

Newsletter

Edition 54 | Winter – Spring 2025

**Your generosity is
advancing new treatment
options for metastatic
breast cancer patients**



Madelaine, FINER trial participant

The groundbreaking FINER clinical trial, led by Breast Cancer Trials in partnership with the Canadian Cancer Trials Group, has shown that adding the drug ipatasertib to standard treatment can extend the time that metastatic breast cancer remains under control.

Associate Professor Andrew Redfern, FINER Australian Study Chair, says the results, presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting 2025 in June, are significant:

"This treatment is an exciting next step for patients with metastatic breast cancer, providing the benefits of longer cancer control which will hopefully translate into a longer and healthier life.

"It could potentially help up to 1,500 people in Australia every year who are diagnosed

with this type of breast cancer, offering a new treatment option for these patients. We now need to confirm these results both with longer follow-up of the patients on this trial as well as with further research," says Professor Redfern.

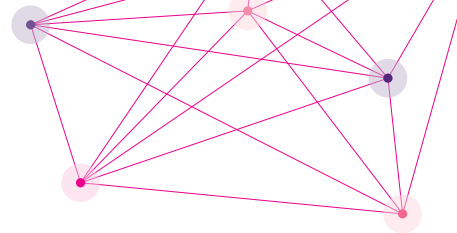
This breakthrough means even more to women like Madelaine, who joined the FINER clinical trial following her second diagnosis – this time with metastatic breast cancer.

Madelaine considers breast cancer trials to be the stepping stones to the future:

"There were participants in trials before my first diagnosis who made it possible for me to access medication immediately. Now, this is my time to contribute to ensure new, better therapies are available," Madelaine shared.

**You are making this progress possible.
Thank you for your continued support in
shaping the future of breast cancer care.**

Chair's update



Thanks to your unwavering support, our research is reaching patients across the globe with life-changing impact.

Over the past six months, researchers and clinicians have come together at major international events to share critical breakthroughs in cancer care — including trial results made possible by your generosity.

At the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting in Chicago, the FINER trial revealed we can extend cancer control in people with metastatic breast cancer.

Adding to this welcome progress for metastatic breast cancer patients, results of our DIAMOND trial were unveiled at the European Society for Medical Oncology

(ESMO) Breast Cancer Congress. They sparked renewed optimism for improved survival and quality of life with the combination of dual immunotherapy and trastuzumab (Herceptin).

These advancements are possible thanks to passionate supporters like you.

Thank you for helping deliver new, life-saving treatments to those who need them most, not only here in Australia, but around the world.

Professor Sunil Lakhani
Board Chair, Breast Cancer Trials



GIFTS IN WILLS

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

The Late Beverley Spinks
The Late Iris Wheeler

The Late Maureen White
The Late Elise Baldwin

The Late Julie Stroud
The Late Corinna Pereira

The Late Margaret Marshall

IN MEMORIAM

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received up to 15 June 2025 in memory of:

Mrs Heather Pezely
Mrs Maria Malara
Mrs Kathy Luff
Mrs Silvia Berketa
Ms Mandy Graham
Mrs Trudy James
Mrs Antoinette Warda
Mrs Angelina Dimauro
Mrs Effie Harrison
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Mrs Anna Griffiths

IMPORTANT: CHEQUES ARE BEING PHASED OUT

Here's how you can continue your vital support

You may have heard that the Federal Government is phasing out Australia's cheque system.

Some of the country's major banks have already started implementing this change and are no longer issuing bank cheques and personal chequebooks.

We rely heavily on the generosity of individual supporters like you to fund our breast cancer research.

This year alone over 21,000 people will be diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia, and over 3,000 people will die.

It's only with your support that we can continue to do the research that will create solutions for every person, every situation, every time.

If you currently donate by cheque, please be aware of these other easy and secure methods for you to continue to support the research that matters to you:

PHONE

Call our Supporter Care Team, Helen and Jeni, on **1800 423 444** between 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday to Friday, and they can take your kind credit or debit card donation over the phone.

BPAY

By telephone or internet banking. Your personal Reference Code is included on every donation form and appeal email we send you.

CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD

Include your credit card details on the donation form we send you in the mail and return them in the pre-paid envelope provided, or to Breast Cancer Trials, Reply Paid 283, THE JUNCTION NSW 2291.

ONLINE

By visiting www.breastcancertrials.org.au and clicking 'Donate' you can use your credit or debit card, or PayPal. You can also scan the QR code included on your donation form to be taken directly to the donation page.

If you need any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us via **1800 423 444** or email enquiries@bctrails.org.au

The diary that saves lives

The 2026 edition of our diary will be on sale from September and will be available at newsagents, Woolworths, participating post offices, or online at www.breastcancertrials.org.au

Keep an eye out for your supporter 'special offer' coming in September!



Your generosity is helping shape a better future for young women like Gemma and Angela

Thanks to your support, our researchers are dedicated to finding kinder, more targeted breast cancer treatments – so more people can survive without giving up the lives they had planned before diagnosis.

Mother's Day Appeal

You helped raise an incredible \$148,787 for our Mother's Day appeal this year.

Your generosity is already at work, supporting vital clinical trials to discover new treatments that can help keep mothers, daughters, granddaughters, and all women safe from breast cancer.

Women like Gemma, who was only 27 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She and her husband, Troy, were planning to start a family – until they were faced with the heartbreaking news that not only was Gemma's life at risk, but the chemotherapy she needed could also affect her fertility and threaten their dream of having a baby.

Thanks to your support of breast cancer research, including the Prevention of Early Menopause Study (POEMS) clinical trial, a breakthrough medication called goserelin was made available to help preserve the fertility of premenopausal women like Gemma during treatment.



Gemma's daughter Audrey is now three and became a big sister in April

Gemma held on tightly to that bright spot of hope. Today, she and Troy are the proud parents of two beautiful children – little Audrey and baby Angus, born in April.

Giving Day

On 8 May, in honour of Mother's Day, we raised a phenomenal \$244,706 'For Our Mums' in just ONE DAY – all thanks to our incredible community of supporters... YOU!

Thank you for your deep care for our mums currently facing a diagnosis, and for honouring our mums we've sadly lost.

This is an incredible boost to research funding that will help stop more lives from being cut short by breast cancer.



**For Our
Mums
GIVING DAY**

Tax Appeal

You helped raise an incredible \$502,654 towards our groundbreaking OPTIMA-Young clinical trial.

Study Chair Dr Belinda Kiely shared:

"We truly couldn't run clinical trials without our incredible donors – you make everything possible. Thank you for enabling OPTIMA-Young – a trial that will make a real difference for young Australians facing breast cancer."

OPTIMA-Young could help identify young people with hormone receptor positive breast cancer that need chemotherapy, as well as those who can avoid it, without compromising their survival.

"This randomised trial will help determine if genomic testing can identify young women who can do just as well with hormone-blocking therapy alone – safely sparing them from the side effects of chemotherapy," said Dr Kiely.

This could be life-changing for women like Angela, diagnosed at just 38. Chemotherapy saved her life but also deeply affected her health and sense of identity. Angela said:

"Chemo knocked me for six. People still don't recognise me. If my story helps raise funds for research – so people like me could survive breast cancer without chemotherapy, that would be amazing."

Angela was touched by your generosity, and the kind messages of encouragement she received:

"Thank you so much. I'm blown away by your generosity and compassion. Many shared personal stories or sent words of encouragement. You're all incredible and my heart is with you."



Angela was overwhelmed by your generous donations and messages of support

Dear Angela, I read your story and want you to know...

"You are an amazing young woman who has shared her experience openly, bravely, and honestly. We never know what is ahead of us and cancer reminds us to live in the moment and cherish our relationships as you are doing. I hope this trial assists the many who come after you."

"I have survived two cancer invasions. Now at the time of reflection, I realised what a debilitating experience it was. I hope you persevere and beat this condition. The help given to me by Breast Cancer Trials is lifesaving. Best wishes."

"I'm wishing and hoping for a breakthrough and hope you continue to be okay."

Your kindness is transforming promising trials into life-changing realities for young people like Gemma and Angela.

Groundbreaking immunotherapy research shows promising results in metastatic breast cancer patients

Our DIAmOND clinical trial – developed by Australian researchers and conducted by Breast Cancer Trials – is the first study to test whether combining dual immunotherapy with trastuzumab (Herceptin) can extend cancer control in patients with metastatic HER2 positive breast cancer.

Results have shown clinically worthwhile response rates and cancer control, along with an acceptable side effect profile – indicating potential long-term benefits in prolonging lives and improving quality of life.

Study Chair, Professor Sherene Loi said, *“These promising results may offer a new treatment option for patients with treatment resistant HER2 positive breast cancer.*

“They provide a compelling case for further exploration and how we can best integrate this treatment combination into clinical practice.”

This research was only possible thanks to our kind supporters. Thank you for helping ensure no more lives are cut short by breast cancer.



Professor Loi presented DIAmOND results at the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Breast Cancer Congress in May

Hope grows stronger when we bloom together

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is fast approaching, and you're invited to join our inaugural **Pink Bloom Party!**



Host your own **Pink Bloom Party** with friends, family, or colleagues to celebrate, connect, raise funds and support those facing breast cancer.

You can host anywhere – your garden, home, workplace, or even online!

Whether you're honouring a loved one, a survivor, or just love a good party, your event will help save lives from breast cancer today, tomorrow, and forever.

We can't wait to see how you'll bloom this October! Find out more at www.pinkbloomparty.org.au



Your impact in enhancing quality of life beyond breast cancer

When someone is diagnosed with breast cancer, treatment is just one part of their journey. Cancer and treatment can cast a long shadow, with short and long-term side effects, and impacts on physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

But thanks to supporters like you who fund clinical trials, our researchers are advancing innovative studies in 'supportive care' to find more targeted, less invasive treatments that improve quality of life for patients.

These include groundbreaking trials such as POEMS, TAILORx and IBCSG-23, which have proven treatment options that help preserve fertility, reduce side effects, and allow patients to safely avoid extensive surgery.

New trials launching this year, such as OPTIMA-Young and ROSALIE, are exploring how some patients may be able to safely avoid chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Professor Boon Chua, Study Chair of the ROSALIE trial, said: *"We may be able to identify patients with low, and very low, risk who are unlikely to benefit from radiotherapy. Supporting these patients in their ability to avoid overtreatment means they could avoid unnecessary treatment toxicity, financial cost, and logistical challenges."*

Thank you for your support to find new targeted treatments that improve quality of life for people with breast cancer.



Professor Boon Chua is leading the ROSALIE trial, which aims to reduce the need for radiation therapy and its long-term side effects



Leslie has been on our Consumer Advisory Panel since 2011, and Chair for the last seven years

Advocating for patient-centred care

Leslie Gilham is a passionate advocate for breast cancer research. After her diagnosis, she participated in the TEXT clinical trial, which helped transform the treatment of hormone receptor positive early breast cancer in premenopausal women – leading to fewer recurrences and improved overall survival.

Since 2018, Leslie has chaired our Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP), a highly active group of people who've had breast cancer that ensure patient needs are considered at every stage of trial development. Many CAP members, like Leslie, have participated in trials themselves and provide valuable input on recruitment, consent materials, protocols, and ethical issues.

Leslie volunteered to help ensure future generations, including her daughter's, have access to better breast cancer care.

"The CAP are involved in helping design a clinical trial, so the patient is at the forefront from the start," she says.

After over 14 years of dedicated service, Leslie is stepping down this month. We thank her for her exceptional commitment to amplifying the patient voice and helping change countless lives.

Leslie also shared her insights in our *Supportive Care in Breast Cancer Q&A* in July. Learn more by visiting: breastcancertrials.org.au/qa-events

How you can Change her story

Over 20,000 women in Australia will this year hear the shattering words: “you have breast cancer.” In an instant, her life is divided into ‘before’ and ‘after’.

With a regular monthly gift to Breast Cancer Trials, you can make sure every Australian woman with breast cancer can access the world’s best and latest treatments.

Month by month, clinical trial by clinical trial, woman by woman, you can change the breast cancer story.

To find out more, visit: breastcancertrials.org.au/changeherstory



You are helping reach more patients

Clinical trial access is often limited by strict eligibility criteria and location, which means those in regional areas can miss out. But we’re trialling a new remote telehealth pre-screening process with our OLIO study.

This new approach allows researchers to pre-screen more patients, improve participant diversity and make trial results more representative. Dr Sarah Zardawi, medical oncologist and clinical fellow, explains:

“Our project is about reaching more patients, particularly those who are eligible for increasingly specific clinical trials, but who may not live in metropolitan areas. We’ve made participation much easier. We hope this approach can be applied to more breast cancer trials in the future.”

The impact is already clear for patients like Rebecca, diagnosed at 42 and living in Mildura, Victoria, with her husband Matt and two young daughters, Daphne and Dorothy.



OLIO Trial Participant, Rebecca,
with her family

“Living regionally, travelling would’ve made everything much harder. The remote pre-screening was simple and gave me real hope – that I could still access cutting-edge trials and help change the future for others like me,” said Rebecca.

Young women like Rebecca are more likely to have an aggressive breast cancer with a higher risk of recurrence compared to older women. OLIO is trialling a new targeted treatment that may improve her survival, and if proven effective, the survival of many others.

Thank you for bringing life-changing treatments to more people who need them.



breastcancertrials.org.au

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