

Thank You

**for supporting
exceptional
research and
patient care**
page 4-5



**In this
edition...**

**A Conversation with Associate Professor
Michael Michael, Interim Chair** | page 2

**Live Local.
Give Local.** | page 3



A Conversation with Associate Professor Michael Michael, Interim Chair

Following the retirement of long-standing Chair Alan Young AM, Interim Chair Associate Professor Michael Michael reflects on his journey with Flinders Foundation, the power of philanthropy, and hopes for the future.

Michael, you've been involved with Flinders Foundation for many years — what first inspired you to get involved, and what has kept you connected?

My connection with Flinders goes back several decades. As a local researcher, I've always believed that great healthcare relies on strong partnerships — between those providing care, driving discovery, and the community that supports both. Working at Flinders Medical Centre first attracted me because it provided such a great collaborative environment. I first became involved with the Foundation because I saw the real impact it had on patients and families. What's kept me connected is the same thing that first drew me in: a genuine sense of purpose and community. It's incredibly rewarding to work with people who care so deeply about improving lives.

You've seen the Foundation evolve over time — what makes Flinders Foundation unique?

Flinders Foundation is uniquely positioned at the intersection of care, research, and community. It brings together the people and ideas that turn compassion into action. The Foundation has grown in scale and impact, but it has never lost its heart. That blend of innovation, integrity, and humanity truly sets it apart.

How does philanthropy make a difference across Flinders?

Philanthropy allows us to go beyond what the public system can provide. It gives us the freedom to further improve patient experiences, and invest in additional cutting-edge research and equipment. I've seen how a single donation can change the trajectory of a project or transform the experience of care for a patient. I've also seen our community support young researchers who go on to make a world-wide impact.

What excites you most about the Foundation's future?

There's a real sense of momentum. We have a passionate team, a strong community of supporters, and endless opportunities to make a difference. The future feels full of possibility.

Finally, what would you like to say to our donors and supporters?

Thank you. Every act of generosity — large or small — creates ripples of impact. Your support helps us care, discover, and improve lives every day. You are part of something truly special. As a medical scientist myself, I have seen firsthand the impacts of research directly improving patient care, from the bench to bedside.

As you read through this Newsletter, I hope you feel a sense of pride in being part of a community that enables us to ensure exceptional care is available, without exceptions.

Live Local. Give Local.

We've launched Live Local. Give Local. because the people we help aren't strangers, they're our neighbours, our friends, our families. Your support makes a difference close to home ... and one day, it just might make a difference for you too.

Your impact is seen in every story of recovery, in every moment of strength regained, and in every spark of hope renewed. That's exceptional care, right here in our community. Today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.



Here are just a few people whose lives have been touched by Flinders.



Carlos Flinders Trials Patient

"My melanoma was quickly diagnosed and successfully treated with life-saving surgery at Flinders last year. In memory of my brother John and friends affected by cancer, I now participate in clinical trials at Flinders to help improve treatments for future patients."

Shae Flinders Occupational Therapist

"What gives me hope is the passion and dedication of the people at Flinders, who continue to deliver exceptional care and advocate for patients amid an ever-changing healthcare landscape. I'm inspired by how Flinders continues to grow and evolve to serve our community."



Rowland Flinders Polytrauma Survivor

"My time at Flinders was truly life-changing. The compassion and expertise of the staff gave me not only extraordinary care but also genuine hope during one of the most difficult times of my life. I'll always be grateful for the dedication of the Flinders team."



**Exceptional care takes a community.
It takes you. Support Live Local. Give Local.**



*Thank
you!*

Exceptional Care, made possible by you

With your kindness, we are able to enhance the care available at Flinders Medical Centre. These are just a few of the extraordinary things you help make possible for patients and their families.

Thank you!



Providing additional warmth and comfort to children in crisis

Children in the Emergency Department at Flinders are being comforted by the warmth of dozens of cuddle buddies, thanks to our generous community. These soft, soothing, hand-made companions provide emotional support to children in crisis.

For nearly 20 years, volunteer Hilda has lovingly sewn 4,000 cuddly friends, inspiring many others to contribute. This Trauma Cuddle Buddies project shows how community kindness can make exceptional care possible.

Alice Clark

Flinders Foundation
Engagement Manager:

"It's incredibly meaningful to see our community connect with purpose, coming together to support the Emergency Department Team in ensuring children in crisis feel as comforted, cared for, and as safe as possible."



Supporting new ways to deliver care

A new model of care, partially supported by Flinders Foundation, is transforming healthcare for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Led by Dr Jessica Smith, the program tailors each patient's experience, from sensory adjustments to light or deep sedation, so vital procedures like blood tests and immunisations can be safely completed.

For patients like Tim, 32, who has profound autism, this approach proved life-saving when a long-overdue blood test revealed dangerously low haemoglobin levels. Thanks to community support, more people with disabilities are now receiving the care they need.

A safe and welcoming space for vulnerable children

More than a year on, the new Child Safety and Wellbeing Health Service is transforming care for vulnerable children and families. Thanks to Flinders Foundation and generous supporters, the purpose-built Bedford Park facility now provides dedicated spaces for adults and children, additional assessment rooms, and private outdoor areas for therapy.

Each year, the service supports around 1,700 referrals from the Department for Child Protection and SA Police. Staff say children's "excited squeals" and families' gratitude reflect the building's warm, respectful design — a true community effort supporting exceptional care.

"With your support, the new CSWHS facility is making a tangible difference – giving clinicians the right environment to deliver the best possible care and opportunities to the children and families we support, contributing to positive changes in their safety and wellbeing."

Loretta Whitehorn, Director,
Child Safety and Wellbeing Health Service



Community Champions

City-Bay Fun Run

Rain couldn't stop **50 incredible fundraisers** from pounding the pavement on 21 September 2025, **raising over \$23,000** for lifesaving research and patient care at Flinders. Every step they took helped our doctors, nurses, and researchers go further for the community.



The Plunge

With courage and heart, passionate individuals and corporate teams took **The Plunge**—abseiling 70 metres from the InterContinental Hotel—to support research and care at Flinders. Together, they **raised nearly \$70,000** to help make exceptional care possible.



SALHN Workforce Wellbeing Grant Round

Supporting those who care for us.

At Flinders Foundation, we're committed to supporting the people at the heart of our health system. By investing in the wellbeing of those who care for others, we strengthen the entire system that delivers exceptional care.

In partnership with the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN), we launched the annual Workforce Wellbeing Grant Round — a first for Flinders Foundation. The program provides small grants of \$500 to \$5,000 for staff and volunteer-led initiatives that enhance the

physical, mental, emotional, cultural, or social wellbeing of SALHN employees.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, this program ensures that care extends to every corner of SALHN — including those who deliver it.

We look forward to seeing all the wonderful projects come to life across various departments at SALHN.

Here are just a few programs we funded, thanks to the generosity of the community:



Sound Healing for Palliative Care Staff

To support the emotional wellbeing of palliative care staff, this project introduces Solu Tone therapy devices — a simple, sensory way to restore calm and balance during the most demanding days. These gentle sound-based tools help staff pause, reset, and re-centre before or after challenging moments, further fostering a more supportive workplace that benefits both caregivers and their patients.



Solu Tone therapy device



Rooftop Revive for Perioperative Staff

Perioperative staff at Flinders are transforming an unused rooftop into a tranquil outdoor retreat — a peaceful space to step away, recharge, and reconnect during busy shifts. Access to natural light and fresh air is proven to lift mood, ease stress, and support mental wellbeing, helping those who care for others find moments of calm in their day.



Natalie May, speaks at the Flinders Foundation 2025 Ribbon Ball

The Ribbon Ball raises over \$435,000 in support of cancer research and care

The Flinders Foundation 2025 Ribbon Ball has raised more than \$435,000 to support cancer research and care at Flinders and beyond. Held on Saturday, 18 October 2025 at the Adelaide Convention Centre, the annual gala brought together hundreds of guests for an unforgettable evening of exquisite dining, entertainment, and community spirit.

Flinders researchers, clinicians, and patients were an important part of the event line-up, with powerful stories of impact shared across the night, including Natalie May, who shared her deeply personal journey with ovarian cancer, and the compassion she experienced at Flinders through her mum's terminal lung cancer diagnosis.

Flinders Foundation Executive Director Ross Verschoor said the impact of community generosity cannot be overstated:



"Funding cancer research and care at Flinders simply wouldn't be possible without the incredible support of our community, our amazing sponsors, and our generous donors.

Their ongoing commitment helps turn hope into progress—supporting the researchers, and clinicians who are working together to create a future free from cancer."

Have a story to share?

Have you or a loved one received exceptional care at Flinders Medical Centre? If you're a grateful patient with a story to tell, we'd love to hear from you.

Sharing your experience can inspire others and help shine a light on the incredible work happening every day at Flinders health precinct.

Reach out to us at: supporters@flindersfoundation.org.au



Turn the page to discover the heartfelt story behind this bookmark. →

Remembering Robyn Combes



TAKE A LEAF
OUT OF
*Robyn's
book*
AND MAKE TIME
each DAY TO...

Practice kindness

Do more of what
makes you happy

Prioritise rest

Let go of what
you can't control

Take note of what
you are grateful for

Eat well

Go for a walk

Just breathe...

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of our dear friend and volunteer, Robyn Combes, who passed away peacefully in Laurel Hospice on Friday 17 October, surrounded by her family and so much love.

Robyn was a driving force behind the Flinders Cancer Wellness Centre, a proud face of Cancer Council SA, and a tireless advocate for people affected by cancer and their families.

Always colourful, compassionate, and full of warmth, Robyn had a gift for making everyone feel seen, valued, and cared for. Her welcoming smile and kind conversation greeted countless people walking through the doors of the Flinders Cancer Wellness Centre – a moment of care and humanity which people would recall gratefully for years afterwards.

Robyn's reach extended far beyond Flinders: she ran the Compass cancer support group at Mitchell Park Community Centre, originally the Mitchell Park Neighbourhood Centre, where she created safe spaces for people to share their story, connect with others and explore purpose and meaning in life after cancer diagnosis.

Robyn was deeply committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of those living with cancer. Her gentle advocacy and thoughtful leadership, including her role in research, peer support, and continuous planning for better services in the future, will leave an enduring legacy of hope, strength, and connection.

Robyn was a gentle but powerful force of nature — someone who made the world brighter simply by being in it. We owe her an enormous debt of gratitude. Robyn lived her life by a simple but powerful set of rules — ones she wrote down years ago to share with others who might need a little guidance or hope through the form of a bookmark.

So, in Robyn's memory, we leave you with her words. And we invite you to carry them forward, as she did every day, by cutting out the bookmark on this page.

You can leave a legacy of hope and healing

Moments like this remind us of the lasting impact one person can have on their community. For many, choosing to leave a gift in their Will is a meaningful way to ensure exceptional care continues for future generations. These legacy gifts help fund life-changing research, patient support programs, and compassionate care across southern Adelaide and beyond.

If you'd like to learn more about leaving a bequest, or how your legacy can make a difference, you can find information on our website or contact our team for a confidential conversation.

← If you would like to carry Robyn's words with you, you can cut out this bookmark.

