

Thank You

**for supporting
exceptional
research and
patient care**
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New hope for tiny patients

A groundbreaking project led by Dr Fiona Taverner is changing the way anaesthetic is given to newborns and infants undergoing a common hernia operation—helping to deliver safer, gentler care to our tiniest patients.

Dr Taverner, an anaesthetist at Flinders Medical Centre, is transforming how babies are cared for during common hernia operations. Traditionally, this procedure uses full-body anaesthesia and a breathing tube, which can be riskier for babies, especially those born prematurely.

To reduce those risks, Dr Taverner and her team trialled a new method using a small injection in the lower back, calming medicine, and oxygen through the nose—avoiding the need for general anaesthesia altogether.

"Groin hernia surgery is the most common operation in babies," explains Dr Taverner. "But general anaesthetic can pose challenges for little ones. There are concerns about how repeated exposure may affect brain development, especially in the earliest stages of life."



Tested across three hospitals by 22 doctors, this approach proved both safe and effective. It offers new hope for families and a kinder alternative for babies at a vulnerable time. Her research is already making a real-world impact, and the technique is now being embraced by surgeons and neonatal teams across the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN).

Dr Taverner's passion for improving care led her to begin a PhD through Flinders University, focused on enhancing outcomes for babies undergoing hernia surgery, which she hopes to conclude at the end of this year.

"We want to try and provide the best and safest possible care we can to our babies locally, but also develop a technique that can be used or adapted to suit many babies looked after by different people nationally and globally."

Building on this success, she's now exploring how babies' lungs behave during surgery, using advanced imaging technology to visualise airflow in real time. This could further refine care and comfort for newborns in surgery.

This project was made possible through funding from the 2022 SALHN Enquiry Grant Round, jointly supported by Flinders Foundation and The Hospital Research Foundation Group. Additional support came from ANZCA, ASA, and SPANZA.

These projects are a powerful reminder of how donor support fuels life-changing care and innovation. Thanks to this research, more babies—here in southern Adelaide and around the world—can receive the best start to life, without exceptions.



"Parents have been incredibly supportive of this project. They want the best and safest option for their babies, and this gives them that choice."

Dr Fiona Taverner

Because of your exceptional *support* in 2024...

Flinders Foundation invested \$3.7 million in health and medical research and patient care projects.

Including ...

\$1.4 million

to provide exceptional care to patients, including state-of-the-art equipment.



\$515,000

in cancer research, allowing researchers to unearth life-saving discoveries and kinder treatments.



\$140,000

on equipment for babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.



\$1 million

to develop a purpose-built Child Safety and Wellbeing Health Service facility, to support vulnerable, abused, neglected and at-risk children, **with a further \$500k to be provided in 2025.**

\$500,000

in funding across approximately 30 projects to support researchers from Flinders University and the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network.



Thank You

Exceptional care. Without exceptions.



Two wheels One mission

Curing cancer with pedal power

David and Sophie Edwards.

Over three days and 310 kilometres, with more than 3,200 metres of elevation, riders in the 2025 Tour de Cure SA Discovery Tour completed the grueling expedition all in the name of funding life-saving cancer research.

Among them was Sophie Edwards, an Olympian with the Australian Cycling Team and a Flinders University medical student, who joined the final day of the ride. But this wasn't just another ride for Sophie. She rode alongside her dad, who was fundraising for the Tour, and together they joined a passionate group of cyclists determined to make a difference.

"I'd seen the Tour de Cure jerseys around and always wanted to be involved," Sophie said.

"As part of my medical degree, I'm doing a research project and got connected with Flinders University researchers who are involved with the Tour and Flinders Foundation. That's how I ended up getting involved—and I got Dad into it, too!"

For Sophie, the day was more than just a ride—it was a reminder of the power of community, storytelling and purpose.

"The atmosphere was so positive. Everyone was so welcoming and supportive—it felt like a great community of cyclists all riding for an amazing cause. But it wasn't just about cycling and fundraising. We also heard from people who have been impacted by cancer, and it really brought us back to why we were doing this."

As a woman in cycling—a sport that's still heavily male-dominated—Sophie was inspired by the strong group of women riders.

"There were so many amazing women involved in the Tour, and they were all so encouraging. I'd love to see more women take part in events like this—it's such a rewarding experience."

Now nearing the end of her medical degree, Sophie also appreciated seeing the other side of health research.

"I've been involved in research before during my undergraduate studies, and being a part of the tour allowed me to gain a better appreciation of all of the hard work that goes in to raise the vital funds needed to support the researchers to continue looking for a cure for cancer."

Sophie Edwards

Funds raised from the SA Discovery Tour are helping support vital cancer research at Flinders health precinct as well as contributing to cancer-related community-based organisations in South Australia who were presented with donations during the SA Discovery Tour.

Thank you to Sophie, her dad David, every rider, support crew members and donors for helping turn research into reality—one pedal stroke at a time.

Since 2007, Tour de Cure has been dedicated to curing cancer and funding vital ground-breaking research. Flinders Foundation is the exclusive partner of Tour de Cure in South Australia, with funds supporting cancer researchers across the Flinders health precinct.

Register your interest for 2026

Join the Tour de Cure family! For more information email supporters@flindersfoundation.org.au.

Thank you for supporting exceptional research and patient care

Thanks to the generosity of supporters, we are continuing to empower medical researchers and healthcare professionals to go above and beyond, making extraordinary care and groundbreaking advancements possible.



Helping newborns thrive

Stuck during delivery and deprived of oxygen for a few minutes, baby Arthur was resuscitated and medevacked from the Riverland to Flinders Medical Centre for specialist care in the Neonatal Unit. There, he was placed on new advanced cooling equipment, which administers life-saving hypothermia treatment to newborns affected by lack of oxygen during birth.

While being cared for in the Neonatal Unit, Arthur also used the 'Babyroo' – a new state-of-the-art 'open air' neonatal intensive care cot which is also the first of its kind in South Australia and only the second in Australia.

Funds used to purchase this vital equipment were raised by the friends, family and generous community of the McConachy family in memory of their baby, coincidentally also named Arthur, and Maria and Leong Foong in memory of baby Melisa.



Alicia Dallisson

Revolutionising bowel cancer screening

Support from Flinders Foundation and its generous donors has been crucial to advancing research at the Bowel Health Service. Thanks to Health Seed Grants, the team has built a strong research foundation, gained national and international recognition, and attracted significant industry partnerships.

Right now, the team—led by Associate Professor Erin Symonds and supported by Flinders University Honours student Alicia Dallisson—is trialling a promising new screening test that aims to improve participation rates and increase early detection of bowel cancer.

The new test being researched is a type of rapid antigen test (RAT), similar to the ones widely used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of collecting a stool sample like the current screening tests, individuals would use the toilet in the normal way, and then use a dropper to take a small sample of toilet water after the bowel motion, place a few drops on a test cassette (the RAT), and receive their result in just 10 minutes.

Alicia Dallisson explains, *"The support from Flinders Foundation has been crucial for the research conducted by the Bowel Health Service. Through Health Seed Grants, the Foundation has helped the team build a strong research foundation, gain recognition, and attract international industry partnerships and funding."*

"Seed funding plays a vital role in launching innovative research projects, allowing larger funding opportunities that drive medical breakthroughs. The generosity of the community and the support of Flinders Foundation continue to make a lasting impact, bringing us closer to better, more accessible bowel cancer screening for all Australians."

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

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

Covering a variety of illnesses, diseases, and social issues, ranging from cancer, heart failure and prostate disease through to chronic pain, mental health, and alcohol dependence, this annual health seed grant round aims to improve health outcomes and create positive change within our community and across the globe.

Some of the cutting-edge research projects include:



Dr Anna Konopka

This study is exploring how damage to DNA may contribute to motor neuron disease (MND). DNA is our body's instruction manual, and when it gets damaged, the messages it sends to cells can become faulty—potentially leading to diseases like MND.

Dr Katia Ferrar

Ongoing stress can lead to health problems, but physical activity may help reduce the impact. This study will explore how activity levels, sleep, and stress are linked in breast cancer survivors. Researchers will measure how active participants are (including their sleep habits) and how that relates to their stress levels, and what factors—like motivation, support from doctors, or how walkable their suburb is—are linked to their activity patterns. The goal is to better understand what helps breast cancer survivors stay active and healthy.



Professor Murray Drummond

This project will adapt a successful US mental health program, YBMen, for use in Australian sports settings. Called YBMenSport, it aims to support the wellbeing of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men by delivering culturally relevant, age- and gender-appropriate mental health education through sport. The program builds on a recent NT version, YBMenNT, and uses relatable content—like videos, music, and current events—to connect with young men in a familiar and supportive environment.



Associate Professor Ash Hopkins

Exercise, including cycling, can potentially help people living with cancer improve fitness, reduce fatigue, enhance mental health and quality of life, and even increase the effectiveness of cancer treatments. This research focuses on developing a community cycling program for cancer patients and their caregivers at Flinders Medical Centre, and measuring the real-world impacts of the program on their physical and mental health.

Dr Lauren Thurgood

This research looks at how cholesterol helps chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) cells grow and resist treatment. Cancer cells use cholesterol to stay strong and send signals that help them survive. The study will test if using cholesterol-lowering drugs like statins can make CLL treatments work better. It will also explore how cholesterol byproducts might damage DNA and make the disease worse. By understanding how CLL cells use cholesterol, this research could lead to better treatments and help more patients in the future.



"Flinders Foundation is incredibly proud of its seed grant program and the innovative ideas it has sparked, leading to groundbreaking discoveries that have made a positive impact on lives."

It's been truly fulfilling to witness many of our seed grant recipients secure much larger grants, including prestigious funding through the highly competitive National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Ideas Grant scheme."

Flinders Foundation Executive Director,
Ross Verschoor

Thank you!



A decade of exceptional care

Ten years ago, Peter Bosneac was diagnosed with cancer at Flinders Medical Centre. Since then, he has received exceptional care from Professor Chris Karapetis, Dr Tim Bright, and many other dedicated staff who have supported him throughout his journey.

To express his heartfelt gratitude, Peter has donated a series of stunning Australian landscape prints. His generous gift is a tribute to the care, compassion and expertise that helped him through one of life's toughest challenges.

These breathtaking prints are now proudly displayed at Flinders Medical Centre as a thank you to the team who made such a difference in his life. For Peter, they represent more than art—they are a symbol of hope, healing, and the powerful connection between patients and the people who care for them.

Every story like Peter's is a powerful reminder of why we do what we do—supporting compassionate care and life-changing research across the Flinders health precinct.



Peter Bosneac
with Professor
Chris Karapetis
and Dr Tim Bright.

*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

