

THIS IS YOUR TRIBUTE

SPRING EDITION 2022

**Can too much
medication
put veterans
at risk?**

**Announcing
new research
partnership**

**Should you
do a liver
detox?**

**“The trial gave
me my life back”
Read Anna’s
clinical trial story**

**Meet Angelo & Maria
investing in answers**



GALLIPOLI
MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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 **Greenslopes
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Part of Ramsay Health Care

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GALLIPOLI
MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION



GMRF is an independent
accredited research institute
and a registered charity.

From the CEO

After many years of hard work, I'm excited to share with you newly published research from our Veteran Mental Health team.

This research is key to helping veterans by supporting clinical practice by highlighting the risk of prescribing multiple medications. You can read all about this research on page 4.

In other news, we continued to support the work of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide by providing expert evidence; and a new project is underway to support first responders who interact with veterans in suicide crisis. An important milestone to share is the 5th year anniversary of the GPH Cancer Wellness Program which is exclusively funded by you!!

I also want to thank the generous people who donated to our Tax Appeal. I understand times are tough, and with the rising cost of living many don't have funds to spare. Your support is making a real difference for veterans, their families and all Australians. This important work wouldn't be possible without you. Many thanks,

Miriam Dwyer CEO



Celebrating 20 Years!

This year, Dr Kim Bridle, Liver Disease Research Lead and Lab Supervisor at GMRF, celebrated 20 years of supporting research at The University of Queensland (UQ).

In her time at UQ, Dr Bridle has supervised countless students, peer reviewed many manuscripts, and made a lasting impact on all those who have worked alongside her. We're very grateful to have Dr Bridle's knowledge and expertise informing our research.



Contributing Scientists



Dr Rebecca Mellor
Senior Research Fellow,
Veteran Mental Health
Research Unit



Dr Kerri-Ann Woodbury
Principal Research Fellow,
Veteran Mental Health
Research Unit



Professor Darrell Crawford
Director of Research



Dr Angela Maguire
Clinical Psychologist/Principal
Research Fellow, Veteran Mental
Health Research Unit



Sogol Mousavi
Clinical Trials Coordinator,
Clinical Trials Unit

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Follow our progress



New research highlights risks of prescribing multiple medications for veterans with PTSD

Raising awareness of potential drug-related health implications for veterans



GMRF recently published research highlighting that veterans with PTSD who are treated with multiple medications at once – known as polypharmacy – are at significant risk of adverse health side-effects, including drowsiness and confusion, respiratory depression, and postural instability, which can lead to falls, fractures, hospital admission, and even death.

This project aims to raise awareness of the potential for drug-related health implications among veterans and contribute to greater education around improving the pharmacological treatment of PTSD.

Lead researcher Dr Rebecca Mellor investigated the prevalence of mood altering polypharmacy in veterans with PTSD who were admitted to a mental health facility, to identify and highlight the potential risks associated with the use of multiple medications to treat veterans with PTSD and other diagnoses.

“Psychotropic medications are prescribed for the treatment of PTSD symptoms; however, we’ve illustrated how psychotropic polypharmacy increases the risk of adverse drug events and drug-drug interactions, which can contribute to falls, hospital admissions, morbidity, and mortality,” said Dr Mellor.

“This highlights the importance of increasing awareness of polypharmacy – especially psychotropic polypharmacy – and potentially inappropriate drug combinations, and the need for improved medication review by prescribers.”

Researchers reviewed the medical records of 219 veterans with PTSD who were admitted to a mental health facility over a one-year period, with the findings providing evidence of the extent of the issue of psychotropic polypharmacy in the veteran population with psychological and physical co-diagnoses.

GMRF’s Psychiatric Advisor and Director of Medical Services at Toowong Private

Hospital, Dr Andrew Khoo, provided expert guidance on the research. Dr Khoo agrees that polypharmacy is a modifiable issue and that optimising prescribing practices would lead to significant improvements in the morbidity and mortality rates of Australian veterans.

“After 20 years of treating veterans with PTSD, I am aware of how veterans, with their chronic conditions and complex psychiatric and medical comorbidity, typically accrue medications from multiple prescribers over time,” said Dr Khoo.

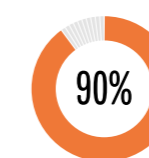
“This research confirms this impression with real data on Australian veterans treated in a typical setting exhibiting alarming rates of general, psychotropic, and sedative polypharmacy. Given the findings, it is critical that we share this information to both veterans and prescribers.”

This study forms the basis for a longer-term collaborative research plan involving GMRF, with prescribing guidelines, awareness programs, and educational resources to be developed to support prescribers through the pharmacological management of PTSD and co-morbidities, particularly in veterans.

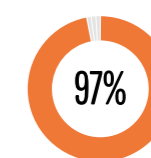
“This research is an early step in the process of improving pharmacotherapeutic treatment of PTSD and reducing unnecessary overprescribing; we’re hoping to address and change a factor that contributes to morbidity and mortality in PTSD sufferers,” said Dr Mellor.

Key findings

The study found that, in addition to PTSD:



90% of patients had a diagnosis of at least one other psychiatric condition

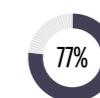


97% of patients had at least one non psychiatric medical condition

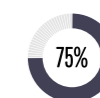
There was a high prevalence of:



80% Psychotropic polypharmacy



77% General polypharmacy



75% Sedative polypharmacy

- **Psychotropic polypharmacy** – use of two or more medications used to treat psychological conditions (e.g. antidepressants, antipsychotics)
- **General Polypharmacy** – use of five or more medications to treat all health issues in an individual (includes all medication classes)
- **Sedative polypharmacy** – use of two or more medications with sedating properties (e.g. sleeping pills)

Take control of your prescriptions

Dr Khoo recommends requesting a list of your medications from your GP, and asking these questions any time you’re given a new prescription:

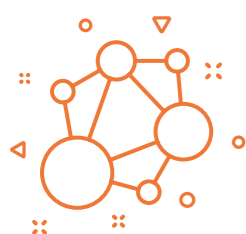
- 1 What is this drug supposed to do?
- 2 How will I know if it’s working?
- 3 What are the common side effects?
- 4 What are the potential interactions with my existing medications?
- 5 How will this drug interact with alcohol or other substances?



Dr Rebecca Mellor



Dr Andrew Khoo



Veteran mental health to benefit from collaboration between leading researchers

New partnership with Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research

As suicide in the Defence and veteran communities is a high-profile issue of concern in veteran health, a new research project is aiming to educate civilian emergency services about their interactions with veterans in regard to suicidality.

The study will utilise qualitative research to develop a suite of training and educational videos to advise first responders in police or paramedic services, and others who may provide

crisis responses to Australian Defence Force members or veterans, about the unique experiences, culture, and other factors that can support responders in providing appropriate and safe care.

The project is the first under a new collaborative relationship between GMRF and the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research (QCMHR), which will see researchers from both organisations draw on GMRF's expertise in qualitative research and QCMHR's expertise in

mental health research and data linkage.

GMRF's Principal Research Fellow, Transition and Reintegration, Dr Kerri-Ann Woodbury will undertake the research with QCMHR's Head of Forensic Mental Health Research Stream, Associate Professor Edward Heffernan, and QCMHR Principal Researcher, Dr Carla Meurk.

This project is being generously funded by the National Fire Industry Association (NFIA) Patron's Annual Walk for Charity.

The team behind the research



Dr Kerri-Ann Woodbury

Dr Kerri-Ann Woodbury is a Principal Research Fellow in GMRF's Veteran Mental Health Research team and leads the Military Service – Transition and Reintegration Research Program. Dr Woodbury served over 13 years in the Australian Army and her academic career has focused on veteran health research. Dr Woodbury was a member of the expert advisory group that informed the National Commissioner's for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention Independent Review of Past Defence and Veteran Suicides.



Research confirms that the period following separation from the ADF is a time of heightened risk of suicidality; ex-serving males who serve less than one year are at significant risk. Yet there are insufficient interventions to inform optimal first responses tailored to the specific needs of the Defence and veteran populations."



Associate Professor Ed Heffernan

Associate Professor Ed Heffernan is a very well-respected psychiatrist and is a psychiatrist in the Australian Army Reserve. Associate Professor Heffernan is currently the Head of the Forensic Mental Health Research Stream at the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research and is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at GMRF.



This project will bring together QCMHR, GMRF, InSight, Queensland Police Service, and Queensland Ambulance Service in collaboration to co-create resources to support first responders to confidently and compassionately respond to veterans in crisis."



Dr Carla Meurk

Dr Carla Meurk is a mental health research academic with expertise in mixed methods mental health policy and services research, data linkage, lived experience research, and e-learning. Dr Meurk is Associate Head and Principal Researcher for the Forensic Mental Health Stream at the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research, an Honorary Senior Fellow at The University of Queensland, and an Honorary Principal Research Fellow at GMRF.



We're using the power of story-telling as a means to inform and instil confidence among first responders, because sharing lived and professional experiences on camera is a powerful way to educate and inspire."

If you need someone to talk to, call:

> Lifeline on 13 11 14

> Beyond Blue on 1300 22 46 36

> Open Arms on 1800 011 046



Update: Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

In December 2021, Dr Angela Maguire was called to give evidence to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide as a member of the GMRF Expert Panel (Hearing Block 1, Day 9; Brisbane).

In April 2022, Dr Maguire was again called as an expert witness to give evidence to the Royal Commission (Hearing Block 4, Day 29; Canberra).

In her evidence, she expanded on her research findings as they relate to the impact of military service on families, and the challenges that families and service providers face when navigating military and civilian systems of care.



Royal Commission
into Defence and Veteran Suicide



Dr Angela Maguire

Do you need to detox your liver?

Fact vs Fiction

Recent years have seen a rise in new detoxes, potions, and supplements all claiming to improve health. After an indulgent weekend, many of us feel like our body might need a cleanse – perhaps you’ve even tried a liver detox?

We spoke to Professor Darrell Crawford, consultant hepatologist and GMRF’s Director of Research, about some common myths surrounding liver health to help us sort the fact from fiction when it comes to liver detoxes.



FICTION

1 > Liver detoxes help cleanse the liver of toxins and make you healthier

Professor Crawford says there is little scientific evidence to show that herbal supplements make an immediate improvement to overall health. People who report feeling better after liver detox activities usually experience the benefits of limiting sugary and fatty foods as well as significantly reducing alcohol consumption. Your liver is a natural filter, and if taken care of, does an amazing job without extra help.

FICTION

2 > Liver detoxes help with weight loss

There is no research that proves that liver detoxes help with weight loss. And in fact, some cleansing diets may cause some weight gain for some people. In most cases, people will experience fluid loss disguised as weight loss. Once normal eating and drinking habits pick up again people regain weight fairly quickly.

FICTION

3 > Liver detoxes can help fight and prevent liver disease

No current research shows that liver detoxes can protect or prevent against liver disease. There are many factors that contribute to liver disease, some lifestyle and some genetic. Modern lifestyle choices such as excessive drinking and eating foods high in fat and sugar, are major contributors to the increasing rate of liver disease. Research underway at GMRF is studying how we can help slow down the progression of liver disease.

So, do liver detoxes work?

We have limited scientific evidence to show that trending liver detoxes make any significant difference to improve health and wellbeing. Professor Crawford recommends speaking with your GP before starting any sort of detox or drastic lifestyle change.








* This article contains general information only. GMRF always suggests speaking to a health professional for specific advice.

Speak to your doctor about taking natural supplements as even natural products can interact with prescription medication and some natural substances can be toxic to the liver in some people e.g. black cohosh for menopause is associated with acute liver injury.

What is a liver detox?

Common liver detoxes include diet-specific changes (such as a juice cleanse or limiting processed foods) or taking natural supplements (e.g. turmeric and milk thistle).

How to love your liver

-  Quit smoking
-  Limit alcohol
-  Eat a well-balanced diet
-  Exercise regularly
-  Maintain a normal bodyweight

Funding a future for rare disease sufferers

Angelo and Maria Doukas have a lot in common; their age, family background, interest in computer science and love for cruise holidays. Sadly, they haven’t taken to the seas since the first signs of Maria’s illness.

It was on a cruise in late 2016 that Maria first coughed up blood. On their return home, a lung specialist in their local Sydney area informed them that Maria had a Mycobacterial lung infection. A little research revealed how difficult it was to treat such diseases.

“It was at this point that we independently set out to get a second opinion from someone considered to be an authority in mycobacterial infections,” said Angelo.

Professor Rachel Thomson, leading clinician and Head of Respiratory Research at GMRF, joined the team as a consulting clinician and remotely consulted on her treatment. Again, misfortune struck as the laboratory analysing Maria’s sample in Sydney misidentified the specific bacterium causing the disease. As time went on the infection spread.

“As you can imagine, we were frustrated and angry,” said Angelo.

After choosing Professor Thomson as their primary clinician, Maria continued treatment with a changing cocktail of antibiotics. Over time, it became clear that Maria’s particular strain was multi-drug resistant.

“We had been under Rachel’s care for some time and made the decision to support Rachel’s research with a meaningful contribution. It was a nice way of repaying Rachel for everything she was doing for us,” said Angelo.

“A contribution towards a research foundation such as GMRF could potentially help make life-saving investigations into non-drug related solutions, which could be just as effective, or even more so,” says Angelo.

In 2021 Maria participated in a clinical trial at GMRF led by Professor Thomson, which is investigating nitric oxide as a treatment for nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) lung disease.

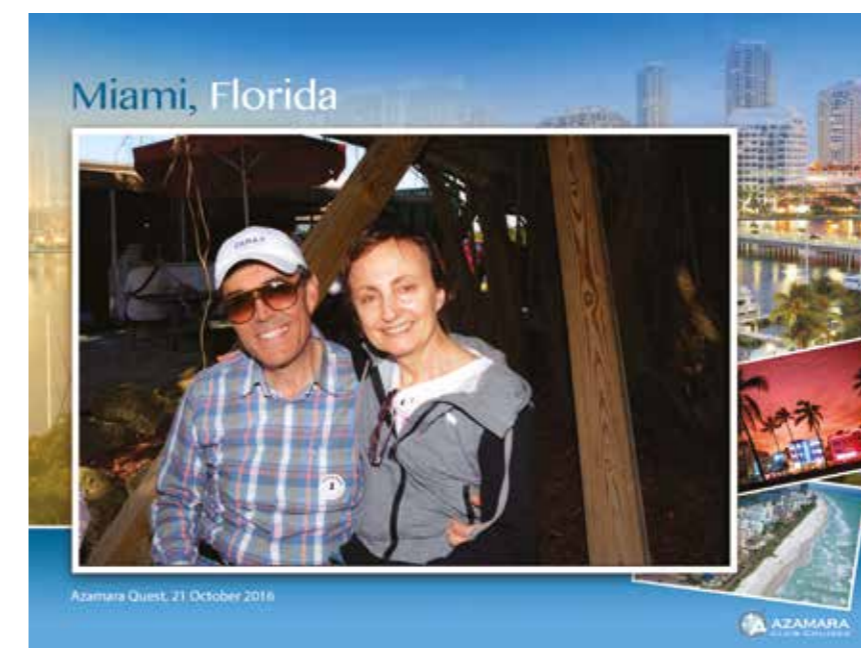
Unfortunately, Maria didn’t experience a notable improvement through the trial.*

Maria has yet to find a medical treatment that is effective for her condition, but the disease has not progressed in recent months, potentially due to medical treatments, lifestyle changes, or a combination of both.

“It’s too early to know if the infection has stabilised or perhaps even getting better, but things are looking more positive,” said Angelo.

GMRF research relies on the generous support of people like Angelo and Maria.

* Although positive results are not guaranteed, clinical trials are a vital way to assess if treatments are safe and can help more people.



Benefits of research from the laboratory bench to the patient bedside

How GMRF research helped Anna

Nontuberculous Mycobacteria (NTM) lung disease is rare, but for the people who live with this illness the impact is severe. As of 2016, over 1,000 people in Queensland were diagnosed with the disease. Common symptoms include persistent cough, extreme fatigue, weight loss, even occasional shortness of breath and coughing up blood.

Anna* was diagnosed with NTM lung disease in 2017. Prior to diagnosis, Anna loved horse riding, swimming, running and spending time in the garden. All of that changed as the extreme fatigue set in and Anna quickly swapped her afternoon run with an afternoon nap.

"I found myself having to sleep for a couple of hours after midday in order to get enough energy to collect my children from school and assist them with homework. On bad days I found I was too tired to be safe to drive them to their extracurricular activities, which left them and myself upset," says Anna.

As a patient of Professor Rachel Thomson, Anna began a clinical trial with GMRF in 2021. This was a pilot clinical trial studying the effect of nitric oxide to help reduce the symptoms of NTM lung disease. Within a week Anna felt different - less sluggish and more alert, even walking again.

"I was able to breathe so much more freely. I was able to start playing with my children and started riding and gardening again, something I had given up hope of being able to do again," says Anna.

Sadly, not everyone has a positive experience on a clinical trial. Anna is one of the lucky ones.

"The trial gave me my life back and the energy to keep doing everything physically possible to improve my chances. It also gave my children their mother back; one that would play with them, join in their activities, and hold parties for them. I'm so grateful to GMRF and the donors that have enabled me to feel useful and enjoy life again," says Anna.



Learn more about how clinical trials can make a difference



*To protect Anna's privacy we've changed her name and used a picture that shows Anna's condition but is not Anna.

A day in the life of a GMRF Clinical Trials Coordinator

GMRF Clinical Trials Coordinator, Sogol shared what her day looks like

Working in clinical trials is hardly a standard desk job. For some of our clinical trial coordinators, sitting at a desk is the shortest part of their day. GMRF Clinical Trials Coordinator, Sogol Mousavi, shared what clinical trials are really like for the people bringing this research to life.



I get to the office and check my list of patients for the day. Once I know who's coming in, I make sure that I have all the supplies I need for their visit, like data sheets to collect their vital information or blood tubes for sample collection.



I see my first patient and collect any data on how they're feeling, if they've had any medication changes, or if they've experienced any adverse events in preparation for their doctor update.



By this time, the patient has been reviewed by the doctor and cleared for treatment. I order the treatment from the hospital pharmacists.



Before the patient receives their treatment, we do a couple more checks to see how they are. We take blood samples and measure vital signs, like their heart rate. Then I take their samples, including blood and sometimes urine, back to our GMRF lab for processing.



Lunch! After running around the hospital for most of the morning, lunch is a time for our team to catch up. When we're not talking about work, we like to play games at lunch, like Wordle.



Afterwards I see my next patient. Together with the doctor and the patient, we check all their results – including blood and urine, see how their heart is functioning, and reports to check if their tumours are changing.



After each patient visit, we share lots of different data with the Data Managers to input into systems. I help answer any questions about the data I've collected.



Back at my desk I set up external appointments for patients, such as ECG tests, lung function tests, scans, cannulation, and more.



Now I make sure everything is ready to do it all again tomorrow. The clinical trial assistants help me to prepare all the supplies for the next day's patients.



I love working in clinical trials because I get to wear many hats, from entering data behind a computer, to working with biological samples in a laboratory, no two days are the same. It's also extremely fulfilling to be caring for people at a very vulnerable time in their lives, and their appreciation makes all the hard work worth it."



Learn more about clinical trials

GMRF conducts a wide range of trials in oncology and non-oncology areas, including respiratory and liver disease. Learn more about our Clinical Trials Unit or see which trials are currently recruiting.





Cancer Wellness Program

Celebrating five years of the Cancer Wellness Program

The program that continues to support cancer patients and their families in our communities

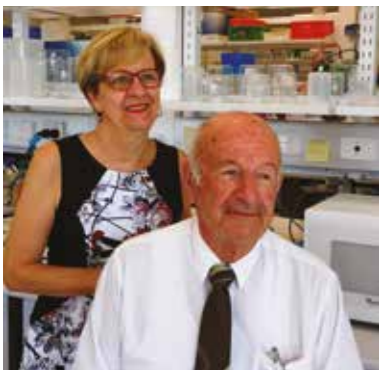
In March we celebrated five years of the Cancer Wellness Program, proudly funded by GMRF, and located at Greenslopes Private Hospital (GPH). The Cancer Wellness Program offers free education and peer support sessions for people receiving cancer treatment and their loved ones at GPH. Holistic support can create a smoother experience for patients and their support networks through cancer treatment and beyond.

Where it all began

In 2016, a handful of nurses in GPH's Cyril Gilbert Cancer Centre identified the need for post-treatment support as many of their patients started the next part of their cancer journey. Running workshops in their lunch breaks, it soon became clear that beyond the first class medical treatment received at GPH, more could be done to support people with cancer.

Thanks to the generosity of GMRF donors Blair and his daughter Joanne, the Cancer Wellness Program started with one coordinator, working two days a week, making calls to support people receiving treatment and taking the next step on their cancer journey.

With close to 10,000 patients receiving cancer treatment each year at GPH, this program has made a real difference in the lives of countless people in our communities over the past five years.



When my Mother was diagnosed with cancer I felt totally lost, not sure of what the future held or what I could do to support her. When my father and I were approached to become involved in the Cancer Wellness Program we immediately envisioned the benefits this would bring to patients and their families. We feel honoured to have been able to supply funding and ongoing support to the program and I feel privileged to have worked with Rane and her team.

Happy 5th Birthday Cancer Wellness!" says Joanne.

The Cancer Wellness Program Journey

Five years, dedicated coordinators, countless sessions, workshops, and phone consults later, the Cancer Wellness Program has touched the lives of hundreds in the community.



We know research takes time to go from the bench to the bedside, so the Cancer Wellness Program is an opportunity for us to help people in need right now. We're thankful to help make such an important program possible and look forward to supporting many more people in the future," says Miriam Dwyer, CEO of GMRF



Learn more about the Cancer Wellness Program or donate today

Mindful Minutes with Petra Milaudi, GPH Hospital Chaplain

If you have 5 minutes (or even less) following these small steps can help you refocus.

1. Get comfortable - lay down, or sit with feet on the floor or stand comfortably. If possible, away from noise.
2. Close your eyes if you can, or focus your gaze on one thing
3. Place both hands on your lower tummy or one hand on your tummy and one on your heart
4. Now breathe. Try not to raise and drop your shoulders.
5. Inhale slowly and count to 5. Exhale count to 5. If that is too much just breathe as you can (1, 2, 3)

Try to do this a few times a day.





With the help of our community

Recognising five years of support from Rotary Club of Carindale

Our research and support programs wouldn't be possible without the help of the community. We're incredibly grateful for each donor and community group that dedicates their time to advancing research and supporting people in need right now.

This year, we celebrate five years of support from Rotary Club of Carindale. After Rotary member Marie Turner began helping GMRF in 2017 through her volunteer work at Greenslopes Private Hospital, she saw the perfect opportunity to engage further support. Marie brought the Rotary Club of Carindale on board as Platinum sponsors for the very first GMRF Red Run in 2017. From then on, their commitment to research has been unwavering.

Five years of support

2017	2018	2019	2020	2022
Platinum Sponsor Red Run	Platinum Sponsor Red Run	Platinum Sponsor Red Run	Presenting Partners for the Run, Walk or Wheel for Remembrance. Funded a six-week pilot program for men with a cancer diagnosis through the Cancer Wellness Program.	Donating take home craft kits for members of the Cancer Wellness Program.

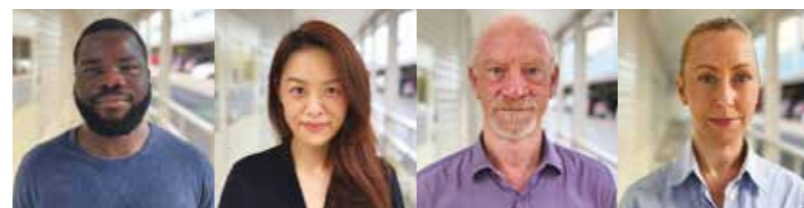
“We're incredibly grateful for the continuing support of Rotary Club of Carindale and look forward to helping more people with cancer and their loved ones in future. Everyone's generous donations really do make a difference for our patients on their cancer pathway! Thank you so much,” says Rane Saffioti, Cancer Wellness Program Coordinator

If you're interested in joining Rotary Club of Carindale, visit the website www.rotaryclubofcarindale.com



Commemorating Anzac Day

2022's Anzac Day was one for the history books. For the first time in over 20 years, it rained during the Dawn Service held at Greenslopes Private Hospital. But the rain didn't stop hundreds of locals filling the hospital grounds for the annual Dawn Service, joining us to remember and honour all those who have served or are currently serving. GMRF volunteers were privileged to be part of the special day helping out with the gunfire breakfast after the service.



Research changes lives and so can you



Thanks for supporting our 2022 tax appeal!

A big thank you to everyone who donated to our 2022 tax appeal. We understand that times are hard for many and still our community found a way to support our research. Your donations will help fund life-changing research for future generations.

Over \$27,000 was raised to help us fight disease and change lives through research.

The future is in your hands

Support GMRF and change lives both now and into the future

1 My details:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Mobile: _____

2. My donation:

I will donate \$ _____ .00 to advance medical research.

- ☐ Make my donation a monthly gift.
☐ I want to know more about leaving a Gift in Will.

3. Payment details:

- ☐ Payment option 1 - I have enclosed cash or cheque/ money order payable to GMRF
☐ Payment option 2 - Donate by VISA or MasterCard (We are unable to accept donations via Amex)

Card Number: _____
Expiry Date: _____
Name on Card: _____
Signature: _____

Please return to:
Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation, Greenslopes Private Hospital, Newdegate Street, GREENSLOPES QLD 4120

Scan the code or visit gallipoliresearch.com.au/donate to donate online.

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Your privacy is very important to us. We work hard to safeguard your personal information. To find out more about our privacy policy please visit our website.





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MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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**Committed to enhancing
the health and wellbeing
of our community.**