

Newsletter

Edition 43 | Summer – Autumn 2020

Brave Sophia shaves her head to help other mums

“My mum had breast cancer and so many people helped her to overcome it. I want to help other mums fight breast cancer too.”

That’s what nine-year-old Sophia said when she made the extremely brave decision to shave her beautiful hair off to raise funds for our breast cancer trials research.

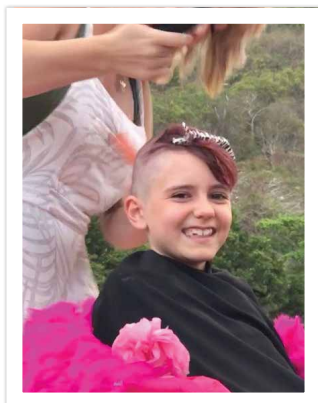
Four years ago, Sophia remembers sobbing when her mum Robyn was diagnosed with breast cancer. At only five years of age, she worried that because her mum was forced to shave off her thinning hair, she would be bullied.

Robyn had only just stopped breastfeeding Sophia’s little sister when she was dealt the shocking news that she had a 64mm lump in her breast. It wasn’t long until her doctor told her she had hormone sensitive breast cancer.

The months that followed were harrowing for Robyn who had to leave her two young daughters and husband at home every month as she made the long journey from Christmas Island to Perth for chemotherapy treatment.

Robyn knew that it was important to keep her girls positive and informed throughout this challenging period. Little Sophia and her younger sister, unfortunately, know far too well the devastating impact of breast cancer. They lost one grandmother to this disease and have watched their other grandmother, great aunt and mum be diagnosed too.

Fortunately, after chemotherapy, 25 rounds of radiation therapy and ongoing Tamoxifen treatment, Robyn has



Nine-year-old Sophia made the brave decision to shave her head to raise funds for breast cancer trials research.

no signs of breast cancer. Sophia has learnt that the treatment her mum received was only made possible because of our breast cancer clinical trials research.

So, on a sunny day on Christmas Island last September, Sophia bravely shaved her head. She raised an incredible \$18,000 to support the life-changing research that helped save her mum’s life.

We are working hard to ensure other young children do not have to go through the same heartbreak that Sophia did when she waved goodbye to her mum every month as she left for treatment in Perth.

Congratulations Sophia on a beautiful act of love for your mum and for all other mums facing breast cancer.

Do you have a great fundraising idea? Join Sophia and all our #PinkChampions by hosting an event today. Find more info here: www.breastcancertrials.org.au/hold-an-event or call us on (02) 4925 3022.





In December last year I was fortunate to attend, along with fellow researchers from Breast Cancer Trials (BCT), the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in Texas, United States. This meeting sees over 7,500 breast cancer researchers from 90 countries come together to collaborate and share learnings on the most current research and advances in breast cancer.

Two clinical trials conducted by BCT, thanks to your generosity, were presented at the conference. You can read more about them in the Research Update on Pages 4 and 5. BCT researchers Professor Geoffrey Lindeman and Professor Jane Visvader received international recognition at the conference for their critical work in advancing our knowledge of breast cancer. Professor Lindeman is leading our new breast cancer prevention trial BRCA-P made possible with your support.

Our researchers are working in our communities every day, treating breast cancer patients and seeing the effect this disease has on individuals and their families. They are uniquely placed to develop new breast cancer clinical trials research to address critical areas of patient need and thanks to your commitment are empowered to do this.

Your donations have ensured that in the next few months we can open two new clinical trials developed

by our researchers which aim to improve treatment options for people with metastatic breast cancer and with triple negative breast cancer. An interesting new study will also be launched looking to measure the value of using Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) as a tool to guide treatment decisions for particular breast cancer patients. I'll be sure to keep you informed about this new research.

And thank you for your generous response to our Christmas Appeal. I was, like you, moved by Lyndsey Clark's story of love and courage. It is for her daughter who was just six when her mum died, and other children like her, that together we must keep up the momentum in breast cancer trials research so that every life is saved.

Professor Bruce Mann
Board Chair, Breast Cancer Trials



Lyndsey Clark and her daughter Nyah

Changing the future for our children



Thanks to your generosity, the world-first BRCA-P clinical trial to prevent breast cancer in women who carry the BRCA1 gene mutation opened in Australia last September. At the time of going to print, 22 women were now enrolled to the trial internationally.

You might remember Rebecca, who featured with her young family in our Tax Appeal last year to help raise funds to support this important research. Rebecca was diagnosed with breast cancer age 29 when she was pregnant with her first child. She then learned she carried the BRCA1 gene and therefore always had a 70% chance of getting breast cancer.

Last year, Rebecca and her husband welcomed their third child Nate who joins Isaac and Taya. These children have a 50% chance of inheriting the faulty gene. The outcomes from the BRCA-P clinical trial are critical to changing the future for these beautiful children should they carry the BRCA1 gene mutation, and for other children born into families who carry this faulty gene too.

Lyndsey's impact continues

At Christmas we shared the story of a very special young woman, Lyndsey Clark, who died from breast cancer aged 29. Lyndsey left her mark on the world in many selfless ways, including through her personal diaries where she hoped her experiences could help others.

It's clear her story resonated, inspiring many heartfelt messages and raising over \$265,000 for the DIAMOND clinical trial. This research aims to provide more treatment options for patients with metastatic breast cancer.

We have now reached 46% of the recruitment target for this clinical trial which is open to women and men.

Richard, pictured right with his wife of 51 years, is a participant in the DIAMOND clinical trial. "I have one grandson who is only two and I want to see him grow up a bit more if I can," says Richard. "Plus, my wife and kids say they'd like me to be around for a bit longer too!"



Thank you to everyone who supported this Appeal and for your messages, some of which appear below.

"I was so touched by your story today of Lyndsey and her death at only 29 years of age – so young, so tragic." – **Alison**

"Everyone impacted by this cancer deserves a cure. Let's provide those dedicated researchers and trial participants the resources to do this." – **Phyllis**

"With so many lives and families affected by this disease, we all need to support each other and give what we can. Keep up the good fight." – **Michele**

"My donation is to give hope to those affected by breast cancer and to ensure that researchers are able to carry out their trials." – **Winsome**

"As a breast cancer survivor, I would like to contribute towards research that reduces the potential loss of life from this nasty disease." – **Kerry**

"Both my mum and my family friend have recovered from breast cancer. To the patients out there, keep fighting, hope and love is around you." – **Eunice**

Calling all Golfers!

Registrations are now open for the 2020 Tee Off for Breast Cancer Trials. If you love playing golf, enjoy the exercise and social nature of the game, then please talk to your local club about hosting a special Tee Off Day.

Many thousands of women from over 150 clubs throughout Australia participated in the 2019 event helping to raise a record \$200,000! Tee Off can be held any day of the year, and the format of the day is entirely up to you. We can help with prizes, promotions and local media.

Small and large golf clubs made a big impact in 2019. Christmas Island Golf Club in remote West Australia and Proston District Golf Club in rural Queensland were two of our highest raising clubs in 2019. Both clubs sought the support of local businesses and their communities to help reach their fundraising goals.

Also located in rural Queensland, Murgon Golf Club raised an impressive \$1,100 at their Tee Off event which saw women travel from as far away as the Sunshine Coast and Oxley to participate and light up their greens in a sea of pink.

But not everyone could wait till they were on the green for the festivities to start. One lady decorated her golf cart and drove up from Kingaroy (a 35-minute drive) with a bright pink bra and underwear displayed proudly on her cart!

Find out how to get involved at www.breastcancertrials.org.au



Deb Henderson, Kathy Duff Deputy Mayor of Murgon and former club president Janelle Smith at the event at the Murgon Golf Club event.

Research update

Positive results for APHINITY

A six-year analysis of the APHINITY clinical trial shows that adding pertuzumab to standard treatment with trastuzumab (Herceptin) and chemotherapy, reduces the risk of recurrence in patients with HER2-positive breast cancer.

The findings were presented at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in the United States in December 2019.

After six years of follow-up, researchers found that:

- Patients who received pertuzumab had a 24% reduced relative risk of breast cancer recurrence or death compared with those who received standard chemotherapy and Herceptin.
- Patients whose cancer had spread to the lymph nodes continued to derive greatest clinical benefit with the addition of pertuzumab to standard treatments.
- Among patients with node-positive disease, the invasive disease-free survival in the pertuzumab arm was 87.9%, while the invasive disease-free survival in the standard treatment arm was 83.4%.

Over 4,000 women participated in this international clinical trial, including 128 from Australia and New Zealand. The APHINITY trial was led by the Breast International Group and conducted in Australia and New Zealand by Breast Cancer Trials (BCT). The BCT Study Chair is Associate Professor Nicholas Wilcken.

The APHINITY clinical trial builds on the breakthrough finding from the international HERA clinical trial, conducted some years ago in Australia by BCT. This clinical trial revolutionised the treatment of HER2-positive breast cancer which is an aggressive form of the disease affecting about 20-30% of women diagnosed with breast cancer. It found that the addition of trastuzumab (Herceptin) to chemotherapy after surgery significantly reduced the risk of breast cancer returning for these patients by 46% and today is saving many thousands of lives. Sadly however, about 30% of patients still experience recurrence of their disease and the need for more treatment options is urgently needed.

The APHINITY clinical trial is investigating whether adding a different yet complementary HER2



Professor Nicholas Wilcken, BCT Study Chair of APHINITY.

inhibitor – pertuzumab – to standard treatment with Herceptin and chemotherapy, will further reduce the risk of recurrence and advanced disease for these patients.

This analysis showed that while fewer deaths were seen in patients treated with pertuzumab, the overall survival benefit was not statistically significant at this time. Longer follow-up is needed and further analysis will also tell us which patients will benefit most from adding this new treatment.

Anastrozole maintains breast cancer prevention effect

Long-term follow up results of the IBIS-II prevention clinical trial show that anastrozole maintains a preventative effect for at least 12 years for postmenopausal women at higher than average risk of developing breast cancer.



Dr Nick Zdenskowski, BCT Study Chair of IBIS-II.

The results, published in The Lancet and presented at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in the United States in December 2019, show that the drug offers significant long-term protection for women who take it for a total of five years. Seven years after IBIS-II trial participants last took the drug, the incidence of invasive breast cancer and Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (DCIS) was 49 per cent lower for that group than in women who received the placebo.

The international prevention clinical trial IBIS-II enrolled almost 4,000 women worldwide, with 818 high risk women from Australia and New Zealand across 30 institutions. The trial was coordinated in Australia by Breast Cancer Trials (BCT) and globally by Cancer Research UK.

The first results of this study were reported in 2013 and found that taking anastrozole for five years reduced the chances of postmenopausal women at above average risk of developing breast cancer by 53% compared to women who took a placebo.

Dr Nicholas Zdenkowski is the BCT Study Chair of the IBIS-II clinical trial following the retirement of Professor John Forbes AM. He says this latest analysis of the IBIS-II data confirms that anastrozole should be a valid prevention choice for postmenopausal women with a family history of breast cancer or other risk factors with the protective effects continuing for at least

seven years after stopping the drug. This latest report also confirms past research that anastrozole is a safe drug in the long-term.

Using MRI before surgery

An interesting early finding from the PROSPECT clinical trial was presented at the international San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in December 2019. PROSPECT is a clinical trial developed and conducted by Breast Cancer Trials' researchers. It aims to determine if a pre-operative breast Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan can identify women with breast cancer who can safely avoid radiotherapy to their breast after breast conserving surgery to remove their cancer.

The finding was presented by the BCT Study Chair for PROSPECT, Professor Bruce Mann, at a Poster Spotlight session which highlights the posters considered to be the most important at the meeting. It was also discussed on stage at the conference by Susan Weinstein, an expert in the field of breast MRI.

As part of the eligibility screening for participation in the PROSPECT clinical trial, women underwent an MRI scan. Of the 443 patients screened with an MRI, 40 of them were found to have an additional lesion in the same breast to the already detected cancer, or in their other breast. This additional breast cancer or Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (DCIS) had not been detected from the more traditional mammogram and ultrasound scans. These women were unable to participate in the PROSPECT clinical trial, however, this early detection of another breast cancer by MRI was particularly important to their treatment plan.

Fortunately, only nine of the 40 patients needed a mastectomy (removal of the breast) due to the additional cancer found on the MRI. This finding from the trial indicates that there may be patients who would benefit from an MRI before surgery for early stage breast cancer, to ensure all tumours had been identified.

The results of the overall PROSPECT trial will be reported at a later date, after participants on the trial have had sufficient follow-up.



Prof Bruce Mann, BCT
Study Chair of PROSPECT.

International Award

We are delighted to advise that Professor Geoffrey Lindeman and Professor Jane Visvader recently received the Susan G. Komen Brinker Award for Distinction in Basic Science at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Conference in the United States.

The Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction is presented to basic and clinical researchers who have made seminal advances in the fight against breast cancer.

Professor Lindeman and Professor Visvader are both members of Breast Cancer Trials (BCT), and Professor Lindeman a member of BCT's Scientific Advisory Committee and a former BCT Board Director. They are the Joint Division Heads of the Cancer Biology and Stem Cells Division at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne. Their important contributions to breast cancer research include:

- Identifying breast stem cells, which give rise to normal breast tissue;
- Defining how normal breast growth is regulated, and how errors lead to breast cancer;
- Identifying the breast cells that are predisposed to becoming cancerous in women with BRCA1 gene mutations;
- Discovering potential strategies to treat and prevent breast cancer.

Their laboratory studies led to the opening of the BRCA-P clinical trial – a world-first clinical trial being coordinated in Australia by BCT, which aims to prevent breast cancer in women with the BRCA1 gene mutation.



Professor Visvader and Professor Lindeman, pictured second and third left, receiving their award.

Gifts in Wills



“Wouldn’t it be wonderful in the future to be able to say ‘take this pill’ and have the cancer cells just disappear?”

My twin sister Gwenneth (at left) was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 47. She was living in England but I was on the phone to her all the time as she went through treatment. Twenty-five years later, her breast cancer returned.

It was terrible for her to have to go through it again, and it must have been difficult to live with the fear it might return, and have that fear realised so many years later.

With my sister affected by breast cancer, plus other friends, it means a lot to me to be able to contribute. I see such value in the research that finds more treatments – and it’s wonderful to know that many more women’s lives are being saved today than ever before. I’m delighted that my gift will further our understanding of breast cancer and help more people to overcome it.” – *Rosemary*

Remembering Breast Cancer Trials in your Will ensures that the special commitment you have to save lives from breast cancer today, is a legacy which will continue beyond your life time.

If you would like information about leaving a gift in your Will, please tick the box on your donation slip or contact Cheryl our Special Gifts Officer for a confidential discussion on 1800 423 444.

To leave a gift in your Will to Breast Cancer Trials, the following wording should be used:

“I (your name) give to Breast Cancer Trials:

- the residue of my estate, or
- _____% of my estate, or
- the lump sum of \$_____, or
- my property known as _____ [eg, real estate, art works, shares, units or other securities in listed companies]

to be applied for general purposes by Breast Cancer Trials as determined by its directors. I declare that the receipt of an authorised officer of Breast Cancer Trials will be a sufficient discharge to my executors who will not be bound to see the application of this gift.”

BEQUESTS

We gratefully acknowledge bequests received from the following supporters and offer our condolences to their families:

Mr George E Gain
Mr Leslie R Graydon
Mrs Betty E Ives

Mrs Marga Kinnel
Ms E McCahill
Mrs Ethel M Murray

Mr Terence A Owen
Ms Patricia Quince
Mr Peter Webb

Mrs Sharon Wilson
Miss Sheila Woodcock

IN MEMORIAM

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in memory of:

Mrs Dawn Ashworth	Mrs Lynette Brice	Ms Elizabeth Ford	Mrs Kellie Jay	Mrs Hilda Larcombe	Mrs Siew Moi Phoon	Mrs Betty Tindall
Mrs Margaret Ashworth	Mrs Janet Ceravolo	Mrs Vera Giblin	Mrs Dyoniza Johansson	Mrs Christine Margaret Laver	Mrs Narelle Plummer	Mrs Myra Tinker
Mrs Gail Ashworth	Mrs Julie Chai	Mrs Carmel Gibson	Ms Caroline Johnson	Mrs Carmelita Mana	Mrs Brita Polasek	Mrs Lieu Nguyet Truong
Mrs Julie Ashworth	Mrs Christine Chiassaro	Mrs Ann Giumelli	Mrs Gwen Jones	Mrs Domenica Marino	Mrs Mandy Ponnusamy	Miss Petra van Grieken
Mrs Hilary Bach	Mrs Lyndsey Clark	Mrs Win Gray	Ms Rosemary Kelada	Mrs Anne Marsciano	Mrs Sylvia Prisk	Mrs Stella Vanasse-Bouffard
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	Mrs Olivia Flavell	Mrs Alice Ireland		Mrs Heather Pezely	Mrs Marilyn Thrush	
		Mrs Veronica Januszke				

Supporters in action

For his mum



“Breast cancer hits very close to home. It attacks indiscriminately, is insidious by nature, and has repeatedly tested my most dearest.”

Khuzair Rehan ran the Melbourne Marathon last November on behalf of his beloved mum who is currently experiencing her fourth recurrence of breast cancer.

Khuzair, who raised close to \$6,000 says he supports Breast Cancer Trials because clinical trials give him hope in a time of helplessness.

Thank you Khuzair and all the **#PinkChampions** who run, swim and ride in fitness events across Australia to raise money for our research program.

Khuzair’s mum was his inspiration for the marathon. He says she is a ‘pillar of strength’.

Lighting up lives

Recently diagnosed with breast cancer that has spread to her lungs, Brooke Roberts is no longer able to work as she undergoes invasive chemotherapy treatment to treat her metastatic disease.

Bravely, Brooke decided to use her time away from work to make a difference and has turned her focus to raising awareness and funds to fight metastatic breast cancer.

Through the sale of her ‘Candles for Cure’ and a gala event, Brooke has already raised an incredible \$10,000 to support our research program.

Brooke is committed to raising money for clinical trials that aim to improve treatment options for individuals with HER-2 positive metastatic breast cancer.



Sarah’s marathon effort



“I couldn’t bear to sit in the passenger seat any longer.”

Sarah Lee was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 41. Four weeks into her chemotherapy treatment, she decided to run the 5km to the hospital instead of driving with her husband. Sarah says, “That run two years ago changed my life.”

Sarah hasn’t looked back and travelled to France to run the Paris Marathon in 2019, not only finishing the race but sprinting across the finish line. Sarah raised close to \$2,000 for our research program.

This year, Sarah has her sights set even higher. She intends to raise an impressive \$42,195 for Breast Cancer Trials across a variety of fundraising events. Sarah’s fundraising target signifies the distance of a marathon, 42.195km.

The Venice Marathon in October will be the final event on Sarah’s calendar. We wish Sarah all the best for her marathon year of fundraising and running! You can follow Sarah at: <https://give.everydayhero.com/au/sarah-s-marathon-effort-for-breast-cancer-trials>

Workplace Giving

Workplace giving is a powerful and simple way to make regular donations to Breast Cancer Trials.

For every dollar you give through your pay, we receive \$1.43*. And, if your employer offers matched giving (where they dollar match your donation), then your contribution to Breast Cancer Trials is effectively doubled!

What is Workplace Giving? When small, regular donations are made to Breast Cancer Trials each pay cycle from your pre-tax wage.

How does it work? Donations are taken at the time payroll is processed before tax has been deducted. This means you receive an immediate tax benefit (reducing your taxable income) and you don't need to collect donation receipts for your annual tax return.

Everybody benefits!

Individuals can give easily to the causes important to them via their workplace, feel good that they can increase the power of their donation dollar, plus there's no need to collect donation receipts for their annual tax return.

Employers can, via Workplace Giving opportunities including matched giving, improve staff engagement and retention all the while doing good and benefiting the community in which they operate.

For Breast Cancer Trials, this source of regular income helps us to plan ahead with certainty and ensures new clinical trials can commence.

It's easy to get started

Contact your Payroll Office to check if your organisation has a workplace giving program and advise them of the amount you would like to donate to Breast Cancer Trials from your pay, each pay cycle.

If you are a business owner and you don't have a Workplace Giving program in place, visit the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website for information on how to set one up through your payroll system. Alternatively, you can engage a third-party online platform to facilitate your Workplace Giving Program. Breast Cancer Trials is currently registered with Good2Give, Benjo and Benevity platforms.

*Exact figures dependent on the individual's ATO personal tax bracket.

The perfect diary for every woman

The 2020 edition of our Australian Women's Health Diary is still available, and we've dropped the price for our wonderful supporters!

Your donation of \$40 or more gives you a special purchase price of just \$5.50 with postage included. Alternatively, you can buy the diary only for \$11 and get free postage – a saving of \$14.95.

Go to our website, or call 1800 423 444 to buy today.

Love your 2020 Australian Women's Health Diary? Share a photo and tell us why on social media @breastcancertrials @bctrialsanz #womenshealthdiary



Deloitte Australia Impact Day

We were delighted to participate in the Deloitte Australia Impact Day late last year.

Impact Day is a Deloitte initiative which encourages Deloitte employees nationwide to donate their time and skills to make a positive contribution to charities in their communities. We were fortunate to participate in two skilled volunteering workshops and appreciated the time and effort of all those involved.



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