

Tribute



NEWSLETTER OF THE GALLIPOLI MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

VOLUME 15 OCTOBER 2015

Special remembrance edition

This issue is dedicated to all those who have made our work possible.



We will remember them.

"I cried a lot that first year... Just because he wasn't there".

When Robyn Solomon visits our hospital, she takes a moment to find the name on the Discovery Partner Honour Board which is special to her: Peter Solomon, her late husband and soul mate stolen from her too soon by liver cancer.

What if? - the game of regrets

Peter first noticed a problem when he was unwell after a heavy meal while on holiday. When he got back home, he was diagnosed with fatty liver disease. Two years later, Peter went to hospital with suspected heart pain. It turned out to be shadows on his liver... Peter had cancer.

"We probably didn't eat a healthy diet. I worked and Peter worked. Really busy jobs. Once Peter was diagnosed, it was all steamed veggies and regular exercise. The thing is – once you're diagnosed, it's too late."

"People think liver cancer comes from alcohol," says Robyn "but Peter was only a social drinker. A glass of wine now and again, he didn't even drink beer... People don't understand if you have fatty liver disease, this is where it can end up. And so many Australians have fatty liver disease now."

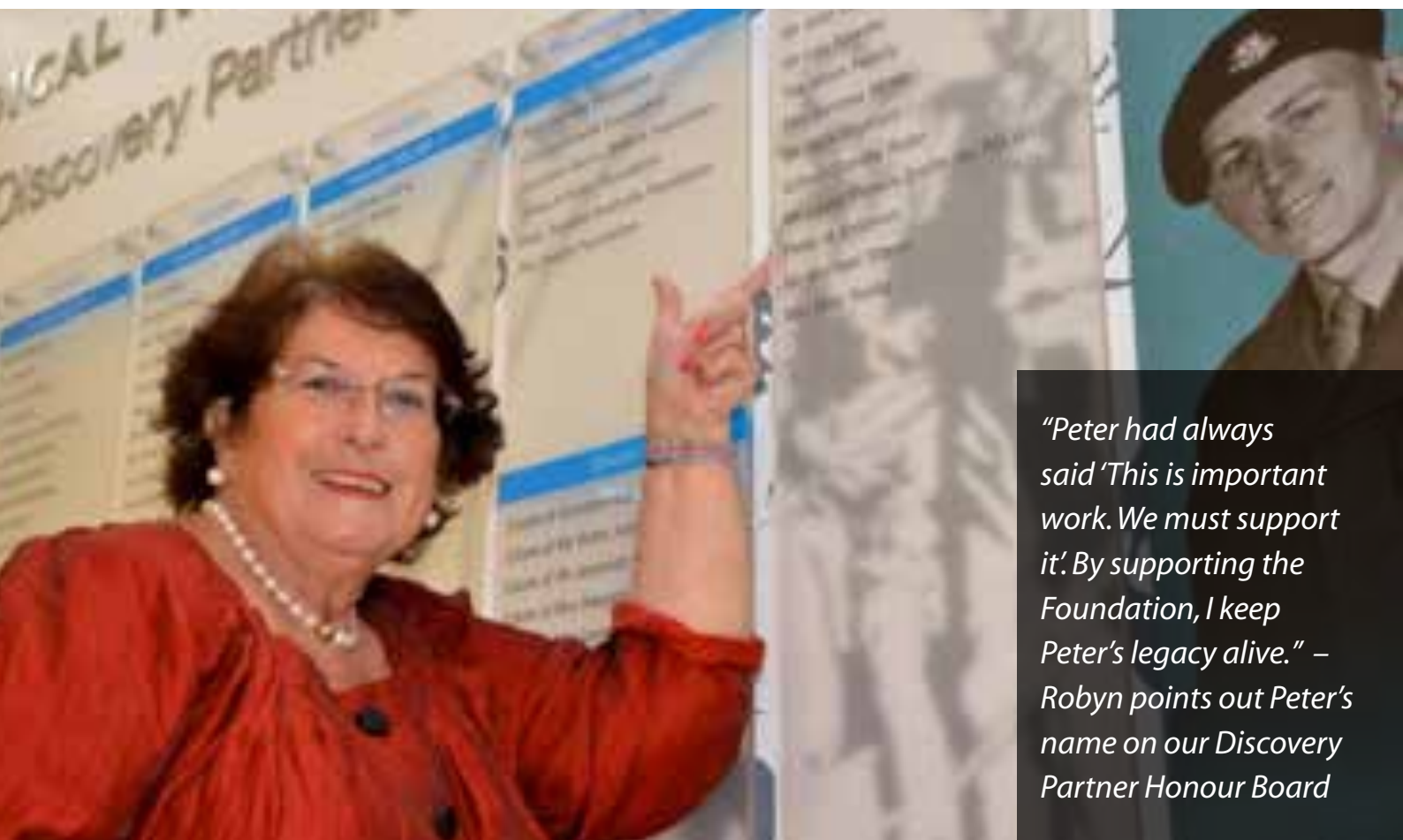
Peter passed away in Greenslopes Private Hospital in 2013. Robyn says, "I cried a lot that first year, especially at night. Just because he wasn't there."

One of Robyn's most difficult memories is that she was not with Peter in the moment he passed. "I went into the bathroom to get changed and when I came out, he'd gone." Despite this distressing memory, Robyn says the hospital would be the first place she would come if she needed care.

The hospital held a special place in Peter's heart too - even when it came to his time in the palliative care facility of the Cyril Gilbert Centre. There, Robyn says they experienced real mateship, "Everyone was very kind and wonderful to us."

Peter's legacy

Of course, losing her partner of 34 years took a toll on Robyn. "Three years of making good food, running up and



"Peter had always said 'This is important work. We must support it'. By supporting the Foundation, I keep Peter's legacy alive." – Robyn points out Peter's name on our Discovery Partner Honour Board

down hospital corridors, going to doctors... After Peter died, I just couldn't be bothered. There were too many things to think of and many more things to try not to think of."

The first time Robyn returned to the hospital was for our Supporter High Tea. "That helped", she says. "What Dr Steel had to say really resonated with me. The whole idea - training the body's own immune system to fight cancer - I thought that was amazing!"

It was that sense of hope for the future that inspired Robyn and her family to donate to our medical research. By doing so, they keep Peter's legacy alive in the hospital community that cared for him during his final days. Robyn hopes this will also help to find answers to help other families fighting cancer today.



Robyn and Peter with their son Jonathan at a birthday party during Peter's final year

"There are lots of times I wonder about if things had happened differently. But you can't get caught in that game. I just want to find answers so my son, his cousins, all our family will have the answers if they need them".



GMRF

Honour Board

We are proud to display our Discovery Partner Honour Board in the heart of Greenslopes Private Hospital (GPH). It features the names of people who have helped to make our work possible. Each name on the board has a story behind it. Stories of belief in the power of medical research, of hope for better tomorrows.

Individual donations, Community Fundraising, and In Memoriam donations are all added to the Discovery Partner Honour Board for donations over \$5,000 (with previous donations taken into account). If you would like to add your name or that of a loved one, please contact us by the end of October 2015.

This will allow us to update the board and reflect on the mateship of our supporters on Remembrance Day 2015.

We will remember them.

No one is immune to cancerYet!

Liver cancer is the fastest growing cancer in Australia.

Our Liver Cancer Unit is the only dedicated liver cancer facility in Queensland. We specialise in developing innovative therapies which will use the body's own immune system to fight tumours. In time, these techniques could be used to fight **all** types of cancer.

"I want to help people survive"

- Bijay Dhungel, GMRF PhD Scholarship Program

"I am someone who is a bit soft-hearted.

When I was in Holland, there was one patient and he was really sick, prostate cancer. It just didn't seem right. It really upset me for a couple of days. So I asked someone else to get the samples and I would stay in the lab.

The aim of all my lab work now is to get to clinical trial stage and treat people. I want to get rid of their cancer. Or at least hold it back. I want to help people survive."

Travelling the world to find answers

As a young boy, Bijay became 'hooked' on science. His parents tried to steer him away from a career in research saying "science doesn't bring home bread". But Bijay was determined.

Since then, he has crossed the globe building the specific skills which have brought him to GMRF. He earned his degree in India, studied gene therapy in Finland, grew stem cells in Spain, and studied virology in Holland.

Now, his focus is liver cancer. "The rates in Australia are really alarming; it is increasing by fivefold", he says. "By the time you diagnose, over 80% of people are already in the advanced stage. There is nothing approved for treatment in that stage. Less than 15% survival rate within one year. There is a need to come up with treatment. Maybe even just to prolong life, add one year or two years".

Bijay believes immunotherapy will lead to a proof of principle that could keep cancer under control. Not just liver cancer - if the principle works, then doctors could potentially send a vaccine to any cancer.

"Curing cancer, from my point of view, is way ahead of us" he says. "But I'm hopeful that I see it in my lifetime. The final aim of our research would be to see cancer completely eradicated."



"A lot of answers will come out of your support, thank you.

Maybe it's our grandchildren who will see the biggest benefit of this work, I hope so. -Bijay

RESEARCH UPDATE

DR STEEL AND THE CYRIL GILBERT TESTIMONIAL FUND

In 2013, \$50,000 was awarded to Dr Jason Steel's project on immunotherapeutic approaches for primary liver cancer. Dr Steel has created potential cancer vaccines specifically for this study, together with his collaborators from The National Institute of Health, USA. Bijay has created 8 types of viral vectors (adjustments which ensure the vaccine goes directly to cancerous cells and then bonds to those cells only).

This is expensive, detailed work. We are immensely grateful to The Thorsen Family Foundation for their support of Bijay's PhD scholarship. This generosity allows the entire grant funding to be directed to the hands-on research.

The next stage will include studying the long-term efficiency of the vaccines. During this time, the team will publish research papers on their findings. Dr Steel emphasises the importance of this shared knowledge and lifelong learning: "I still read publications every day. That never stops!"

REMEMBRANCE THROUGH RESEARCH - DR JASON STEEL (HEAD RESEARCHER, LIVER CANCER UNIT)

"My grandmother was very important in my life.

She got cancer when I was choosing between medical school and a career in research. She was having chemotherapy, radiotherapy... she was miserable.

I realised that's all the doctors had and, if I became a doctor, that's all I would have too. It pushed me to want to find more options. I thought – with research – I could make a greater difference.

In coming years, **I want to see cancer become a chronic disease, not a death sentence.** Where we can treat people effectively, monitor them, and use their immune system to keep them cancer-free.

With support, I believe our work can be at clinical trial by 2020.
The bigger picture is going to be a success. That's how it has to be."



URGENT ITEM NEEDED: NanoDrop machine

In their work, the team needs to accurately measure the concentration of DNA. At the moment, they are doing it with two different methods which are not wholly reliable. This means they don't get exact concentration or exact results. With the NanoDrop, their work would be more exact, smoother, and faster.

If you, your family, or community group can help us to raise funds for this machine, please contact us on 07 3394 7284 or enquiries.gmrf@ramsayhealth.com.au. Thank you.



PTSD Initiative

The suicide toll of current and past Australian soldiers is 3 times higher than our combat toll in Afghanistan.

Our researchers are working to find real-world strategies to protect the mental health of our veterans.

WORLD-FIRST RESULTS - The Long-Term Physical Impact of PTSD

The initial findings of our research into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were unveiled at PTSD 15, an international forum held in Brisbane. This conference brought many organisations and individuals together to develop unified approaches to tackling the enormous mental health burden facing our veterans.

300 Vietnam veterans participated in this study (half had been previously diagnosed with PTSD and half without PTSD). First level analysis of the research shows striking differences between the two groups.

Key findings revealed veterans with PTSD have:

- A four-fold higher risk of heart attack in the past.
- Lower levels of the 'good' cholesterol. This contributes to an increased risk of heart disease.
- More than triple the risk of acting out their dreams while asleep.
- Twice the chance of being diagnosed with sleep apnoea.
- Almost two times the tendency of restless legs.
- Increased daytime fatigue and sleepiness.
- Two times the chance of suffering stomach ulcers.
- Double the chance of reflux.
- Greater tendency to report constipation, diarrhoea, and irritable bowel syndrome.

Further analysis is currently underway. The final results of this Vietnam veteran study will inform the next phase of research in contemporary veterans - the Veteran Mental Health Initiative – funded by RSL Queensland to develop strategies for 'soldier to civilian' reintegration. Stewart Cameron (State President, RSL Queensland) said the Vietnam veteran findings confirm the importance of funding medical and scientific research into PTSD. "This vital research will be ongoing and will play a role in best treatments of the disorder both now and in the future."

Visit www.gallipoliresearch.com.au for further details of these research findings.

proudly supported by



Dr Madeline Romaniuk (Lead Psychologist, GMRF) representing the Foundation at the PTSD 15 Forum



Stewart Cameron (State President, RSL QLD) emphasises the need for medical research for veteran mental health.



Corporate mateship for medical research

Large organisations can sometimes get a bad reputation – too much focus on profits, not enough focus on people. But, at GMRF, we know this is not true when it comes to our key partners. Our PTSD Initiative research has a shining example of corporate mateship.

The research would never have happened without RSL Queensland. They donated \$1.75 million in 2013, followed by a further \$5 million this year.

The in-kind support we received from our other corporate partners has also been quite staggering:

- QLD X-Ray performed brain MRIs, coronary artery calcium testing, and abdominal ultrasound scans pro bono. This in-kind support is valued in excess of \$160,000.
- Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology provided standard tests at a discount of 54% - to a total value of \$61,500.
- Channel 7 produced a Community Service Announcement (CSA) shown extensively across three stations to an air-time value of \$120,000.
- Hudson's Coffee in Greenslopes Private Hospital provided over \$1,200 in meal vouchers for our Vietnam veteran participants.
- Glentworth provided invaluable data analysis, advice and support.
- Tattersall's Club hosted a free luncheon as a thank you for our Vietnam veteran participants.

In this year of remembrance, thank you for helping us to keep the ANZAC spirit alive.

If you would like to help fundraise for GMRF, contact us today on 07 3394 7284 or enquiries.gmrf@ramsayhealth.com.au.



Remembrance through research at Greenslopes Private Hospital

We are so proud to have our home in Greenslopes Private Hospital. From its beginnings as a repatriation facility through to privatisation, the hospital has always kept a constant focus on education and research. We are focused on finding answers, together.

We receive an incredible amount of in-kind support from the hospital including: rent, utilities, IT helpdesk, marketing support, and much more. This support, in combination with any profits raised in our Clinical Trials Unit, covers the entire administrative costs of our Foundation. **This means that 100% of your donations go directly to medical research.**

**Mr Blair Smith,
long-time GMRF supporter.**

“My wife passed away in the hospital. The day I came back to collect her things, the nurses all came to talk to me. Even the catering lady came over, to say sorry for my loss. That meant a lot to me. It’s a special place. I want to support the important research that happens there.”



“You can’t take it with you” - Mr Smith presents a donation to Dr Steel and Miriam Dwyer (CEO, GMRF) in memory of his wife Joy.



Your Support – Enabling Nurses to Lead Research

Karen Eastwood is a Stomal Therapist and Wound Care Nurse in GPH. She was concerned by an increase in heel pressure injuries amongst patients. Thanks to you, she led a GMRF Innovation Grant project to address the issue.

“As nurses, you can see things that need to be changed. But sometimes you don’t think there is much you can do about it. The grant gave us the money to prove what we thought and change practice in the hospital.

It was daunting. I didn’t realise how much more work research would be! I trained in a hospital 30 years ago; I hadn’t written a lot of papers like the girls coming through University nowadays. I didn’t really know where to begin.

The reports I had to send to GMRF every couple of months helped. We broke it into little blocks I could manage. And I had a finishing date, so I had to get it done.

I was scared but I’m happy now. The hospital has established a Pressure Injury Committee and I’m on that because of this research. There is a Standard Protocol of Care now; all Nurse Unit Managers have it. We are simplifying paperwork for nurses so it’s not open to interpretation. All wards have staging photos, so nurses are confident in staging and treating their patients’ injuries.

It must be working - I haven’t been called to any Stage 3 injury on heels in a long time now.”

Karen’s health tip for managing pressure injuries at home – “Good nutrition and movement every couple of hours are vital. If your shoes rub, don’t wear them!”

Support the GMRF Innovations Grants to thank our nurses for all that they do...

The nursing and allied health staff of Greenslopes Private Hospital work at the frontline of medical care. They see potential improvements that could change lives. They care about their patients.

Have you received that care when you were ill?

Say thank you by donating today. Show them that you believe in their ability to lead research.

Thank you to Hanrick Curran Specialist Accounting and Audit Firm for their generous support of the GMRF Innovation Grants.

"Innovation and excellence are values we aspire to uphold here at Hanrick Curran so it's great for us to be able to support further practical applications of these values by partnering with GMRF" Tim Taylor, Partner





L to R: Karen Finch (GMRF Clinical Research Nurse), Julie Joyce (Clinical Nurse Specialist), Maria Povey (Clinical Nurse Specialist), Michelle Beutel (Nurse Unit Manager), Dr Victoria Atkinson (Medical Oncologist), and Bronwyn Casey (GMRF Research Officer).

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“The
research
staff are
part of
my team
as well”

"GMRF is definitely the place to donate!"

– Michelle (Nurse Unit Manager, Cyril Gilbert Cancer Centre)

How do the Cyril Gilbert Cancer Centre and GMRF work together?

When Miriam (GMRF CEO) is approached to conduct a trial, she'll sometimes ask me if it will be valuable to Greenslopes and our patients. I'll pull numbers and let her know how many patients I see in that area. Melanoma is always a big one.

Then, one of the GMRF girls come to our Unit meeting and let the doctors know what trials are running. The doctors can think if they have patients who are suitable for the trials.

There's a lot of people working together to get these patients through treatment. The GMRF girls are great; they are part of the family. Their focus is the patient, which is what we're all about. As far as I'm concerned, the research staff are part of my team as well.

What does it mean to have GMRF research happening in the hospital?

It gives us an extra dimension as a cancer centre. We have access to drugs before they are on the market. Ground-breaking trials running right here.

What advances has research brought to cancer treatment in recent years?

These new drugs, they're working so much better than we ever dreamed of them working!

From when I started in oncology 15 years ago, patients with good outcomes have quadrupled. We're treating better; we're keeping people alive a whole lot longer than we ever dreamed of doing.

Years ago, you had 3 months to live from diagnosis of metastatic melanoma. There was nothing. Now, people are alive after a year or two. My lifetime is going to be very interesting for cancer treatment. I don't know if we'll ever find a cure but we're certainly heading in a new direction that's very exciting. Immunotherapy is an interesting area to watch.

What's the best part of your job?

We make an influence on someone's life, every day. You don't get many jobs like that. Even if we can't cure someone, we can make their journey that bit better. I feel privileged.

The nurses here know the patient's relatives names and everything. The catering girls know what coffee they have; they don't even have to order it. Our staff are really good at supporting each other too. They'll sit in the tearoom and just say 'are you right?' Those kinds of things.

What scares you most about your work?

When things don't work the way you want them to. There are people who don't want to stop fighting. But there's nothing we can do. Having conversations about what we can do to bring someone to a good end - that sucks.

I'm 35. When we get new patients who are in their 30's with melanoma - that's really scary. The outcomes are not always good. Sometimes they have young kids. We work to give them the opportunity for quality time with their children, that maybe the child might remember. That's something we can aim for - to provide good memories.

But, some days, I go home to my partner and tell him "it's scary as hell"

How do you feel when you hear about donations in memory of one of your patients?

It's rewarding to know that we've made an impact. That someone wants to donate back to what we do. For them, maybe their friend hasn't won their battle but they can help someone else maybe win theirs.

I always say "if you want it to go to oncology research, GMRF is definitely the place to donate"

BREAKING NEWS - LIFE-SAVING NEW DRUG RECOMMENDED FOR PBS APPROVAL

230,000 Australians are living with chronic hepatitis C.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) has stated new treatments for hepatitis C are proving to be very effective. They advise that listing of these products onto the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) would offer improved treatment options, especially for those who suffer with the highly prevalent and difficult to treat type of hepatitis C: genotype 1. This statement by the PBAC means those patients are now one step closer to receiving a Federal Government subsidy for effective treatment.

Our Clinical Trials Unit has treated 21 patients (across three international studies) using these drugs. **To date, 11 of our patients have achieved a 100% cure rate.** The other 10 patients continue with us in follow-up and we will know their results in coming months.

"The focus of all medical research should be to see developments move from clinical trials to patient access as quickly as possible," says Miriam Dwyer (GMRF CEO). "It is what makes all the hard work worthwhile – giving people affected by serious illness a new chance at health."

RESEARCH UPDATES

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS (RA) AFFECTS APPROXIMATELY 500,000 AUSTRALIANS.

Our CTU has been involved in a trial that has recruited over 120 people (including those with RA, first degree relatives, and healthy volunteers). This study is investigating the links between genes, environment, and the immune system with a view to developing strategies to prevent and treat RA. 400-500 participants are planned to be involved in this study in total.

EACH YEAR IN AUSTRALIA, AROUND 1,500 PEOPLE ARE DIAGNOSED WITH MULTIPLE MYELOMA.

The New England Journal of Medicine has published a myeloma study with promising results. Patients with difficult to treat or relapsed myeloma were treated with the experimental new treatment, Daratumumab. 65% of patients who responded to treatment did not have disease progression at 12 months. Our CTU is now involved in an international study testing Daratumumab in combination with standard of care, in patients with previously untreated multiple myeloma who are ineligible for high-dose chemotherapy.

Teamwork changes lives at GMRF Clinical Trials Unit

IN AUSTRALIA, ONE PERSON EVERY SIX HOURS DIES FROM MELANOMA. QUEENSLAND HAS THE HIGHEST RATE OF MELANOMA WORLDWIDE.

The team at our Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) works hard every day to make sure we give as many people as possible access to innovative new treatments. In 2014/15, our CTU was the 1st Australian site ready to recruit participants to three ground-breaking melanoma studies.

We asked some of our collaborators how they feel about the work ethic and spirit of our CTU team...

"Working with the team at GMRF is a wonderful partnership. Sometimes the studies are moving so fast that we don't take the time to stop and reflect and say thank you!! You are a credit to research in Australia and the patients you treat and support."

- Zoe Armstrong
(Clinical Research Director, MSD Medicines).



Our promise to you

To make sure we are keeping our supporters informed correctly, we recently mailed a supporter survey. Due to an error on our part, some surveys have been returned without names. If you requested any items which you have not received (such as information on bequests or regular giving) please contact us on 07 3394 7284 or by using the enclosed reply paid envelope. When we have your full address details, we will send you the information as quickly as possible.

We received feedback from one donor that they had an issue getting their receipt when they donated on our website. We were very disappointed to hear this and we would love to talk to this person (call us on 07 3394 7284 if this is you so we can organise your tax receipt). To ensure this never happens again, our team have completed extensive testing on our website and cannot find any issues.

However, if you ever have any queries or experience any problems with a receipt, please contact us on 07 3394 7284 so that we can help as a matter of priority. Your donations make our work possible and we want you to know that we are very grateful.

Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation



Beauties on Duty

In this year of ANZAC commemorations, join us to celebrate the strength of women from the past 100 years.

Cloudland, Fortitude Valley
Remembrance Day, 11th November 2015
From 12.30pm

Presented by



Proudly supported by

Calleija

Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation,
Greenslopes Private Hospital, Brisbane



With Special Guest
Dame Quentin Bryce

To purchase tickets, visit
www.gallipoliresearch.com.au

Host your own Poppy Lipstick Day!

For a small entry fee, host a pampering event for your friends. We can even provide a little make-up stand where you can sell our Issada Poppy lipsticks (with 10% of all sales supporting GMRF research)

If you need some suitable event décor, we have some giant poppies you can borrow!



Send us your photos or 'tag' us online:

 /GallipoliResearch

 @CentenaryPoppies

To support the Gallipoli Poppies campaign,
visit www.gallipolipoppies.com to
purchase your limited edition Issada
Poppy lipstick today.



Gill's Old Bastards – putting the 'fun' in fundraising!

Gill's Old Bastards (GOBs) are one of our most loyal community groups. Over the years, they have raised over \$35,000 for GMRF cancer research!

The group was founded in memory of Ian Rennie's wife, Gill, whom he lost to cancer.

"Every time we make a donation to Gallipoli in the name of "Gill's Old Bastards", I get a glow of pride that - in Gill's name - we're contributing to saving lives.

There is someone out there enjoying time with their family and loved ones who wouldn't have that opportunity without GMRF's work. We help make that possible."

Ian says they keep the 'fun' in fundraising by always running activities they know their members want and enjoy (trivia, bowls days, regular get-togethers in the pub). They also listen for new ideas and suggestions from members, such as a wine tour that's now part of their annual calendar of events.

Ian, Meredith, and Gavin point out GOBs on the Discovery Partner Honour Board.

IAN'S BIG FUNDRAISING TIP:

"To pinch someone else's slogan - just do it! It's not that hard to make a difference, and it's a wonderful feeling when you hear of the impact the research is having directly on someone's life."

If you would like to help fundraise for GMRF, contact Maria today on 07 3394 7284 or noonanmaria@ramsayhealth.com.au.



"I've lost several members of my family to cancer." – Peter 'PK' Tate

I had been raising funds for a decade in support of various charities. When I was introduced to GMRF, it was a no-brainer who would receive my money from that point forward.

Marrying the work conducted by GMRF to our friend Gill's name allows us to remember Gill in such a positive light - every single time we donate. The staff we have been lucky enough to meet are wonderfully passionate about what they do and truly appreciate all of those who aim to help them.

To everyone at GMRF - we love what you do and what you stand for."

If you would like to help fundraise for GMRF, contact us today on 07 3394 7284 or enquiries.gmrf@ramsayhealth.com.au.



