



# Anti-Cancer Council

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## TOP MARKS FOR OUR RESEARCH



## STITCH IN TIME EARNS DOLLARS

An independent analysis of Australian research output by the Australian National University has given top marks to the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria for the quality of research it funds.

Highly-regarded research will often be referred to or quoted as an authority by other researchers writing in the world's professional medical and scientific journals.

The analysis shows that research funded by the Anti-Cancer Council attracted more citations in high-impact journals than the worldwide average. The Anti-Cancer Council received the highest ranking in Australia for organisations funding research projects which were reported in the more than 100 publications category.

Through the support of Victorians, the Anti-Cancer Council provides \$7 million each year to research.

This includes biomedical and clinical research conducted at medical research institutes, hospitals and universities across the State to continue the fight against cancer. It also funds the Anti-Cancer Council's inhouse, world-leading epidemiology and behavioural research and our education and prevention programs.

The worldwide average or expected rate of citations is driven largely by publications from the major research centres of the US and Europe. The report points out that for published Australian research to attract citations at or near this level is

a strong performance; to achieve citations at a greater rate (as did the Anti-Cancer Council) 'is an exceptionally strong performance'.

The chair of the Anti-Cancer Council's Medical and Scientific Committee, Professor Richard Fox, said the results indicated that the Anti-Cancer Council was highly selective in awarding grants for quality research and Victorians

could be confident their valuable donations were being spent on worthy projects.

'We will continue our policy of supporting high-quality research and subjecting research grant applications to rigorous external and internal review so that this high standard is maintained,' Professor Fox said.

The analysis was conducted by Australian National University experts with a distinguished record in research evaluation. Their report, titled *Australian Biomedical Research: Funding Acknowledgements and Performance*, quantifies for the first time the contributions made by Australian research to global health and medical literature. The report's authors tapped into a database of more than 300,000 research papers in 3,000 professional journals worldwide.



Professor Fox

**Research funded by the Anti-Cancer Council attracted more citations in high-impact journals than the worldwide average.**



**Bess Newberry, Yarram Unit, with a nativity set made for an Anti-Cancer Council fundraising event.**

It is difficult to imagine, but a combination of cake baking, raffles, sewing bees and other special events by our 32 volunteer units has raised nearly half a million dollars in the last 12 months.

The units, scattered across the State, started 18 years ago and form the nucleus of our fundraising efforts in country Victoria.

Each unit is unique and members assist the Anti-Cancer Council in its mission to fundraise, educate and provide support to cancer patients and their families within their own communities.

Apart from participating in our big fundraisers such as Daffodil Day, the units' efforts achieved an impressive total for the last 12 months of \$453,607.

Bess Newberry (pictured) has been with the Yarram Unit since its inception 10 years ago. While craftwork is her favourite, she will lend her hand to many different fundraising efforts.

Volunteer units are linked to the Special Events staff at the Anti-Cancer Council and form an integral part of our team. Their gifts of labour, time, money and friendship are gratefully appreciated.

If you live in country Victoria and are interested in joining a unit or maybe forming your own, then please call Lorraine Carlton on (03) 9635 5267.

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Professor Robert Burton**

## **NEW SURVEY SHOWS PROMISING RESULTS FOR BREAST CANCER**

In May of this year the Federal Health Minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge, launched a landmark study: *Surgical Management of Breast Cancer in Australia in 1995*. It was a world first, describing how breast cancer was managed for the entire population of a country for a given period of time.

With the exception of State-based treatment surveys in Australia, which were initiated by Dr David Hill of the Anti-Cancer Council in 1986, information on how women with breast cancer have been treated has only been available through publications from individual doctors and hospital-based series. These cannot give a true picture of how a whole population fares.

This Australian treatment survey for breast cancer was led by Dr David Hill, and involved cancer registries in all States and surgeons, physicians and radiation oncologists treating breast cancer throughout the country. For the first time we have a comprehensive picture of how Australian women are treated for breast cancer. This can be compared against the gold standards for treatment of this disease.

The study reveals that 71 per cent of women diagnosed with breast cancer in 1995 resided in urban areas, 22 per cent were under the age of 50 years, and 69 per cent were Australian born. At the time of diagnosis, 85 per cent of the patients had early breast cancer, and all underwent surgery as their initial mode of treatment, with the majority (52 per cent) undergoing conserving surgery (lumpectomy, or less than mastectomy). Among the women with early breast cancer, 51 per cent consulted a radiation oncologist and 41 per cent had adjuvant radiotherapy.



*Robert Burton*

Medical oncologists saw 37 per cent of those early breast cancer patients, and 23 per cent had adjuvant chemotherapy as part of their treatment.

## **In summary, the overall management of early breast cancer in Australia compares well to international benchmarks.**

The question of how many cases of breast cancer a surgeon should operate on each year is controversial; however the study notes that 38 per cent of the patients were treated by surgeons with a caseload of more than 40 breast cancer patients per year. These surgeons were more likely to perform breast-conserving surgery than surgeons who treated fewer patients.

When compared with State-based surveys of breast cancer treatment done in Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales between 1986 and 1993, this survey reveals that:

- The mean number of breast cancer cases treated per surgeon has increased over the last decade.
- The breast-conservation rate in early breast cancer has increased from 23 per cent to 52 per cent.
- Adjuvant radiotherapy after breast-conserving surgery has increased from

44 per cent to 69 per cent. This is still below that reported by the Western Areas Breast Group in New South Wales of 83 per cent in 1992.

In 1986, only 13 per cent of cases of early breast cancers were screened detected, while over 40 per cent of the early cases in the target group for screening mammography (50 to 69 years) were detected at BreastScreen Australia in 1995.

In summary, the overall management of early breast cancer in Australia compares well to international benchmarks, however there is no cause for complacency.

The results indicated that while most women who could be treated by conservative surgery are being treated by conservative surgery, routine adjuvant radiotherapy is not yet the norm, although this is the international standard. Adjuvant chemotherapy and/or hormonal therapy should be offered to all women who have breast cancer detected in the lymph nodes of the armpit. However it appears that up to a third of all women with early breast cancer may not be receiving optimal adjuvant drug treatment.

Therefore, it is crucial that a woman who is diagnosed with breast cancer discuss with her general practitioner the treatment policies and experience of the surgeon to whom she may be referred. She can also call us on 13 11 20.

## **NEWS FLASH**

I have a regular spot on 3AK's Leigh Drew Show AM 1503 from 7.30 to 8 pm on Mondays. Write to me or telephone (03) 9866 8666 with questions and cancer issues that I can address.

**Robert Burton**

**Our new contact details are:  
Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria  
1 Rathdowne Street Carlton Vic 3053  
Tel: (03) 9635 5000 Fax: (03) 9635 5270  
Cancer Control Research Institute  
100 Drummond Street Carlton Vic 3053  
Tel: (03) 9635 5000 Fax: (03) 9635 5440**

# VICTORIANS ON WORLD STAGE



**At the conference: Sheila Hirst, Manager Women's Cancer Education Programs; Commander Cathryn Hire, US astronaut and guest speaker; and Woody Macpherson, Secretary to Council.**

Approximately 1,000 delegates from around the globe, including representatives from the Anti-Cancer Council, converged on the city of Atlanta, Georgia, last month for the Second World Conference for Cancer Organisations. They spent a week sharing ideas on the latest developments in management of cancer organisations and their programs.

The plenary sessions covered topics including the state of practice in cancer organisations, the challenge of the future, making change happen and shaping the future outside our organisations.

A number of presentations were delivered by Anti-Cancer Council delegates and they were very well received. Our delegates also heard new ideas which have been brought home for tailoring to Australian conditions.

One unfortunate fact about the global fight against cancer is that there is an enormous gap between the progress made by the developed countries which have well-established cancer organisations, and the progress made in developing countries. But we hope that the delegates from these countries also gathered information that can be turned into action on their return home.

# WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

The Quit Campaign focused its attention on smokers who wanted to quit on 31 May as part of World No Tobacco Day.

This year's theme was 'leave the pack behind'. With most smokers taking two or three times to quit successfully, making 31 May an official quit day gave smokers a running start to a successful attempt. Quit sent information packs out to over 200 organisations, including chemists and community health centres. One event included a Smokefree Koori Football Clinic with AFL stars.

## URGENT HELP NEEDED

The Cancer Epidemiology Centre at the Anti-Cancer Council needs volunteers aged between 40 and 69 to help evaluate two dietary questionnaires. To participate, you will have to fill out two questionnaires a few weeks apart. This study is not appropriate for people on special diets. As a bonus, all participants will receive a personal diet report.

To participate, please contact Angela on (03) 9635 5324 or Erika on (03) 9635 5323.

# FEDERAL BUDGET BRINGS GOOD NEWS

The Federal Budget, announced in May, brought very good news to the Anti-Cancer Council on two fronts—tobacco and medical research.

By November, tobacco will be taxed on a per stick basis rather than by weight. This will mean that the jumbo packets of 50 cigarettes, only seen in Australia and particularly popular with teenage smokers, will become too expensive and should disappear altogether from

the shelves.

It is estimated that 15,000 fewer Australian children will take up smoking over the next 12 to 18 months as a result of the tax shift.

The Budget also announced that an additional \$614 million would be dedicated to medical research over the next six years.

'This move will consolidate Australia as a world leader in medical research,

especially in the area of genetics,' Professor Robert Burton, Director of the Anti-Cancer Council, said.

'While we are able to cure some cancers through early detection, we still don't know what causes two of the main cancers—breast cancer and prostate cancer. This funding commitment will ensure that the discovery process is sped up.'

# FUNDRAISING NEWS

## Coming Events

### 4-23 August

Daffodil Day Arts Awards 1999: 'At the Crossroads', St Paul's Cathedral

### 17 August

Daffodil Day Business Breakfast, Hotel Sofitel Melbourne, Keynote Speaker: David Smorgon

### 19 August

Daffodil Day Remembrance Concert, Andrew Lloyd Webber's Requiem, St Patrick's Cathedral

### 21 August

Daffodil Day Ball organised by The Young People's Committee, Forum Theatre

### 17 September

Think Pink Party: to raise money for breast cancer research

### 22 October

Sun Day: school fundraising day

### 25 October

Australia's Breast Cancer Day

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are urgently required to support the running of our merchandise and Daffodil Day fundraising programs.

Help is needed with:

- data entry, basic to advanced (specific program training will be provided)
- answering telephones (incoming calls for merchandise orders only: no tele-sales)
- shop sales.

Anyone interested and able to assist in these areas is asked to call Joanne Pulling on (03) 9635 5115.

## HOPE IS IN YOUR HANDS

### Support Daffodil Day Friday 20 August

**D**affodil Day, now in its sixth year, is the largest cancer awareness and fundraising event in the Southern Hemisphere. This year we celebrate Daffodil Day on Friday 20 August.



Having established itself in Australia as the national celebration of hope, Daffodil Day is a time to focus on the progress made in the fight against cancer and to support those touched by cancer. It is the opportunity for every

Australian to help raise vital funds by purchasing fresh daffodils or daffodil merchandise.

You can join and help us reach our target of \$2 million in any of the following ways:

- Volunteer your time—spend a few hours selling daffodils at your nearest shopping centre on the days surrounding Daffodil Day.
- Order a box of merchandise—each sale-or-return box contains a new range of silk daffodils, pens and enamel badges to sell in shops, at work, at school or to family and friends.
- Make a tax-deductible donation.
- Attend one of our Daffodil Day special events.

To support Daffodil Day, call the Special Events department on 1300 65 65 85.

We would like to thank the following Gold and Silver Daffodil Day sponsors: Coles, Kmart, BiLo, VANA, Herald Sun, Mitre 10, Amcal, Ansett Australia, Mobil/Quix, Health Insurance Commission and Sorbent Silk.

### An everlasting gift to future generations

Funding quality cancer research depends to a very great extent on the money people leave us in their Wills.



Have you considered that by including the Anti-Cancer Council in your Will, you can give future generations a world where people diagnosed with cancer do not have to die? You can give them health and life.

Please consider us when you write or update your Will.

## ANNUAL REVIEW AND RESEARCH REPORT HIT THE STREETS

**O**ur *Annual Review* and *Research Report* are now available to our supporters and friends. Copies are sent to donors, all Members of Parliament and other interested parties. The *Annual Review* is one of the major ways we report our activities to the public, apart from this quarterly newsletter.

The *Research Report* is the place where all the research we undertake or fund is reported.

Both reports are produced inhouse and printed economically on paper supplied at a discounted price. A team of volunteers constructs the folder, collates the reports and dispatches them.

If you would like to receive a copy of either of these reports, contact Marian Wilson on (03) 9635 5213.

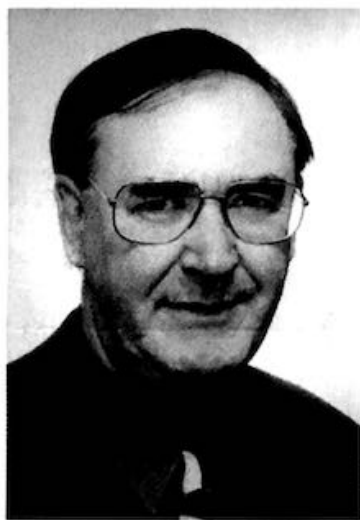
## NEW DIRECTOR APPOINTED FOR NCCI

**P**rofessor Mark Elwood has been appointed as the new Director of the National Cancer Control Initiative (NCCI) housed at the Anti-Cancer Council.

Due to take up his appointment towards the end of the year, he replaces Professor Emeritus Richard Lovell, who is retiring after holding the position of Acting Director for 18 months.

Professor Elwood is an internationally-renowned epidemiologist and will leave a posting as Professor of Cancer Epidemiology at the University of Otago in New Zealand to take up the NCCI post.

The NCCI was launched in 1997 by the Federal Health Minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge. Its task is to advise the Commonwealth on cancer control and develop and manage a range of projects in the areas of bowel cancer, skin cancer, familial cancer, data collection and an inventory of cancer control organisations and their activities.



## GRUESOME ADS WORK



**G**ruesome images of clogged arteries, bleeding brains and rotting lungs helped to persuade 190,000 Australians to quit smoking. The images were part of the National Tobacco Campaign, chaired by the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer Director, Dr David Hill.

The campaign, *Every Cigarette Is Doing You Damage*, funded by the Federal health department, began in mid-1997 and featured a series of shockingly honest television advertisements, backed up by extensive newspaper and radio advertising.

Its first report card came in May and Dr Hill's research showed a 1.4 per cent drop in smoker numbers during the first six months of the campaign. This means 190,000 smokers quit. It also showed that 29 per cent of smokers who rang the Quitline were not smoking 12 months later.

The Federal Health Minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge, said the campaign had successfully reached its target of smokers aged between 18 and 40.

He said the report card said smokers were more likely to quit following anti-smoking advertising.

**90 cents of every dollar we receive from the tobacco industry goes to the National Cancer Control Initiative.**

Dear  
Doreen



Director,  
Education and Support  
Answers your questions.

**I notice that the breast screening program is being strongly recommended for women over 50. My elderly father was recently diagnosed with bowel cancer. Is there a screening program for bowel cancer?**

There is no population screening program in Victoria for bowel cancer; however, you may ask your GP to provide you with a faecal occult blood test (FOBT). This is a simple test which has been shown in three major overseas trials to significantly reduce the risk of death from bowel cancer for people aged over 50.

**Are some people at higher risk of developing bowel cancer?**

Yes. People are at an increased risk of bowel cancer if they have:

- a family history of bowel cancer, particularly if the cancer was diagnosed in one or more close relatives before the age of 55
- had bowel cancer before, or an adenoma (a type of benign tumour) in the bowel
- extensive ulcerative colitis (inflamed, ulcerated colon and rectum) present for eight or more years.

Statistics also show that men have a slightly greater risk than women of developing bowel cancer. However, bowel cancer is the most common cause of cancer deaths for women over 60 years and bowel cancer is the most common cancer when you combine men and women's cancers.

Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world. We recommend that men and women 50 years of age and older have a faecal occult blood test every two years.

**I have been told that I have to have a colonoscopy. What is this?**

A long, thin flexible tube with a built-in light (a colonoscope) is passed into the large bowel through the anus (back passage). This allows the doctor to inspect the entire length of the bowel. At the same time, the doctor may remove any polyps or tumours which are found. This is usually done as a day procedure and you will be given sedation.

**Is there anything I can do myself to reduce my risk?**

Yes, there are many practical things you can do that appear to lower a person's risk of bowel cancer. You should eat plenty of vegetables and cereals, especially wholegrain cereals. You should also reduce your fat intake and have regular exercise. Details are included in the Anti-Cancer Council's booklet *Reducing Your Risk of Bowel Cancer*. You may obtain a free copy by calling 13 11 20.

**Doreen Akkerman is the Helen M Schutt Trust Fellow.**

If you have any questions call the Cancer Helpline on 13 11 20.

**Cancer:  
a big  
problem  
where every  
little bit  
helps**

As a valued supporter you are already aware of the importance and magnitude of our task and know our achievements have only been possible because of the kindness of supporters like you.

By giving so generously, you have shown great trust in us and we have repaid that trust by spending your money wisely, not least by keeping our costs to a minimum by only sending you one donation request a year.

Unfortunately we get far more requests

for help than we make ourselves. Our support services are called on 365 days a year, demand for our education resources is constant and there are always more research projects to fund than we can afford.

If you choose to make an extra donation using this coupon you will enable us to allocate more money to these vital programs while keeping our administration and mailing costs to the bare minimum. Thank you in advance for this extra kindness.

**Yes I would like to make an extra gift in the fight against cancer**

Please find enclosed my donation of \$  \*

to help the Anti-Cancer Council continue its vital work.

Name: .....

Address: .....

P'Code: .....

My cheque made payable to the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria is enclosed or

please debit my credit card for \$

Bankcard  Mastercard  VISA  American Express  Diners

Credit Card No: \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_

Signature: ..... Exp Date: \_ \_ / \_ \_

Please send me more information on how to include the Anti-Cancer Council in my Will.

**Post this coupon with your donation to:**  
Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, 1 Rathdowne Street, Carlton Vic 3053

\* Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible