

TRIBUTE

Newsletter of the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation

Spring Edition 2020



Real people making a real difference – together

Discovering the treatments and cures of the future

Supporting those affected by illness right now

Welcome to the Spring 2020 Edition of the GMRF Tribute



What a strange year 2020 continues to be for all of us! At GMRF we continue to mark our 15th Anniversary by remaining focused on our goal of excellence in medical research and staying connected to the needs of our community. Now more than ever, we see the importance of medical research. Despite these challenging times, our work continues to progress full steam ahead.

The GMRF team are second to none and I am very proud of the commitment each member has shown. I am surrounded by the brightest and the best minds, and I love watching the multidisciplinary teams working across the research units – collaborating to find solutions. I am equally impressed and proud of the team that make the research possible, whether in coordination, administration, communications or fundraising. Everyone gives 100% and is committed to our shared mission of enhancing the health and wellbeing

The vital work of GMRF would not be possible without your commitment and support. Your heartfelt belief in the research being undertaken at GMRF raises our spirits when progress is slow or when times are difficult.

For your belief in our work I want to say thank you!

of our veterans, their families and the broader Australian community.

Despite COVID-19, our research team continues to grow; with new staff and students starting in the past few months to tackle more research questions. We have over 45 team members working out of our facilities at Greenslopes Private Hospital (GPH). Our workspace is changing to accommodate the growing team. I am so grateful for the ongoing support of this fabulous hospital and its Executive Team, in particular CEO Ms Chris Went. GPH is driven by 'People caring for People' and this shines through in their commitment to improving outcomes for patients through research.

As we enter Spring of 2020, I encourage you to find a nice sunny spot and enjoy reading this Tribute Newsletter. You will read all about the latest research work from the GMRF team and the impact your support is making.

Stay well and safe!

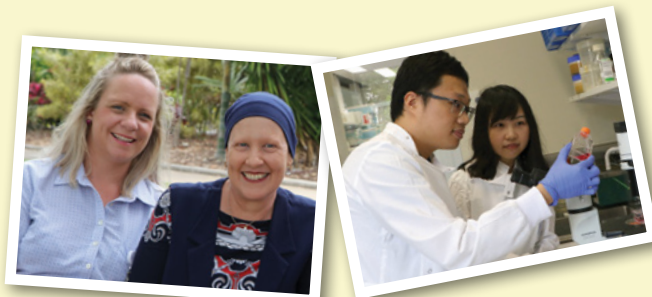
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Dwyer".

Miriam Dwyer
Chief Executive Officer

An incredible show of support for our tax-time appeal!

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our 2020 Tax Appeal! We know many people are facing tough times right now, and we were humbled by the generosity shown by our community.

We received over \$60,000 — an increase from our 2019 Tax Appeal! Thanks to this support, we can keep the momentum going in our vital liver research and support patients and their loved ones through the Cancer Wellness Program at Greenslopes Private Hospital.



Thank you for helping to make a difference now and into the future!

Real people making a real difference – together

Our work is powered by the dedication and generosity of our people and community.

Brilliant researchers committed to discovering solutions to major health issues. Clinicians caring for patients and facilitating access to new treatments. Patients and study participants giving their time to be part of new treatments and interventions. Everyday people and organisations generously donating to fund this work.

These are some of our people who power our progress.



“We support research because we’ve been touched by cancer. We hope we will one day live in a cancer-free world. With a club motto of ‘for good times and doing some good’, we’ve had plenty of fun along the way!”

PK Tate, President of Gill’s Old Bastards – GMRF fundraisers since 2007.

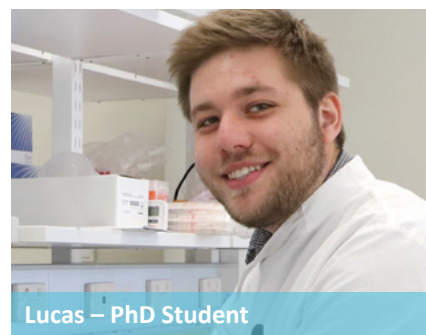


“I conduct research to see scientific knowledge translate into medical advances. On a day-to-day basis, it means helping patients access treatments they may not have had otherwise. It’s a win-win!” **Corrine Fiveash, Clinical Trials Coordinator.**



“I participate in research because this trial could be life-saving. The type of treatment I’ve had is excellent and the GMRF team are fantastic.”

Judy McNally, clinical trial patient and GMRF supporter, diagnosed with melanoma in 2018.



“I conduct research because I love the challenge. As a researcher you are naturally curious and desire to create new knowledge that will help people.”

Lucas Trevisan Franca de Lima, Liver Research PhD Student.



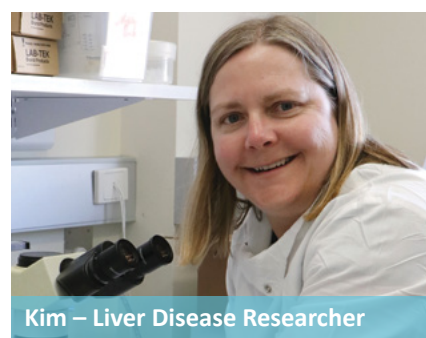
“I support research because I am grateful the GMRF clinical trial treatment worked for me! I want to show my gratitude and support ongoing research into vaccines.”

Jeff Deslandes, clinical trial patient and GMRF Supporter, pictured with Dr Haolu Wang.



“I conduct research because it gives you the power to understand an issue and develop practical solutions. We listen to the community and improve ways of addressing need through the power of science.”

Kelly Brown, Veteran Research Officer and Registered Psychologist.



“I conduct research to help people who would otherwise not have treatments or would have poor quality of life. Being here, you’re not just tucked away in a lab. I see patients and I see the impact my work can make.”

Dr Kim Bridle, Liver Disease Research Officer and Lab Supervisor



"We are studying a form of cell death, which is particularly important during liver transplantation. We've shown we can block this process. Now we want to find biomarkers of cell injury that can help identify which livers can be successfully transplanted."

A second chance for donor livers

With fatty liver disease affecting one in four Australians, this emerging health crisis is having far-reaching and long-term implications. As our liver health declines, the number of donor livers unsuitable for transplantation increases. It means bad news for the more than 300 Australians on the transplant waiting list each year.

To address this growing problem, we need more livers available to transplant and to improve the quality of those donor organs. That's where Raji Baidya, from our Liver Research Unit, comes into the picture.

The final year PhD student from Nepal has dedicated the past three years of her life to understanding why so many livers are failing and what can be done about it. She has identified key areas of injury, known as cell death pathways.

"When the liver is removed for transplant, it is in a very vulnerable state," Raji says. "That is generally the time cells start to die. If it is a fatty liver, then it is even more vulnerable. The fat can exacerbate injury which can cause the donor liver to fail after transplant."

Raji says moderate to severe fatty livers are usually discarded and that the rise in fatty liver disease is impacting the number of livers suitable for transplant.

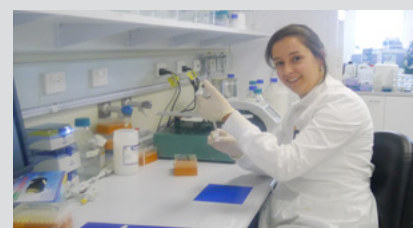
"We need to know if we can use these discarded livers to address the nationwide shortage of donor livers."

A major achievement for Raji was identifying key cell death pathways that were causing the liver to fail after transplant.

Armed with this information, Raji is hoping to identify key markers of liver injury to predict which donor organs are likely to fail. Right now 10-13% of patients will die within three years of their transplant, meaning Raji's research could reduce the rejection rate of transplant livers and save lives.

"The injured cells secrete a warning signal that basically says 'we're not doing well!'. As far as I am aware, other research groups have not investigated this in a cell culture model. I am very proud of this project," Raji says.

Visit www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/liver-research to find out more.



From bench to bedside

Raji's research follows on from the work of Dr Janske Reiling, who completed her PhD at GMRF in 2017.

Janske studied a liver preservation technique called normothermic machine perfusion which aims to rescue donor livers considered unsuitable for transplantation.

Janske is now working with the Liver Transplant Unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, which has recently published their study of the successful use of machine perfusion to transplant ten livers.

Their work is already having a positive impact on patients on the waiting list, with the long-term aim to increase the number of livers available for transplantation.

A NOVEL WAY OF 'WEEDING OUT' LIVER CANCER

"As far as we're aware, the data hasn't been analysed in this way. There are no publications on the approach we are taking. So far, our findings have been very promising,"
Dr Haolu Wang, GMRF Liver Researcher.

For many cancer patients, the fear of their cancer returning or spreading is ever-present during remission. GMRF's liver researchers are exploring a new theory which could stop tumour regrowth in its tracks.

Dr Haolu Wang and Dr Tina Liang joined our Liver Research Unit in late 2019 as part of a partnership with the University of Queensland Diamantina Institute. In addition to leading their own projects, the husband and wife team are working together to develop a more effective liver cancer treatment.

The microenvironment surrounding the tumour is not targeted in current treatments. Dr Liang and Dr Wang believe this microenvironment could play a crucial role in tumour progression, functioning as the 'soil' that provides the nutrients needed for the tumour – the 'weed' – to spread.

"Chemotherapy focuses on the tumour cells," Dr Liang explains. "It is essentially just killing the weeds, meaning new cancer cells still have the environment in which to grow. As a result, response rates of current treatments are low."

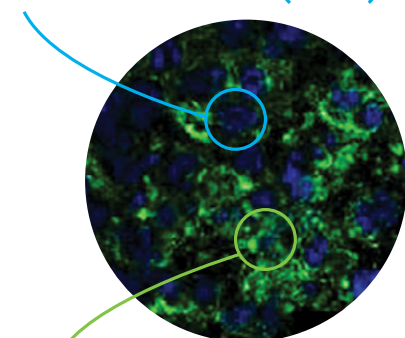
Their research looks at the 'soil' to understand what elements of the microenvironment enable growth and protect cancer cells. The goal is to develop a new combination medication of existing drugs to target the tumour

microenvironment and increase the effectiveness of chemotherapy.

"We want to develop a drug that changes the microenvironment, so it is no longer good for tumour growth. In fact, we're hoping to make it go the other way to improve responsiveness to chemotherapy," Dr Wang says.

Right now, they are investigating how chemotherapy affects the microenvironment. This involves conducting their own experiments and analysing patient data before and after chemotherapy from hospitals around the world.

Blue = Tumour cells (weed)



Green = Cancer-associated fibroblast (soil)

What's next?

After more extensive analysing and validating of data, drug testing is expected to start in the next two years. Dr Liang says the progress of the project is fast tracked from the couple having plenty of time to discuss ideas!

"We are constantly chatting about this work. There will be times when we're cooking dinner together and one of us will say 'bingo!' and an idea might come out – it's great," she says.

The focus on exploring new treatments is driven by a strong connection between clinical and research experience. Before going into research, Dr Wang worked as a clinician in their home country of China.

"After seeing the need in hospitals, I went into research to help improve the prognosis for more patients. The power of research is that it can lead to treatments which could help millions of people," Dr Wang says.

You can be a part of this innovative and life-changing project.

"There are a lot of expenses when it comes to research. Just feeding the cells for our experiments for one to two days is \$20. It's a small thing, but it's vital to our research. Every contribution you make helps our progress," Dr Liang says.

Help Dr Wang and Dr Liang turn research in breakthroughs by donating at www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/donate

Brilliant minds and bright futures

Latest updates from GMRF's young researchers



Lucas Trevisan Franca de Lima: Using saliva to detect liver injury

Lucas Trevisan Franca de Lima

Lucas is in the first year of his PhD project investigating a novel approach to earlier detection of liver disease and liver cancer.

Where are you at with your research? I have just completed a pilot study looking at the blood and saliva biomarkers of patients with liver fibrosis and healthy volunteers. Biomarkers are signatures that can be objectively measured so they can be used as an indicator of a normal biological process or a disease. The early findings have been very promising. I was able to identify the same biomarkers in the blood and saliva.

Why are these findings significant?

It indicates that a saliva test might detect liver disease and liver cancer. Right now, the only option is imaging (MRI, CT scans and fibroscans) and blood samples. A saliva test would be a painless, non-invasive and relatively inexpensive procedure that can be repeated over time. It could also be used to collect samples from rural communities, improving their access to earlier diagnosis.

What's next? Validating! I started with small groups of 10 so I will now test in groups of 50 across more hospitals. Validating takes time, but that's how you build new knowledge.



Afolabi Akanbi: Fighting liver disease by understanding iron overload

Afolabi Akanbi

Afolabi has just completed the first year of his PhD project in understanding and addressing the role of iron in fatty liver disease progression.

How does it feel to have completed the first year of your PhD project? It feels great! The first year Confirmation of Candidature is an important milestone. It basically tells you if you're on track and that you can continue your PhD. This is a huge step in the right direction regarding my career. It is very encouraging to get positive feedback about my work from experienced academics.

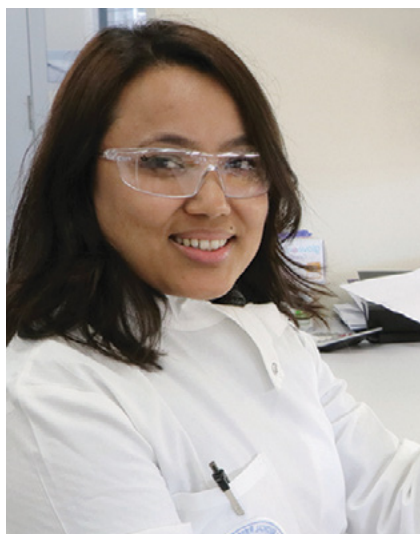
So there are promising results

coming from your thesis so far?

Yes, your theories are tested and examined to make sure there is merit – it was a daunting prospect, but I am excited by the results so far. I am starting to understand more about a molecule called hepcidin which could help to control the excess iron in the liver which can cause irreversible injury.

What's next? In the next 6 months, I will be doing analysis which will help us examine the role that alcohol, iron and hepcidin play in altering fat cells. These experiments will enable us to determine the therapeutic potential of hepcidin.

Take part in innovative medical research! Lucas is looking for people without liver disease to participate in his project into earlier diagnosis of liver injury. Find out more about this opportunity by calling us on 07 3394 7284.



Ritu Strestha: Identifying new drug targets for better liver cancer treatments

Ritu Strestha

Final year student Ritu is nearing completion on her project which has helped to identify novel druggable targets for better therapy in primary liver cancer.

What impact do you see your research making for future patients?

That my project makes current and emerging treatments more effective for liver cancer patients. By translating my research into practice I believe there will be less chance of drug resistance and more people will be able to respond to this kind of treatment approach.

What would you tell 'First Year Ritu'? I would say your plan of action or proposal will not always work so you have to spend even more time increasing your understanding of the problem. Your ultimate goal stays the same, but you might have to change your plan and learn as you go. It can

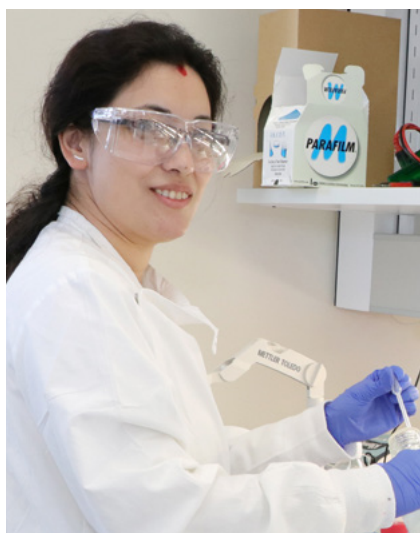
be challenging and frustrating, but I would remind myself there are no dead ends, only modified plans!

What's next as you near completion?

One more month of lab work and then I will spend the rest of the year on data analysis and thesis writing. There is light at the end of the tunnel!

What's your proudest achievement in your research? The new

understanding my findings have provided. I was able to identify the relationship between major aspects of cancer development and drug resistance. Now I can target these aspects and test a combination of new and existing drugs. I am happy that I could find something really important and novel. It is very satisfying. I am so grateful and thankful to the donors and to GMRF for this opportunity. This research would not have been possible without the support of both.



Raji Baidya: Identifying and preventing cell death pathways in transplant livers

Raji Baidya

Raji is in the process of submitting five publications and her thesis as she nears the end of her three-year project to improve the number of livers suitable for transplantation. (Read more about Raji's research on page 3!)

What are you most proud of about your project? The success of identifying cell death pathways in liver injury. There is a national liver donation shortage, and the validations and translation of this research will help to address this major issue for patients.

How have you grown as a researcher during your PhD? It has definitely

been a challenging project and at times it does test your ability, not just intellectually, but also emotionally and physically. Now I know the effort is worth it and it has helped me grow as a researcher. The long hours in the lab, the personal and professional sacrifices – the more I get into it the more excited I am for a career in research.

What's next? I don't want to think about that just yet! I am in the process of finishing my lab work and writing my thesis and papers for publication. I've been offered a post-doctorate from a collaborator in France, but with restrictions on travel I am not sure about that one just yet!



Searching for the source of rising lung disease

There are bugs in Queensland, thought to be harmless, that are making more and more people sick. Found in soil and water, the bugs can lead to infections and a chronic lung disease known as non-tuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) disease.

A growing problem

NTM disease is rising dramatically. Projections show cases could more than triple in the next 20 years — up to 6,446 cases per year in Queensland alone. Often undetected in early stages, it can cause chronic coughing, fatigue, weight loss, night sweats and coughing up of blood.

While NTM usually affects the elderly and immune compromised, clinicians are seeing more younger, healthier patients with this disease. Our Respiratory Research Unit, led by Associate Professor Rachel Thomson, aims to discover why this is happening.

Searching for Answers

“There are a lot of questions no one has answers to yet. How have the

bugs gotten into the water? Have they come from the natural environment to water systems and household dust or have humans contaminated the environment? Why are younger people picking it up more and what is it about their immune systems that put them at risk?” Assoc Prof Thomson says.

The search for answers has taken the team out of the laboratory and into the community. They are now taking water and soil samples from across the greater Brisbane region.

Understanding leads to treatments

Assoc Prof Thomson hopes their investigations can lead to ways of reducing the infection rate and addressing the source of the bug in homes and water.

“At the moment, we can treat a patient and clear their infection. But they are at risk of reinfection, because the bugs are in our environment. We are trying to understand what is happening in the environment so we can reduce exposure and subsequently reinfection,” Assoc Prof Thomson says.

NEWS FLASH: Assoc Prof Thomson is a lead investigator of the NHMRC – Medical Research Futures Funded FORMAT trial (Finding the Optimum Regimen for *M. abscessus* Treatment).

This novel study design means a combination of drugs can be tested and evaluated with new medications introduced during the trial. The Australian team are leading the world and will roll out this trial in multiple international sites.

The unit recently received funding from the US Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and from generous GMRF donors. This has enabled the unit to bring on a research officer and PhD student.

“The support contributes to a range of aspects of our work, such as our researchers’ salaries and our lab consumables. This funding enables us to conduct several projects at the one time and maximise our impact.”

Find out more at: www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/respiratory

Knowledge is key to new treatments

Meet the newest members of the Respiratory Research Unit who are helping build our knowledge of serious lung diseases

Mark Clayton: Investigating NTM bugs in Brisbane water

Mark joined the Respiratory Research Unit in July 2020. He shares his thoughts on first-impressions of GMRF, his project and how he hopes to change lives through research.

Starting my PhD is somewhat of a change of direction for me. I did my undergrad in microbial biotechnology and Honours at the University of Queensland's Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology. I worked in quality assurance for a local pharmaceutical company. I hadn't worked in respiratory diseases, but I was eager to investigate infectious bacteria and do research that would help people have better lives.

My literature review has opened

my eyes to an escalating problem.

There is a gap in research on how NTM bacteria in our water relates to infection. It is daunting, but I am excited to contribute to better understanding this bacteria.

There are questions that need

answering! As part of my project I hope to define the extent of the NTM bug in the drinking water distribution system. Strains known to cause human infections have been detected in drinking water, but we don't know if this is a cause of infections.

We have a clear path forward. This understanding will inform our work with our collaborators. We aim to develop intervention strategies for reducing colonisation and development of biofilms in water supply pipes. These strategies could then be trialed



in the homes of those at higher risk of contracting the disease.

First impressions of GMRF are

fantastic! The team is very welcoming and GMRF has great facilities. I love that the experts are right there and are happy to help out. On my first day here I was put straight into the labs with experienced researchers. It's great!

Mark's PhD project is made possible by the Pacific Golf Club Patron's Scholarship.

Jordyn Woodward: Helping build a Bronchiectasis Registry

Jordyn joined GMRF in 2018 as a Clinical Trials Assistant. She's now in the Respiratory Research Unit working on a project into bronchiectasis, a common condition causing damage to the lungs.

We are trying to understand and treat a very broad problem. There is not a lot known about bronchiectasis and how it develops. We know it can be caused by NTM, but treatments are limited and it is generally considered a life-time condition.

The Bronchiectasis Registry will build our knowledge. We are part of a

national collaborative project with a network of 11 researchers and clinical experts to contribute to a national Bronchiectasis Registry. My role is to add and update patient information on demographics, the types of bacterial infections present overtime and the variety of medications used.

It is exciting to be part of such a

practical solution. The more data you have, the better knowledge you have about a disease, which better informs patient care through ongoing research. No database with this level of information currently exists, and the more patient information we add, the more effective treatments will become.

Jordyn's work is made possible by the generous support of Civic Solutions.



The Bronchiectasis Registry aims to:

- Improve patient education and support
- Contribute to improved clinical management
- Provide improved access to clinical trials for those with bronchiectasis
- Gain a better understanding of the economic cost of bronchiectasis



New treatment options and a new lease on life

Before a new treatment can be made available, testing is required to ensure it is both safe and effective. Clinical trials are the vital ‘gatekeeper’ between discoveries in the lab and treatments administered in hospitals and accessed in the community.

While there are certainly no guarantees, clinical trial treatments can change lives, as Brisbane retiree Kay Pernice discovered – twice.

Kay was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma in 2015. After an operation to remove the tumour lymph nodes, she was placed on a clinical trial with her doctor, GMRF Clinical Trial Principal Investigator Dr Victoria Atkinson. The 12-month trial went smoothly and resulted in Kay being ‘cancer free’.

Two years later, the tumour returned. Scans revealed the melanoma had spread to the brain, initially in three spots, but then to nine. Kay recalls the moment palliative care was called in, and Dr Atkinson sat her down for a very difficult conversation.

“I asked her how long I had and she

said ‘about two months.’ I told myself ‘it’s not going to beat me,’” Kay says.

Kay commenced another trial under Dr Atkinson almost immediately following that conversation. While she dreaded facing cancer again, she says the

“I was so grateful to be part of this trial. It has given me my life back – I am now in remission! I feel it would not have happened without the support and expertise of everyone involved in this trial.”

support she received from the GMRF Clinical Trials team, staff at Greenslopes Private Hospital, and Dr Atkinson helped her through.

“I was scared to death of going through everything all over again. The girls from the Clinical Trials Unit sat with



Patient care is at the heart of our Clinical Trials Unit’s work.

The team genuinely care, and it shows! We were delighted by the response and feedback to our recent Clinical Trials Patient Survey – a 97.9% satisfaction rate for the team!

me and comforted me. The support of everyone involved in these trials is what I treasure most. I don’t think I would have coped without these genuinely caring, wonderful people.”

For five years, Kay has undergone radiation, standard treatment and clinical trials involvement. Almost 12 months to the day after being told she had two months left to live, Kay was told some very different news – she was in remission.

Clinical trials are a vital step in translating medical research into new treatments. To find out more visit:
www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/CTU



Apart but not alone: support continues through pandemic

Feeling isolated and alone during cancer treatment can make an already difficult journey feel that much harder.

For many cancer patients, social distancing measures and the COVID-19 pandemic have only further increased feelings of loneliness and isolation. Now more than ever, we see the incredible value of the Cancer Wellness Program at Greenslopes Private Hospital (GPH).

Thanks to our wonderful donors, we're working together with GPH to offer vital information, resources, and support to cancer patients and their families online.

Program Coordinator Amanda Lucas knows how important feeling connected is for cancer patients and shared with us what she's been up to.

Patient wellbeing comes first

The GPH Cancer Wellness Program has always prided itself on being able to bring people together in both an educational and social capacity, allowing our attendees to meet others like themselves during their cancer journey. However, given our cancer patients are some of the most vulnerable people in the community

when it comes to having a lowered immunity, keeping them home and safe was imperative.

Adapting the program

While sessions have been on hold, I needed to ensure our patients were still connected. I have created weekly newsletters and the GMRF website now has a dedicated page for participants to access information and resources.

We also recently held our first seminar online – a session on mindfulness, which is particularly relevant right now!

A Heart Warming Response

I know having a check in each week has been a lifeline for many, and I have been humbled by the feedback I've received over the past few months:

"I am doing extremely well, and I enjoy reading the updates. The support removes any stigma of being home alone and makes me feel very privileged in these dark days. Thank you!"

"The best thing you can do for us old souls is just what you're doing! The regular contact makes us feel we are still connected. I'm not alone."

PILOT SUCCESS:

The Men's Cancer Wellness Pilot Program provided men undergoing cancer treatment with tailored information and practical strategies on topics such as exercise, nutrition and survivorship. As one participant said:

"The program gave me a boost and has helped to increase motivation."

The results and feedback from the six week program will inform the offerings of the broader Cancer Wellness Program and enable more tailored support for men.

The Men's Cancer Wellness Pilot Program was made possible by the generosity of:



George Hartnett
Metropolitan Funerals
Honouring Lives



Rotary Club of Carindale

The Cancer Wellness Program is made possible by generous people like you. To find out more or to support the Program, visit www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/cancer-wellness



"Taking off my boots for the final time was very difficult. I know I just need to find another pair." Warrants Officer, Australian Army.

Assessing service personnel readiness for civilian life

The transition to civilian life can be a difficult process. Within five years of leaving the military, nearly one in two service personnel will struggle with mental health.

GMRF is conducting research to assess the needs of those transitioning from the Defence Force so the appropriate supports for each individual can be put in place, if or when they're needed.

The Civilian Readiness Study, conducted in

partnership with RSL Queensland, forms part of our transition and reintegration project aiming to help veterans thrive in civilian life. Over 200 transitioning service personnel have already completed the first in a series of three surveys.

This study will help us understand the transition experience. From this, we will develop a needs assessment tool to identify support needs for personnel before they leave service and track progress after separation.

"This tool will be the first of its kind in Australia and once validated will determine an individual's psychological areas of need in less than 15 minutes," Director of Veteran Health Research, Dr Madeline Romaniuk says.

We are recruiting for this study and we need your help! Please spread the word to anyone you know who may be eligible. Visit: www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/military-reintegration-study

Researching a better night's sleep for veterans with PTSD

Sleep is a vital pillar of overall health. When we get a good night's sleep, we wake up feeling rested and recharged in body and mind. Not having enough good quality sleep can impact many areas of your life and daily functioning.

"Sleep and mental health are closely connected," GMRF Research Officer and Psychologist Kelly Brown says.

People with mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety and PTSD, are more likely to experience insomnia or other sleep disorders.

"This can create a cycle of bad sleep and mental health concerns, like anxious and negative thoughts. Sleep deprivation

can contribute to a reduced capacity to function and cope with symptoms."

Our PTSD Initiative, conducted in partnership with RSL Queensland, revealed that compared to veterans without PTSD, veterans with PTSD were:

- 2x more likely to experience sleep problems
- 2.1x more likely to have obstructive sleep apnoea
- 3x more likely to report nightmares.

To address this, we are exploring psychological treatment approaches for veterans suffering from poor sleep, nightmares and PTSD. We



are investigating the combination of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), the current gold standard treatment, with the novel Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT). Both interventions outperform medication for improving sleep and nightmares.

This program is tailored for veterans and available in Brisbane for a limited time only. An afterhours program will be offered at Mates4Mates Milton Family Recovery Centre in October 2020. Find out more: bit.ly/GMRF-VSTS



Addressing the problem of too much medication

As a research institute exploring new treatments for serious illnesses, we understand the value of current and emerging medicine. It can help you manage, treat and even prevent a range of health problems. Given the toll military service can take, it's common for veterans to be on multiple medications, but at what point could it be doing more harm than good?

Polypharmacy is the regular use of multiple medications. It can cause a number of potential issues:


- A high risk of negative outcomes such as falls, problems concentrating, or even admission to hospital.
- The potential interaction between drugs may cause one or more not to work or even be harmful.
- Medication prescribed to address one health issue could make another worse.

GMRF's Psychiatric Advisor and Director of Medical Services at Toowong Private Hospital, Dr Andrew Khoo, has been treating veterans for over 20 years.

"I've spent a lot of time refining the drug regimens of veterans. Honestly, there is often not much rhyme or reason to the prescriptions," Dr Khoo says.

Finding the right medication can be a challenge for your doctors, particularly for psychotropic medication – which is used to treat mental health conditions. There is a lack of approved medications to treat PTSD and there is often other conditions in the mix such as sleep issues and chronic pain.

Our 2013 study into the whole-body impact of PTSD revealed



"Polypharmacy impacts on personal, family and broader community and society levels. We want to better understand the problem so we can contribute to better treatments," Dr Rebecca Mellor.

a high prevalence of psychotropic polypharmacy in Vietnam veterans with PTSD. One in three participants were on two or more of these medications. This was linked to high levels of depression, risk of suicide and worsening of PTSD symptoms.

With funding from the Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation, we are investigating this issue. Dr Rebecca Mellor from our Veteran Mental Health Initiative is looking at the prescribing patterns of clinicians involved in treating veterans referred to mental health facilities for the management of PTSD.

"We know it is an issue that impacts on personal, family and broader community and society levels. We want to better understand the risks and consequences of polypharmacy so we can contribute to better treatments," Dr Mellor says.

The aim is to use study findings to inform clinical guidelines and develop awareness programs and educational resources for clinicians. Dr Khoo is advising on the project.

"This is the first step in refining the way we prescribe for veterans with PTSD and people with psychiatric problems in Australia. I hope this research is used to inform and improve clinical practice as soon as possible," Dr Khoo says.

Take control of your prescriptions.

Dr Khoo recommends requesting a list of your medications from your GP and asking these questions any time you are given a new prescription.

1. What is this drug supposed to do?
2. How will I know if it is working?
3. What are the common side effects?
4. What are the potential interactions with my existing medications?
5. How will this drug interact with alcohol or other substances?



A perfect blend of research and clinical experience – Dr Sarah Hampton

One of our great strengths as a research institute is our multidisciplinary team — clinicians and researchers working together to progress the understanding of major health issues and develop real solutions.

As a research officer and clinical psychologist in our Veteran Mental Health Initiative, Dr Sarah Hampton shares her thoughts on this powerful combination.

I wanted a balance between clinical and research work. During my time in private practice, I worked with veterans, emergency service personnel, and a wide range of adolescents and adults dealing with trauma-related issues and other psychological problems. I love working directly with people, but I also love exploring the latest best practice from a research point of view. A job that combines both these passions is quite rare. When the opportunity to conduct a research project on compassion-based therapy came up at GMRF in 2018, I grabbed it with both hands!

I think there is a misconception that compassion is a load of waffle. But the research into the science of compassion tells a different story! There is growing understanding of the physiological and psychological benefits of compassion – and GMRF is part of increasing this knowledge. GMRF's study on Compassionate Mind Training helped veterans with PTSD and their partners learn how to soothe difficult emotions using self-compassion and improve their relationships through the giving and receiving of compassion.

I love seeing research contribute to real outcomes for veterans. The study findings indicated several important benefits of compassion therapy. In the three months follow up, veterans reported a significant decrease in PTSD symptoms. Veterans and their partners also reported significant decreases in anxiety and stress, steady declines in depression, and significant improvement in quality of life and relationship satisfaction.

I believe research must have real-world application, otherwise why bother? I am now developing the content for GMRF's e-learning program on transition from military service. The modules deal with important topics that can be overlooked such as purpose, resentment and regret, and beliefs about civilian life that can hold veterans back from a successful transition. I hope this training provides helpful information and reduces some of the stigma veterans may feel during what can be a very challenging adjustment period from Defence to civilian life.

"I feel so grateful to work at GMRF. It offers me the rare opportunity to combine my passion for clinical work with meaningful and relevant research."

You can find out more about our team of researchers, clinicians and support staff at:

www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/our-team



RSL Queensland wins employment award



RSL Queensland's Employment Program is going from strength to strength — expanding nationwide and receiving recognition for its contribution to the Defence community.

Following the success of the Queensland program, the Federal Government provided a grant to develop it in other parts of Australia.

The program launched in South Australia earlier this year, and work is underway to deliver it to other states and territories around the country.

The program comprises support for veterans, Defence partners and employers and in May it won the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards for Excellence in Supporting Spouse Employment. RSL Queensland General Manager Veteran Services Rob Skoda said Defence partners faced challenges that could greatly impact their career prospects, both during and after service.

"As a veteran myself, I understand exactly how much Defence partners contribute to their family unit — making sure everything runs smoothly and keeping it together through relocations, exercises and deployments," Rob said.

"But it is those disruptions to everyday life that can make it more difficult for Defence partners to maintain a career.

"That's the reason that we've invested heavily in programs and services that support the entire Defence family, such as the Defence Partner Employment Program."



Translating research into outcomes

Development of the Employment Program was informed by the early findings from GMRF's Veteran Mental Health Initiative — our five year investigation into transition from military service to civilian life, conducted in partnership with RSL Queensland. We also worked together to develop the Veterans Onboard initiative, building education modules for employers to understand why they should hire a veteran. Modules included 'Military Culture and the Workplace' and 'Myths and Misconceptions about Veterans'.

Since its launch in April 2018, RSL Queensland's Employment Program has accepted 864 veterans and partners into the program, securing 320 roles. On average, clients spent 90 days in the program.

He praised the efforts of the organisation's Employment Team, who worked closely with veterans and Defence partners to help them find employment.

"Our dedicated team of Employment Officers works closely with each client to determine what their aspirations are and how we can best support their search for employment.

"This award is testament to their hard work and the tremendous results they have achieved since the program launched in April 2018," Rob said.

Find out more about this program at:

rslqld.org/employment



Change the lives of generations to come as a GMRF Future Discovery Partner

There is a group of supporters within our community who have made an extra special commitment to progressing life-changing new treatment options.

Our Future Discovery Partners are people who have made a powerful decision which will help to improve the lives of generations to come. By choosing to leave a gift in their Will to medical research they are taking a stand against illness.

We all know, and have felt, the devastation that serious illness can cause. Our Future Discovery Partners have joined

us because they share a united belief that real solutions are possible through the power of medical research.

Future Discovery Partners provide a vital source of funding to our work. They inspire our team to press on through the challenges of research. They empower us to take those all-important steps forwards in better understanding, treating, and ultimately preventing serious illnesses.

As a Future Discovery Partner, you can fight the impact of illness and give a life-changing gift for generations to come.

Bob's act of remembrance through research

Bob is a GMRF Future Discovery Partner because he is passionate about veteran health. He spent over three decades in the military, rising from Private to Major, serving across the world.

Bob's first wife Bernadette passed away from vascular illness in early 2018. It was through Bernadette's treatment at Greenslopes Private Hospital that they found out about our research for veterans and the wider community.

"While she was in hospital she read up on GMRF. The work in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) added more fuel



to the flame of our interest. We saw that GMRF took a whole body approach and focused on creating real solutions."

From 2012, Bob and Bernadette generously supported GMRF's research and saw leaving a gift in their Will as a way of furthering their support.

"We made sure to look after our family first, then included a gift in our Will to GMRF. We know this will go to improve the health of veterans, and anyone else that can be helped by this research."

Bob remarried in late 2019, and together with wife Vicki, continues his strong support of our research.



Interested in becoming a Future Discovery Partner?

For an obligation-free, confidential conversation about becoming a Future Discovery Partner or to receive more information about leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Tracey Lowe, GMRF Community Engagement Coordinator, on 07 3394 7284 or at LoweT@ramsayhealth.com.au



Your Will: A plan for the future

Making or updating your Will can be confusing, but it doesn't have to be.

The uncertainty brought on by the coronavirus pandemic has got many of us thinking about our future. While a lot of things are outside our control, making or updating your Will helps you ensure your loved ones will be looked after and your final wishes honoured.

Every person's circumstances are unique, and it is important to take the time to find the best solution that fits what you want to achieve and the interests of your loved ones.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why organise a Will now?

None of us know what can happen in the future. Making your Will now is the only way to be sure that your wishes will be carried out after you're gone. If you believe in the power of medical research, including a gift in your Will is the ultimate commitment to a healthier future for generations to come.

Can I create a Will by myself?

You can, however we strongly recommend you seek assistance from an Estate Planning Specialist. The expense in the short-term will help to ensure your wishes are properly actioned in the long-term.

Do I need to tell you if I include GMRF in my Will?

No, not at all. While we would love to hear if you have made this decision (so we can thank you and keep you up to date on our progress) we respect your privacy.

Can I choose the research area?

Research priorities may change significantly over time. A general purpose gift is the most helpful to us, so that the money can be applied where it is needed the most. However, we aim to give you and your family as much choice as we can — talk to us about what is possible.

Isn't it only wealthy people who leave gifts in their Will?

Please do not feel that you need to be wealthy to leave a

"Planning for the future can be daunting, but it is the best course of action to make sure you protect the interests of your loved ones and secure your future wishes."

Karen Gaston, Partner, Thynne + Macartney



Helping it all make sense

GMRF Corporate Discovery Partner, Thynne + Macartney Lawyers, are award winning specialists with many years experience in Wills and Estates.



They have created a fact sheet for people considering leaving a gift to GMRF in their Will, outlining how to get started and ensure your Will is up to date and valid. Contact us to request a copy.

gift in your Will. All gifts — no matter how small you may think they are — can make a difference. The combination of your gift with that of other GMRF supporters can lead to breakthroughs that will improve the health of others for generations to come.

Do I need to create a new Will to include GMRF?

No. If you have an existing Will you can make a Codicil — a short amendment to a Will. This is often cheaper and more efficient than making a new Will.

Can I change my mind?

Of course! It's your decision. Even if you have confirmed your intentions, you have the complete right to change your mind. We want you to be 100% comfortable with your decision to include GMRF in your Will.



Visit www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/GiftinWills

to find out more or to download our Future Discovery Partner Brochure



Pictured: GPH Cancer Wellness Program Coordinator Amanda Lucas, GMRF CEO Miriam Dwyer, John Holland General Manager QLD/NT Building Colin Matthews, John Holland Project Manager Jai Shires, GPH CEO Chris Went and John Holland Communications & Stakeholder Relations Manager Jodie Grant.

Building brighter futures for families affected by cancer

New development at Greenslopes Private Hospital (GPH) may have only just commenced, but construction company John Holland are already helping support cancer patients at the hospital on the path to wellness.

John Holland commenced work on several buildings in early 2020 as part of GPH's plan to provide increased services to patients. Driven by a commitment to supporting the communities in which they operate, the company has established the John Holland Charity Project with the aim of raising over \$50,000 for the GPH Cancer Wellness Program.

John Holland has a proven track-record of genuine care for their communities. Project Manager Jai Shires says their motto is 'we're up for the challenge of improving lives', and they certainly put their money where their mouth is.

"When we heard about the Cancer Wellness Program through GMRF it resonated with us immediately. Part of our core values is working in the community and putting the community first. We're all about improving lives and it's very clear this Program is doing that," Jai says.

The project has struck a chord with the John Holland team, particularly for Communications & Stakeholder Relations Manager Jodie Grant, who knows first-hand the impact cancer has on the lives of patients and their families.

"My dad was diagnosed with bowel cancer earlier this year. It's a new learning curve for us all and it can be really overwhelming. When I heard about the Cancer Wellness

Program and the charity project it really touched me and I couldn't resist getting involved," Jodie says.

GMRF is proud to fund GPH's Cancer Wellness Program. This commitment to providing support to patients and their families is only possible because of our supporters.

"We're delighted and grateful John Holland have come on board in support of the wholly donor-funded program. The Program is making a tangible impact right now thanks to supporters like John Holland," GMRF CEO Miriam Dwyer says.

The charity project will run throughout construction until June 2021. For more information or to make a donation visit: www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/john-holland-project.

John Holland Corporate Charity Golf Day



Friday 30th of October, Victoria Park Golf Course.

Join us for a fun afternoon of golf and help raise money for GPH's Cancer Wellness Program. Find out more by calling us on 07 3394 7284 or

visiting www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/john-holland-project



Proudly supporting the GPH Cancer Wellness Program

Greenslopes Private Hospital
Part of Ramsay Health Care

GALLIPOLI
Research through research



RUN, WALK OR WHEEL for Remembrance 2020

Presented by

Rotary
Club of Carindale



In support of



2020 has been a tough year, but there is a growing feeling among our community — a strong desire to connect with one another, do something positive, and to have a little fun. The Rotary Club of Carindale is giving you the chance to do all three at once!

While their traditional fundraising and events were on hold, the club was inspired to do something different to bring people together. We have joined forces to launch the Run, Walk or Wheel for Remembrance in support of GMRF.

“We felt this awful disconnect in the community from the pandemic,” club member Marie Turner says. “We were missing that connection, so we wanted to do something fun to say we’re all still here and we can still do things!”

This year, the Run, Walk or Wheel for Remembrance will be a virtual event. You choose your distance and your course to complete by yourself or with family and friends. You can get involved, no matter your age or ability level.

“We wanted everyone to have something they could do. People in wheelchairs, families, cyclists, walkers and joggers. It’s about bringing the community together,” Marie says.

As part of your entry, you’ll receive a downloadable bib to personalise with your team name or your motivation for

supporting Remembrance through research. Marie says she’ll be running for her Great Uncle, who is buried at Gallipoli.

By signing up to participate and fundraise, you will be playing a vital role in enhancing the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. 100% of proceeds from the event will go towards GMRF’s work.

“We’re very supportive of the work GMRF does. We know how difficult it has been to fundraise. For us to be able to bring the community together online is taking something positive out of a really difficult period,” Marie says.

To find out more, visit our website or contact us on 07 3394 7284 or at enquiries.gmrf@ramsayhealth.com.au



Get involved and run, walk or wheel for Remembrance

runwalkorwheelforremembrance2020.gofundraise.com.au



Make a difference now and into the future

Make a donation

Every donation we receive helps us progress innovative medical research and life-changing support initiatives.

You can help change lives by donating today.



Donate online at
www.gallipoliresearch.com.au



Call us on
07 3394 7284
to donate over the
phone via credit or
debit card



Donate via cheque and post to:

Gallipoli Medical Research
Foundation
C/- Greenslopes Private Hospital,
Newdegate St, Greenslopes,
QLD 4120



Become a Regular Giver

A regular gift enables
us to plan for the future
and further progress
our work.



Hold a Fundraiser

A great way to bring
friends and family
together for a
good cause.

Ask us about ideas!



Become a Future Discovery Partner

You can be a part of
medical discoveries for
generations to come by
leaving a gift to
GMRF in your Will.

100%

Our promise to you... 100% of your donation is used to change lives.

The in-kind support we receive from Greenslopes Private Hospital, together with the income generated from our Clinical Trials Unit, covers our administration costs.