatal Unit.



Easton had seizures as a newborn and was placed on the 'Brainz Machine' at Flinders. His family shared their story as part of Flinders Foundation's 2017 Christmas fundraising appeal to help buy more of this important brain monitoring equipment for the Neonatal Unit... he's now six and doing amazingly!



Beautiful **William**, 17 months, spent his first seven months in the Neonatal and Paediatric Units at Flinders, including weeks recovering in Melbourne from open heart surgery.

Twins **Abigail and Kaiden** (featured on the cover), age 7 were born at 31 weeks and spent nine weeks in the Neonatal Unit. Abigail also recently paid a visit to Noarlunga Hospital, leaving with a cast for a broken thumb!

The Fun Fair is on again...Stay tuned for details!



When he was in the Neonatal Unit, I kept asking the doctor how he would be when he grew up and they said they just didn't know. It warms my heart to see how he's doing now. The staff are so amazing and I always take the time to think of them and give thanks for them.
Radha, mum of Ramanan Renagargian, age 8 who was born at 27 weeks.

Thank you for supporting Kids at Flinders. Your generous support of our recent Christmas appeal raised more than \$20,000 to support kids and their families at Flinders.

Thank you



Susan grateful for life-saving care

Susan on a long-awaited trip back to her homeland of Ireland before she found herself in the Flinders Medical Centre Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

When Susan Arthure contracted COVID-19 on the return flight from a long-awaited trip back to her homeland of Ireland, she found herself in the Flinders Medical Centre Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Despite taking “every possible precaution”, a weakened immune system from a Non-Hodgkin lymphoma diagnosis – for which she is in remission – left her particularly vulnerable to the virus.

“Although I had fantastic treatment and started straight away on anti-virals and steroids, I was getting sicker and sicker, and eventually after three weeks with COVID-19 I said, ‘I’m really not well at all’, and was admitted to Flinders for 16 days,” Susan recalls.

With her lungs full of COVID-19 pneumonitis, and requiring 100 per cent oxygen at times, Susan was cared for across the ICU and Respiratory Ward while she continued to test positive for a total of five weeks.

“They saved my life,” Susan says of the staff at Flinders.

“I know how busy they all are, but I never felt like they were racing to get to the next patient...they always gave me considered and thoughtful answers and were honest with me about what was happening.”



I’m so grateful not only for their incredible medical care and technical skill, but also for the compassion and kindness they showed me.

Susan Arthure

With Susan still recovering, she and husband Hugh unfortunately had to cancel a holiday to New Zealand. But the pair generously chose to donate their cancellation refund to help the ICU support more patients like Susan in future.

“They were so very important to me during this time, and I’ll be forever grateful,” Susan says.

Susan is now continuing her recovery with the help of Flinders’ Pulmonary Rehabilitation Clinic, where she attends exercise and breathing classes to help rebuild her strength and endurance.

Grateful for the care you or a loved one received?

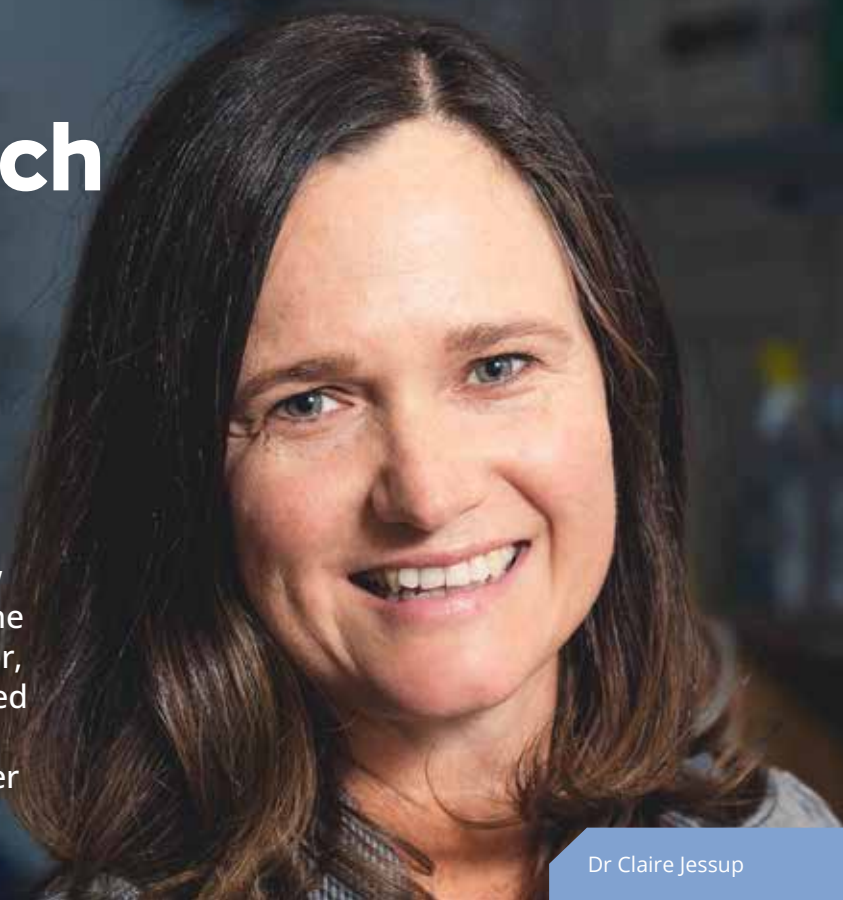
Let us know by phoning **8204 5216** or at **supporters@flindersfoundation.org.au**

Thank you

for supporting patients and their families affected by cancer

Cutting-edge cancer research underway

Thanks to the generosity of supporters and participants of Flinders Foundation's Pink Yellow Blue Cabaret and the 2023 SA Discovery Tour, four new Flinders University cancer research projects have shared \$100,000 in funding to enable new discoveries to be made to help improve the lives of patients affected by ovarian cancer, multiple myeloma and the asbestos-related cancer, mesothelioma, as well as patients living with cancer in conjunction with other chronic health conditions. [Read on...](#)



Dr Claire Jessup

Ovarian cancer

Dr Claire Jessup and Mr Rhys Fogarty's research will lay the foundations for immunotherapy treatment to become a more viable treatment option for ovarian cancer, with hopes it could one day lead to new treatments for women with advanced stage ovarian cancer.

"There is an urgent need for new treatments for ovarian cancer, because while many patients initially respond to chemotherapy, which is the current treatment, unfortunately many will relapse with no further treatment options available," Dr Jessup says.

"We hope the outcome of this project could lead to a new treatment for ovarian cancer which greatly improves the lives of patients and their families, particularly in advanced stages."



Dr Charlotte Downes

Multiple Myeloma

Dr Charlotte Downes is hopeful that her research focusing on a specific protein expressed on the surface of bone marrow cancer cells could one day lead to improved outcomes for multiple myeloma patients with poor prognosis.

The project will study a protein called Desmoglein-2 (DSG2), working to define its roles in multiple myeloma in the hope of developing novel treatments to inhibit the functions of the protein.

We can't wait to share the impact of this important work with you!



Dr Ash Hocking

Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma – a cancer associated with asbestos exposure – has a very poor prognosis, with the majority of patients sadly surviving less than a year after diagnosis.

Dr Ash Hocking will use funding to grow ‘3D mini tumours in a dish’ – called organoid co-culture models – using cells from individual patients with mesothelioma to test and predict in the laboratory how their own cancer cells might respond to immunotherapy treatment with the aim of developing a personalised medicine approach to the treatment of this cancer.

Cancer and other chronic conditions

Improving health outcomes and quality of life for people who are affected not only by cancer, but multiple other chronic conditions – called ‘multimorbidity’ – is the aim of Dr Emma Kemp’s new study.

“Our work is about helping both patients and healthcare professionals in their efforts to treat the ‘whole person’ and improve their quality of life, rather than treating a single disease,” Dr Kemp says.



Dr Emma Kemp and Dr Katia Ferrar

Meet Flinders’ new cancer research fellows

Two exciting new cancer research fellowships have been awarded to Flinders University’s Dr Katia Ferrar and Dr Emma Kemp which will see them dedicate the next three years working to improve the quality of life, and reduce distress, for people who are living with, or after, cancer.

Dr Kemp’s research will aim to explore the psychological impacts of cancer on patients and carers to find better ways to support them to navigate this difficult time in their lives, by providing the right resources at the right time to support people throughout their cancer journey.

Meanwhile, Dr Ferrar’s research will investigate how physical activity can help improve the lives of people affected by cancer, as well as looking at the benefits of a variety of other wellness therapies.

A partnership between Flinders Foundation, Cancer Council SA and Flinders University has invested over \$1 million in these new cancer research fellowships, with thanks to generous Flinders Foundation supporters including the Dry July Foundation, Pink Yellow Blue Ball attendees and individual donors supporting cancer research.

Support cancer research and care at Flinders. *Donate today.*

You're making cutting edge research and new discoveries possible...

Thank you!



Geri Laven-Law

We're excited to share that 31 new research projects totalling \$750,000 have been funded thanks to generous supporters just like you!

Ranging from cancer, Motor Neurone Disease, mental health, sleep and eye health, through to children's health, cerebral palsy and gestational diabetes, this annual health seed grant round aims to improve health outcomes and create positive change within our community and across the globe.

"We're grateful to our supporters and the South Australian community for helping to fund the dedicated researchers at Flinders University and the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network who work tirelessly to improve the lives of people and their families affected by a wide range of illnesses, diseases and social issues." - Flinders Foundation Executive Director, Ross Verschoor



Dr Tanja Jankovic-Karasoulos

Tackling rising gestational diabetes rates

"The dogma surrounding gestational diabetes has focused primarily on maternal obesity, as well as age and ethnicity, yet the rise is seen across all groups...increasing evidence points to a role for folic acid in insulin resistance and gestational diabetes."

"Our work will provide critical evidence on the role of folic acid and support applications for larger funding to tackle the problem of rising gestational diabetes in Australia to alleviate the imminent and long-term health impacts in 500,000 women and babies predicted to be affected over the next decade," lead researcher, Dr Tanja Jankovic-Karasoulos, explains.

Join us

Learn about bowel cancer research happening at Flinders at our next **Research Forum**.

When: Wed 19 June 2024

Register: at flindersfoundation.org.au or phone **8204 5216**.





Dr Ganessan Kichenadasse

World-first DNA study for earlier colorectal cancer detection

In a world-first study, Flinders University researchers Dr Ganessan Kichenadasse and Geri Laven-Law are analysing patient blood samples to a greater degree than ever before in an effort to detect bowel cancer earlier and at a more treatable stage – ideally before symptoms present.

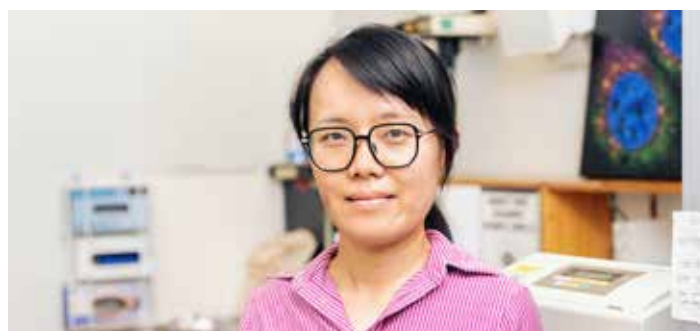
And there's hope that their work could lead to development of the first Australian-made blood screening test to detect bowel cancer – also known as colorectal cancer.



Professor Justine Smith

Eye disease clinical trial in sight

Professor Justine Smith and her team hope their new research project could be a stepping stone to a clinical trial on a potential new treatment for macular oedema associated with inherited retinal eye disease.



Dr Xuan Luo

Faster testing of new MND treatments

There are exciting clinical trials underway across the globe to find new drugs to stop the progression of Motor Neurone Disease (MND) – a rare neurological disease with progressive loss of muscle function, for which there is sadly no cure.

Now thanks to your support, the researchers here at Flinders are developing exciting, easier and much faster ways to detect whether these new treatments are working for each patient during these clinical trials.

Dr Xuan Luo will use her research grant to develop a portable battery-driven device called a 'Portable Vortex Fluidic Device' (or P-VFD) which will potentially provide faster feedback on treatment effectiveness by analysing patients' biofluids, compared with current diagnostic tests.



Associate Professor Ching Li Chai-Coetzer

Revolutionising sleep apnea management

Sleep researcher Associate Professor Ching Li Chai-Coetzer will explore alternative diagnosis and monitoring of uncomplicated obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), using a low-cost commercially available contactless sensor mat placed under a patient's mattress, opening the possibility of helping more people promptly, and freeing up sleep-laboratory waiting lists.

Thank you for 'embracing' body image research

Flinders Foundation has partnered with The Embrace Collective, led by renowned Australian of the Year 2023, Taryn Brumfitt, to support critical body image research in Flinders University's Embrace Impact Lab.

Overseen by body image researcher Associate Professor Ivanka Prichard, the Lab is dedicated to empowering young Australians to embrace body appreciation. Generous support is funding a research assistant position, taken up by Dr Jamie-Lee Pennesi, to gather and assess data around the impact the EMBRACE KIDS film has on body image, mental health and overall wellbeing in Years 7 and 8 students.



Associate Professor Ivanka Prichard and Dr Jamie-Lee Pennesi.

Chat to our team about how you can support kids and families at Flinders

Support for this type of intervention and prevention research provides us with a wonderful opportunity to be able to shape the lives of young people and to improve physical and mental outcomes in the community. Associate Professor Ivanka Prichard

Farewell to Neonatal Unit's 'milk lady'

When Pat Rhodes first set foot in the Flinders Medical Centre Neonatal Unit in 1983 she'd never handled a baby before.



It was very scary, they were all such tiny babies...nowadays, I would have held thousands and thousands and they're all just so beautiful.

Pat Rhodes

Soon after arriving, a job opened up in the unit's milk room.

"I went in there and never came out," Pat laughs.

For more than 40 years, Pat has been affectionately called the 'Milk Lady'. Together with her colleagues she's meticulously organised milk supplies and managed feeds for up to 45 babies at a time, with some needing eight bottles a day.

"I loved knowing I'd got all the feeds out and being able to go around and chat to all the mums about their babies and their milk supply, and help them when they needed," Pat says.

"I've also loved working with so many great staff."

After four decades of service, Pat now heads off into retirement with plenty of caravan and overseas trips on the cards – but she looks forward to continuing to reunite with neonatal babies and families while out and about.

Save the date!

Pink Yellow Blue Ball

Sat 12 October 2024. Tickets on sale soon.
Register now for early updates! →

