



Anti-Cancer Council

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NEW SERVICE TO FIGHT FAMILY BOWEL CANCER

A new era in cancer treatment and detection unfolded in March with the launch of a pioneering service to help Victorians fight family bowel cancer.

The Family Bowel Cancer Initiative is an Australian first and was launched by the Health Minister, Rob Knowles at the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria.

The Initiative is at the forefront of the new age of cancer genetics and the care of families with cancer.

It will manage families who carry the newly discovered bowel cancer genes so that most cancers will be prevented or detected early when they are curable.

The Initiative is a collaboration of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Murdoch Institute in conjunction with the Department of Human Services.

Ten to 15 per cent of Victoria's bowel cancer runs in families (familial bowel cancer) and bowel cancer is the commonest internal cancer affecting both men and women.

A service which offers more than treatment is needed for these families. They also need support through the ethical and

emotional dilemmas which confront them and they need to have access to careful family follow-up and compassionate genetic counselling.

The families will be listed on a special register at the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria which tracks their progress. Through the Initiative the Anti-Cancer Council will develop education programs for the families and health care professionals. The Royal Melbourne Hospital, the Murdoch Institute and the

Victorian Clinical Genetics Service will provide the counselling and other clinical management services and genetic testing.

The Director of the Anti-Cancer Council, Professor Robert Burton said, "This Initiative will be monitored and is set to become the model for other genetic services for breast cancer,

melanoma and possibly prostate cancer".

"Genetic testing saves people from dying from cancer because those found on testing to have a higher genetic risk can be offered treatment or regular surveillance which will result in earlier diagnosis and treatment. Testing also identifies family members who do not carry the cancer gene and so are at once relieved of the stress and cost of long-term surveillance."



Dr James St John at the launch demonstrating the genetic link

SUPPORTER DONATES \$50,000



Mrs Judith Cohen

When Mrs Judith Cohen's sister died from bowel cancer in 1966, Mrs Cohen set aside some money to be bequeathed to the Anti-Cancer Council in her will.

However Mrs Cohen decided she would like to see the money used for research into bowel cancer in her lifetime and, inspired by a similar gesture from another Anti-Cancer Council supporter, she advanced her bequest of \$50,000 at the beginning of the year.

Mrs Cohen has been a long-time supporter of the Council.

To thank her for her generous contribution, the Minnie Rieke Selig Memorial Research Award has been established in memory of her sister. The recipients of the award are Professor Paul O'Brien and Dr Fiona Andrews of the Department of Surgery at the Alfred Hospital. They are investigating the contribution of aspirin in the prevention of bowel cancer.

Mrs Cohen said "At least I have a chance of seeing some results in my lifetime and I am glad it is helping such valuable research".

FROM THE DIRECTOR

BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

Breast cancer is the commonest fatal female cancer. In Australia more than 7,000 women are newly diagnosed with breast cancer each year, and about 2,500 women die. Unfortunately the cause of breast cancer is unknown, and so we have no simple way of preventing the disease, as applies for example with cigarette smoking and lung cancer. Since breast cancer cannot be prevented, our major strategy for control is early detection while the disease is still curable.

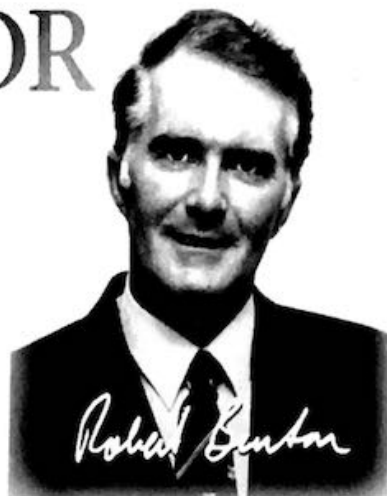
No woman dies of a breast cancer in the breast! Women die because breast cancer cells invade into the bloodstream and spread to other parts of the body where they interfere with the function of vital organs, for example the liver and the

hormone therapy) can cure many women by destroying breast cancer cells that have spread through the bloodstream. Because of mammographic screening and adjuvant therapy we are expecting that breast cancer mortality rates, which have been static for half a century, will now begin to fall. This fall, however, will only be modest and the future of breast cancer management lies with

- prevention when the cause is known
- improved breast cancer screening
- new drugs which target breast cancer cells and spare normal body tissues.

Hence the Victorian Breast Cancer Research Consortium!

The Honourable Rob Knowles Minister for Health launched the Consortium at the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria on Thursday 6 March of this year. The pledge of \$30 million over 10 years by the Victorian Government to support fundamental breast cancer research is the largest single initiative of any Australian government for fundamental cancer research, and is a landmark for medical research into women's health in this country. A number of research groups, each led by an outstanding scientist, will probe the chemistry and biology of breast cancer using the most advanced tech-



**PROFESSOR
ROBERT
BURTON**

niques in the world. Central to this new research initiative is our rapidly increasing knowledge of the genetics of breast cancer. Because this new knowledge provides fresh opportunities to devise new screening tests and treatments for breast cancer, genetics will be a major aspect of the Consortium's work.



Speaking at the launch: Prof Suzanne Cory

There are many pathological stages from a normal breast to the development of breast cancer. Better understanding of pre-cancerous changes in the breast could provide opportunities to treat a woman before there is any chance that cancer may have developed or spread. This will be part of the work of the molecular pathology group led by Dr Jane Armes.

The breast is an organ which is under hormonal control, and many women with breast cancer can live in balance with their disease through manipulation of the female sex hormones. Currently this consists of preventing the ovaries from functioning or combating the effects of oestrogen with the drug Tamoxifen or giving other kinds of hormones. New hormonal knowledge about breast cancer



Speaking at the launch: Avis Macphee

lungs. If a breast cancer can be removed before this spread occurs, then the woman will be cured. The earlier the breast cancer is diagnosed the less likely it is that cancer cells will have entered the bloodstream and spread to other organs. Our mammographic screening program aims to detect early breast cancer.

Although spread of breast cancer cells through the bloodstream is common, this does not mean that all women who have such spread will die of the disease. Indeed, many women will live a normal life span and die with breast cancer, rather than of breast cancer. Most importantly, modern drug therapy given after breast cancer surgery (adjuvant chemotherapy or



Speaking at the launch: Dr Jane Armes

could provide a whole new range of targets for new (designer) drugs. Dr Evan Simpson will lead a group investigating this aspect of the disease.

As well as investigating new therapies for breast cancer here in Melbourne, the Consortium will monitor developments overseas very carefully, and investigate promising new discoveries, wherever they come from. Finally all this fundamental breast cancer research will be directly linked to the treatment of Victorian women today through the Breast Study Committee of the Victorian Cooperative Oncology Group of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria. This is where breast cancer clinicians, scientists

and other health care professionals meet regularly to monitor progress in cancer research and organise clinical trials of new treatments in breast cancer.

We expect the Consortium scientists will attract additional support from research granting agencies, industry and private donations because they will be world leaders at the very edge of new research. Breast cancer touches many families and at the launch of the Consortium Tania Carbone presented the Consortium with a cheque for \$3,000; an in memoriam donation for her mother Graziella who died recently after battling breast cancer as a young woman.

ANTI-CANCER COUNCIL EXPANDS

The Anti-Cancer Council will open a new office in Geelong soon. The office has been provided by the Andrew Love Cancer Centre at the urging of Dr Richard Bell, Director of Cancer Services. It will be located at the Geelong Hospital in the Rylie Street Building, and staffed by volunteers. The office will provide a base for community education programs such as SunSmart and PapScreen as well providing people in the Geelong area with up to date information about the full range of our services. If you can volunteer some time to the project, please contact Melissa McGrath at the Anti-Cancer Council on (03) 9279 1146 for more information.

SMOKEFREE FOOTY

North Melbourne football star, Corey McKernan is the new Quit AFL ambassador.

The Quit sponsorship deal with the AFL team, North Melbourne, means players will now wear a SmokeFree logo on their uniforms. The deal is part of the campaign to reduce the harmful effects of tobacco use among all age groups.

Corey McKernan's first job was to sign his name and encourage his team members and the Health Minister, Rob Knowles, to pledge to keep their bodies smokefree.



At the launch: Tania Carbone (centre) with Robert Burton (left) and the Honourable Rob Knowles, Minister for Health.

IN BRIEF

"INSTITUTE WITHOUT WALLS" COMES TO MELBOURNE

Following the submission of a successful bid to the Australian Cancer Society by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, Australia's National Cancer Control Initiative will be based at the Anti-Cancer Council.

The Initiative was announced by the Federal Health Minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge, late last year and its brief is to coordinate cancer control across Australia.

The Director of the Anti-Cancer Council, Professor Robert Burton, said it would be an institute

without walls and would set priorities across the whole spectrum of cancer control and develop projects in key areas.

"Family cancer does not respect state borders and we need to coordinate our approach to these cancers so we are not doubling up," Professor Burton said.

Newcastle University Behavioural Science Professor Rob Sanson-Fisher has been appointed as the Initiative's Director and will head up the secretariat at the Anti-Cancer Council in Melbourne.



NATIONAL
CANCER
CONTROL
INITIATIVE

FUNDRAISING NEWS

BE A PART OF AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

Thursday, 5 June will be the time to raise your cups for cancer research as part of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. Help us raise funds on the day by holding a gathering almost anywhere - at home, at work, your local community centre or at a cafe.

Invite your friends, family and colleagues and it quickly becomes a fun social occasion which raises funds. Renowned chef Gabriel Gate is the patron. Longstanding sponsor Lipton has covered the cost of producing the host kits and other promotional materials.

We aim to raise \$175,000 this year but we need your help. To register for a host kit or to find out more, call the Community Fundraising Team on (03) 9279 1114, fax (03) 9279 1240 or email fundraising@accv.org.au.

TAPESTRY EXHIBITION

Australia's largest tapestry, needlework, cross stitch and patchwork exhibition is on again this year with all proceeds going to the Anti-Cancer Council. It will be staged at Box Hill Town Hall, Whitehorse Road, on 14-15 June.

Entry is \$7 for adults, \$6 for pensioners, \$4 for children 7-12. Children under 7 are admitted free.

SPARE SOME TIME FOR THE OP SHOP

The Anti-Cancer Council's Op Shop in Richmond needs more volunteers. If you can spare some time to help out, call Judy on (03) 9429 3616 or call in to 424 Bridge Rd, Richmond.

TOONGABBIE LADIES ON PAR IN DRIVE AGAINST CANCER

The Toongabbie Golf Club Lady Members have won first prize in the annual Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria's Drive Against Cancer which raised \$60,000 across the state this year.

The prize is a painting of the club's course donated by renowned water colourist, Robert A Wade. The Toongabbie Club was eligible for the prize after qualifying as one of the state's top 100 fundraising clubs for the Anti-Cancer Council.

Sunshine's Mary Vella won the Brosnan golf clubs and bag. Jonathon Alder, from Marong, won the \$500 wardrobe from Blazer. Sharon Henry, of Apsley, won the \$500 wardrobe from Perri Cutten.

CORPORATE CUP GOLF

The annual Anti-Cancer Council's Corporate Golf Cup was a huge success again this year and attracted 60 entrants. Corporate golf is now raising thousands of dollars for cancer research. If you would like to play in one of our major events, corporate women's golf day or to contribute the profits from your corporate golf day to the Anti-Cancer Council, contact Peter Nardella on (03) 9279 1121.

DAFFODIL DAY VOLUNTEERS

We would like to hear from any people who are interested in supporting Daffodil Day on 22 and 23 August. Become a volunteer and help sell daffodils and other tokens. Help us reach the \$1 million target. Call the Community Fundraising Team on (03) 9279 1226 to register.

BIRTHDAY DONATION



Karen Russell

When Karen Russell and her fiancé, Graeme Hayes decided to hold a combination birthday and Christmas bash last year, the invitations they sent included an Anti-Cancer Council envelope in which they asked guests to put a donation instead of bringing gifts.

Karen had been diagnosed with breast cancer earlier in the year and the party was a way of thanking friends and family for their support. Her inventive idea helped to raise \$1,800 for the Anti-Cancer Council.

More than \$15,000 is raised each year in this way.

JUNE SHOP SALE

The Anti-Cancer Council's annual shop sale begins 1 June. Get in early to grab a bargain of between 20 to 50 per cent off all stock. The Super Special this year is a free roll on SPF 15+ sunscreen with every purchase over \$30.00.

NEXT ISSUE:

Stories and photographs from our Gala Ball on 19 April 1997

WE'RE ON THE WEB

In January this year the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria launched its web site or home page. People with access to the internet can now get information about the Anti-Cancer Council electronically. Our site includes much of our current written material: press releases, patient education booklets, information about prevention, research grant applications, our shop catalogue, and donor and order forms. We are updating our site regularly. People can also communicate with us electronically by email.

If you are online, paddle or surf to our web site at www.accv.org.au and let us know what you think.

DRASTIC ACTION TO HALT SKIN CANCER EPIDEMIC

Last summer 1.4 million Victorians were sunburnt.

Why are people risking skin cancer and still experiencing painful sunburn when Sid Seagull and SunSmart have been around for nearly 20 years?

The question was answered by the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, at the Anti-Cancer Council. The Centre interviewed young people and they were told, "If this is such a serious issue, why don't you treat it seriously?"

Following further research and testing by the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer the new SunSmart ad went to air in January. It graphically depicts a removal of a skin cancer and a skin graft replacement, and has proved to be most popular with its target audience of 17 to 25. It also tested well with older people who said it actually prompted them to see their doctor about unusual spots.

Cancer – an artist's

impression

As part of Daffodil Day, the Anti-Cancer Council has organised a major art exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria about living and dying with cancer. Called "Cancer: The Journey" the exhibition will be held in the Access Gallery from 9-31 August. Selected works from the Literary and Art Awards will be exhibited alongside the work of New Zealand photographer Rebecca Swan and Melbourne artist Sam Dickson.

Selected poetry and prose entries

will be featured in a special Open Day Concert and Events Program in the Great Hall at the Gallery on 17 August.

Celebrated poet Les Murray will judge the poetry entries and author and journalist Beatrice Faust will review the prose works.

The awards are open to everybody who has been affected by cancer.

To enter the Awards or book into associated writing and art workshops call Community Fundraising on (03) 9279 1114.

ANNUAL CAR RAFFLE



Tickets for one of the Anti-Cancer Council's major fundraisers can still be purchased until the first week of June.

Prizes are wonderful with tickets only \$2 and a book of 10 for \$20. Just imagine yourself with one of these great prizes:

1st Prize - Mazda 323 Astina V6 Auto Hardtop (sponsored by Mazda (Vic) - valued at \$41,972)

2nd Prize - \$5,000 Shopping Spree from David Jones Melbourne

3rd Prize - 8 Nights Holiday for two including accommodation to Alice Springs (3 nights), Uluru (Ayers Rock - 1 night), Darwin (3 nights) and Kakadu (1 night) - breakfasts included (sponsored by Ansett Australia - valued at \$4,268)

4th Prize - Beautiful 6 piece Mikasa Dinner Set - valued at \$1,200

Write to the Anti-Cancer Council, 1 Rathdowne Street, Carlton 3053 for tickets, or phone your order to (03) 9279 1114. **Be quick!!**

Dear
Doreen



mutation in a gene which leads to early bowel cancer. Most cancers will be prevented or detected early when they are curable. (For more information, read our front page story.)

2. Screening People of Average Risk

There is now evidence that people over 50 could be screened to reduce the mortality rate from bowel cancer in the whole population. This evidence is very new, but is already being considered at the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria. A plan for pilot testing in Victoria will be presented to the state government by the end of May.

What is family bowel cancer? How do I know whether my family is the sort you're talking about?

About 95% of the population have no special risk factors for bowel cancer. They have no confirmed family history of bowel cancer, but their risk increases with age, as does the risk for all cancers. Some families have a number of members who have been affected by bowel cancer and in particular some where the diagnosis of bowel cancer was made in two or more people under the age of 50. An inherited mutation in a gene which leads to early onset bowel cancer is suspected in these families. Genetic testing of these families

can now confirm such a diagnosis or rule it out.

I think my grandfather died of bowel cancer. What should I do?

If you are concerned about whether you might belong to such a family you should collect all the information you can from members of the family. When was your relative diagnosed with bowel cancer? Was it certainly bowel cancer or was it some other type of cancer? Were there any other family members who might have died of the same disease? Remember that bowel cancer is one that is rarely mentioned and sometimes even hushed up. See your GP to discuss your family history and your risk. If there's just one member of your family who was diagnosed with bowel cancer over the age of 55 then you are very unlikely to have an increased risk.

You can actually reduce your own risk through diet and lifestyle changes. The Cancer Helpline has a booklet 'Reducing your Risk of Bowel Cancer' which you can obtain by phoning 13 11 20 Monday to Saturday 9am-5pm.

The Cancer Helpline was established with the help of the Helen M Schutt Trust. Doreen Akkerman is the Helen M Schutt Fellow.

I heard on the radio that Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world. Is anything being done about this?

Apart from common skin cancer, bowel or colorectal cancer is the commonest cancer in Australia today. Australia has a similar rate of bowel cancer to the USA and Canada. These are amongst the highest in the world.

The amount of concern in the community is reflected in the fact that the Cancer Helpline received 3,000 calls about bowel cancer last year.

The Anti-Cancer Council has two new bowel cancer programs.

1. The Family Bowel Cancer Initiative

The Family Bowel Cancer Initiative was launched on 20 March. It will manage families who may carry an inherited

HELP US MEET OUR FUTURE TARGETS—introduce a friend.

As a valued supporter, you are already more than aware of the importance and magnitude of our task to minimise the human cost of cancer for all Victorians. Our past achievements have only been possible due to the generosity of our supporters and there is a simple way you could help us further—introduce a friend to the Anti-Cancer Council by giving them this newsletter and donation coupon.

Passing on your copy of Anti-Cancer Council News is an easy way to make others aware of our vital work and to encourage them to join us in the fight against cancer.

If you introduce a new donor to the Anti-Cancer Council they, like all our donors, will receive this newsletter four times a year but only one donation request. We believe multiple requests are both an imposition and a waste of money.

I would like to become a registered donor 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 \$

Card type:

Bankcard Mastercard VISA Amex Diners

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

Signature: Exp Date: _ _ / _ _

* Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible

Post this coupon with your donation to:

Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, 1 Rathdowne Street, Carlton Vic 3053