

Newsletter

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GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH SHOWS MANY WITH BREAST CANCER CAN SAFELY AVOID CHEMOTHERAPY

OPTIMA clinical trial Australian Study Chair, A/Prof Belinda Kiely



Thanks to your support, the OPTIMA clinical trial has found that many people with breast cancer can safely avoid chemotherapy with the use of a gene test, potentially sparing them side effects without increasing the risk of their cancer returning.

Led by Breast Cancer Trials in Australia and supported by generous people like you, OPTIMA was designed to safely reduce the use of unnecessary chemotherapy for people with newly diagnosed hormone receptor positive breast cancer.

Australian Study Chair, A/Prof Belinda Kiely, said: "OPTIMA addresses a long-standing challenge in breast cancer care: identifying who benefits from chemotherapy and who does not."

The findings show that people aged 40 and over, whose tumours have a low Prosigna test score, can be treated safely with hormone blocking therapy alone, potentially transforming care for thousands of patients each year.

"These findings show that chemotherapy offers little or no additional benefit for people with

low Prosigna scores, meaning a substantial number of patients could safely avoid it and its physical and emotional side effects without compromising their outcomes.

The results mark a significant step toward more personalised treatment," said A/Prof Belinda Kiely.

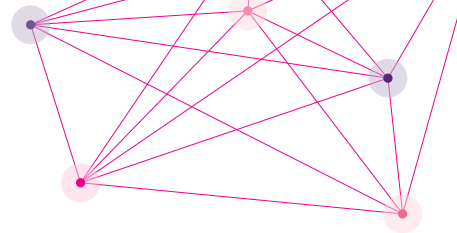
Mum of two, Elissa Simms, took part in the OPTIMA clinical trial after experiencing significant side effects of chemotherapy.

She said: "I lost 10 kilos in six weeks and I was very nauseated. I was lethargic, unable to get out of bed and have a shower most days. Having that choice to not have to go through chemotherapy... it would just help women continue on with a normal life."

The next phase of OPTIMA, also made possible by supporters like you, aims to explore how this test can help guide treatment for younger, premenopausal women.

On behalf of thousands of Australians who will benefit from this breakthrough, thank you.

Chair's update



Because of you, breast cancer research is advancing in powerful, life-changing ways. Your generosity is helping more people receive tailored treatments, improving outcomes and quality of life.

At the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting—the world's largest oncology conference—results from the OPTIMA trial showed that many women can safely avoid chemotherapy while still achieving excellent outcomes.

This breakthrough, made possible by your support, marks a major step towards more personalised care for the most common type of breast cancer.

You're also driving progress across our clinical trials. ROSALIE has welcomed its first patient, and PROSPECTIVE has

reached a global milestone by opening its first international site—bringing us closer to identifying patients who may safely reduce or avoid radiotherapy.

Thanks to your support, our research team is preparing to launch the OPT-Pembro trial—exploring whether people with aggressive triple negative breast cancer can safely receive less treatment and return to their lives and loved ones sooner.

Thank you—every breakthrough begins with you.

Sunil Lakhani

**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 Cyril Foreman

The Late Dr William R Bradford

The Late Linda Kenny

The Late Shane Anthony Batkin

IN MEMORIAM

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received up to 15 June 2026 in memory of:

Ms Jennifer Addison
Mrs Iolanda Amato
Mrs Jeanette Anderson
Mrs Lidia Angelino
Mrs Marlyn Bailey
Mrs Julie Baker
Mrs Laura Barker
Ms Pauline Barnford
Mrs Gillian Barton
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Mrs Jan West
Mrs Sherry Wheeler
Mrs Lorraine Whittingham
Ms Lyndy Wiese
Mrs Helen Wood
Mrs Linley Wood
Ms Katie Wright

For Our Mums GIVING DAY

Thanks to your generosity, our 2026 For Our Mums Giving Day held in May was an extraordinary success.

You helped raise a phenomenal \$257,700 for breast cancer research, surpassing our initial goal of \$150,000.

These funds will drive critical breast cancer clinical trials research to improve treatments and give mums like Sarah more precious time with the ones they love.

Sarah was diagnosed with aggressive triple negative breast cancer at just 38.



Breast Cancer Trials staff in celebration of your generosity



Sarah and her family are grateful for every moment together

Mother's Day marked the anniversary of Sarah's mastectomy—a powerful reminder of what she's been through, and the future she almost lost.

Because of you, more mums can have that future.

"Every scar tells a story. Mine reminds me what I survived—and how close I came to not being here for my children," Sarah shared.

"I'm eternally grateful to still be here to watch them grow.

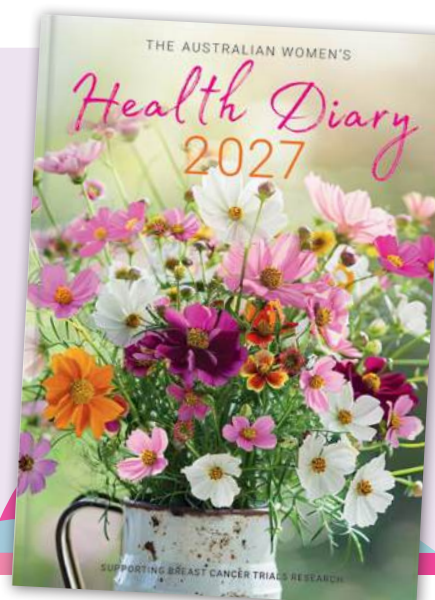
Because of research, and because of people like you, I believe the future won't be as grim for anyone who has to walk this path. Thank you."

On behalf of our researchers, trial participants, and everyone whose life will be touched by your support—thank you for making this year's For Our Mums Giving Day so special.

The diary that saves lives

The 2027 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 IN ACTION: THANK YOU FOR CHANGING LIVES



You helped raise an incredible \$550,238 towards our new OPT-Pembro clinical trial through our Tax appeal.

Your support means that our researchers can start investigating whether some patients with triple negative breast cancer may safely reduce treatment.

Dr Julia Dixon-Douglas, Study Co-Chair, shared: *"Thank you so much for making this clinical trial possible. Your support helps fund research that is identifying ways to deliver effective treatment while reducing unnecessary side effects for patients."*

Because of you, people with aggressive triple negative breast cancer may be able to return to their lives and families sooner."

Right now, surviving triple negative breast cancer often involves more intensive treatment and greater risks. But you're helping to change that.

OPT-Pembro could reduce the amount of treatment and associated side effects—without compromising outcomes.

As Dr Dixon-Douglas explains: *"What excites me about this research is it will mean we can cure more patients, with less side effects and less treatment, and the patients will be able to get back to their lives."*

This means women like Natalie could spend less time in breast cancer treatment, and return to a full, healthy life.

Natalie was 42 and raising three young children when she was diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time—this time with triple negative breast cancer, an aggressive form of the disease.

Her treatment took a devastating toll—physically, emotionally, and on her future.

"I don't think people often realise just how much treatment can impact your health and wellbeing in unexpected ways," Natalie said.

She wanted you to know the difference your donation will make:

"I've had breast cancer 20 years apart and have seen the advances in treatments. It's all because of people like you who support clinical trials. I can't imagine where I'd be without you."

Your donations give me the security of knowing that research will continue if I ever need it again—and for the next women facing this type of breast cancer. Thank you."

Thank you for helping women like Natalie face breast cancer with fewer risks and side effects.

You helped raise \$117,585 for breast cancer clinical trials research through our Mother's Day appeal—bringing hope to families like Jean and Jane's.

Inspiring mother-daughter duo, Jean and Jane are bonded by their shared experience with breast cancer.

Last Mother's Day was filled with uncertainty for their family. Jane had just been diagnosed and was preparing for surgery. Today, things look very different.

Jane is doing well and has recently become a grandmother, a joyful milestone after everything her family has faced.

This Mother's Day, she was connected with her mum, Jean, who lives in the UK. Together, they were grateful to celebrate another year—something they never take for granted after three breast cancer diagnoses between them.

Moments like these aren't just luck. They are the result of decades of clinical trials research and the life-saving treatments made possible by supporters like you.

Jane reflected on the impact you have on families like hers. She shared: *"Breast cancer*



Jane and her mum Jean, three breast cancer diagnoses between them

changed my perspective. I've let go of what doesn't matter and embraced what truly does. I'm so grateful for the research that makes better outcomes possible for families like mine. Thank you for your donations."

Stories like Jean and Jane's show what's possible—but there is still more to do. Every day in Australia, nine women die from breast cancer, which is why your ongoing support matters so deeply.

Thank you for helping mums survive breast cancer and giving more families precious moments together.



"Clinical trials are complex and costly, but each one has the potential to save and change lives. Thank you for backing us."

— Dr Julia Dixon-Douglas

Thank you, too, for the many inspiring messages of encouragement to Dr Dixon-Douglas and the research team, a few of which are below:

"Thank you Dr Dixon-Douglas and your team for your commitment, care and hope you provide to all breast cancer patients and survivors. I cheer you all on! With gratitude and support. Clinical trials save lives! Thank you!"

"Thank you for your commitment to saving the lives of many women. I lost both my mum at 51 and sister at 65 to breast cancer. I'd like my daughter to have a world where we beat this."

"Please continue this excellent job. I am convinced many more lives will be saved, making many children and their families happy and appreciative as they are getting their mums back again."

FROM AUSTRALIA TO FRANCE AND BACK AGAIN TO HELP BREAST CANCER PATIENTS GET THE RIGHT TREATMENT

Dr Julia Dixon-Douglas is bringing her international expertise back to Australia to help improve treatments for people with triple negative breast cancer.



Thanks to generous supporters like you, promising young researchers are gaining the experience, skills and global connections needed to transform treatment for people with breast cancer.

Dr Julia Dixon-Douglas is one of them.

Through an International Clinical Fellowship Grant funded by Breast Cancer Trials supporters, in 2023 she took up a research position at Institut Gustave Roussy in France—one of the world's leading cancer research centres—where she investigated how best to use immunotherapy and other emerging treatments for breast cancer.

"In the last few years, it's been really exciting to see a whole range of new treatments become available for patients with breast cancer," Dr Dixon-Douglas says. "But we are really just at the starting line in understanding which patients will benefit most from those treatments."

Now, Dr Dixon-Douglas is bringing her international experience back to Australia on two fronts.

Alongside her role as Study Co-Chair of the OPT-Pembro clinical trial, she's also the recipient of a 2026 Breast Cancer Trials Clinical Fellowship Grant and is leading the UNRAVEL-TNBC project, examining why some patients with early-stage triple negative breast cancer respond to immunotherapy, while others do not.

Dr Dixon-Douglas' research focuses on biomarkers—biological signals that may help predict which treatment, or combination of treatments, will work best for each individual patient, improving outcomes and reducing side effects.

She shared that improving treatment for women with triple negative breast cancer is both urgent and deeply motivating for her, as it's one of the most aggressive forms of the disease and can be difficult to treat because it lacks the markers doctors usually use to guide treatment.

"Right now, we still treat many patients the same way," Dr Dixon-Douglas explains. "But every tumour, and every immune system, is different. So, it's about adapting the treatment around that."

Dr Dixon-Douglas says support from donors like you has been instrumental in shaping her as a researcher—giving her the international experience that now informs and strengthens her work in clinical trials across Australia.

"Research is hard and it takes time," she says. "But every breakthrough starts with people willing to support it."

Thank you for supporting researchers like Dr Julia Dixon-Douglas. Your generosity is helping bring more personalised, effective treatments closer for every person affected by breast cancer.

Thank you for sharing your voice

More than 2,400 supporters responded to our recent Supporter Survey, sharing not just feedback—but the personal stories and motivations behind your support.

What shone through is the deeply personal experience many of you have with breast cancer—and how it inspires you to support clinical trials research.

Almost 8 in 10 supporters who responded have a personal connection to breast cancer. A third have faced the disease themselves, while many others have supported a loved one through it. Tragically, one in three have lost someone close.

Many of you shared a strong belief in the power of research and a determination to build a better future.

Around 3 in 4 people support Breast Cancer Trials' research because clinical trials are essential to developing new treatments and creating a future where breast cancer no longer cuts lives short.

"To everyone who took part in our recent Supporter Survey—thank you.

Your time, commitment and passion mean so much to me, our dedicated researchers and clinical trial participants, and everyone affected by breast cancer.



Your support and feedback are helping shape the future of breast cancer care."

- Karen Price, CEO,
Breast Cancer Trials

And 70% of you told us that you're driven to help make treatments kinder, and with fewer side effects.

The areas you most want to support show both your compassion and your purpose: preventing breast cancer, detecting it early, and helping to stop it from returning.

Thank you for sharing what drives your generosity and where you want to see progress. With your help, our researchers will continue to work hard in these areas to save and improve lives.

Let hope blossom this October



The **Pink Bloom Party** is back thanks to the wonderful success of last year's inaugural event. To celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month, you're invited to join us this October!

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.

Find out more at pinkbloomparty.org.au



Celebrating 30 years of impact

For three decades, Sue has been helping fund breast cancer clinical trials research—supporting better outcomes for women and families affected by the disease.

Sue made her first donation to Breast Cancer Trials (formerly the Breast Cancer Institute of Australia) in 1997. Like many in our community, her motivation is deeply personal, with both a family member and a close friend having experienced breast cancer.

That connection has driven Sue's extraordinary commitment to advancing research and improving treatment options.

Through her regular monthly giving and the thoughtful intention to include a gift in her Will, Sue is helping ensure that progress continues for future generations.

Reflecting on the progress she has witnessed over the years, Sue shared:

"In the 30 years of donating, it has been so gratifying to hear about the advancements in the understanding and treatments for breast cancer. It has gone from 'one size fits all' to individual care, giving women hope for better outcomes."



30-year giver Sue, pictured with her daughter Erika

We are deeply grateful to Sue for her generosity and unwavering belief in a future where no lives are cut short by breast cancer.

And to the many supporters like Sue—thank you. Your ongoing commitment powers every breakthrough and brings hope to more families affected by breast cancer.

With a gift in your Will to Breast Cancer Trials, you can leave a lasting legacy and help create a future where no more lives are cut short by breast cancer.

Request your FREE Gift in Will guide today by calling (02) 4925 3022, or emailing bequestenquiries@bctrials.org.au



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