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# Anti-Cancer Council

NUMBER 159 SUMMER 1997

## Anti-Cancer Council awards \$5 MILLION TO RESEARCH

**T**he Anti-Cancer Council has released its research grants for 1997 which amount to \$5 million. They include ground-breaking projects in prostate cancer, brain tumours and the effect of aspirin on bowel cancer.

The awards support research conducted at Victorian Universities, research institutes, hospital research departments and in some Anti-Cancer Council research units.

The awards are a collection of fellowships, grants and PhD scholarships.

Some of the new projects for this year include genetic research, pharmacology, radiation biology and cell biology.

The Director of the Anti-Cancer Council, Professor Robert Burton said some of the projects for 1997 include fundamental research into what actually causes cancer as well as how to improve prevention and treatment. "The cure rates for cancer in Victoria have doubled during the 60-year lifetime of the Anti-Cancer Council," Professor Burton said. "All this has been due to excellent basic scientific and clinical research. The current revolution in cancer biology and genetics is already improving the lives of cancer patients and holds enormous promise. There has never been a better time to

support cancer research."

Three new projects for 1997 are:

1. The effect of drugs similar to aspirin on the prevention of colon cancer. Researchers: Professor P E O'Brien, Dr F J Andrews - based at the Department of Surgery, Alfred Hospital.

2. Research into what gene controls the onset of prostate cancer and why some men get it and others don't. Researchers: Associate Professor J D Zajac, Mr M Frydenberg - based at the Department of Medicine, Royal Melbourne Hospital.

3. Cancers of the brain are of two types - of the nerve cells themselves which only occur in children and which are rare - and the more common cancers of the cells which make up the tissues that supply and nourish nerve cells (gliomas). Gliomas are rapidly growing cancers for which current treatments have been unsuccessful. In order to develop new therapies for gliomas, the researchers are addressing two aspects common to the growth of gliomas. Firstly, gliomas require an adequate blood supply in order to continue growing. Secondly, gliomas largely invade a host immune defence response which would attack the cancer cells. Researcher: Dr M Saleh - based at the Dept of Surgery, University of Melbourne, Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Medibank Private has established the largest research award supported by the business community and is supporting the work of Associate Professor Peter Gibson at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. His work is studying the mechanisms by which diet may alter the development of colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is the leading cancer site in men and women in Victoria. Medibank Private is contributing \$50,000 annually for the next three years.



## IT'S GOLD for Nigel Gray

**F**ormer Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria Director and now UICC President, Dr Nigel Gray has been awarded the Australian Cancer Society Gold Medal for Distinguished Service in the fight against cancer in Australia.

The ACS introduced the medal in 1977 and it is awarded by vote of the national Council of the Society on the basis of merit, not as a regular award.

The last time it was awarded was in 1992 and it went to Mr W Brian Fleming, who is Chairman of the Anti-Cancer Council Executive Committee.

The award has been presented on eleven other occasions.

- 1977 Sir William Kilpatrick KBE
- 1978 Dr B S Hanson CMG  
DSO OBE ED
- 1979 Mr R Downing MLC  
Dr C Craig
- 1981 Dr D Metcalf
- 1983 Dr N Davis
- 1984 Professor V J McGovern  
Dr K S Mowatt OBE
- 1985 Dr J Colebatch  
Dr F Gunz
- 1986 Professor K Cox.



Bob Sharman, business development manager at Medibank Private accepts a plaque from Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria director, Professor Robert Burton thanking Medibank Private for their generous gift.

# letter from the director

**PROFESSOR**

**ROBERT**

**BURTON**



February 1997

Welcome to the first edition of Anti-Cancer Council News for 1997. This quarterly newsletter is produced to keep you informed of the important work which your donations make feasible, as well as reporting any advances resulting from these projects.

In this issue, you will see that your generosity has enabled us to allocate \$5 million in research grants across Victoria for 1997. In addition to the continuation of many existing projects, we are delighted to be able to support a number of new research ventures, in areas such as prostate cancer, brain tumours, radiation biology and bowel cancer.

Your kind support also allowed can-HELP, our cancer information service, to celebrate its seventh birthday in January. Since 1990, can-HELP's trained counsellors have been offering practical advice and understanding to thousands of Victorians touched by cancer. In 1996 alone, nearly 20,000 calls were received. Please remember that, whatever your query or concern, our can-HELP team are there for you, Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5.30pm and Saturday between 9am and 5pm, simply by calling 13 11 20.

We are proud of our commitment to spending your donations responsibly and keeping costs to a minimum by only asking for your support once a year. However, we do have an increasing number of donors who wish to donate more regularly, either by mail or by automatic deductions from their credit cards or bank accounts. If you would like to do so, Jenny Saker, our Donor Manager would be delighted to speak to you further about the options we can offer. Please call Jenny on (03) 9279 1124 if you would like more information. If you are happy with your current annual request, you do not need to contact us, we will continue to keep in touch with you the same way as before.

After a fascinating twelve months, I am now entering my second year as Director of the Anti-Cancer Council. During my first year I have been constantly delighted by the extent of our supporters' commitment to and interest in our work. Please accept my sincere thanks for this enthusiasm. It is what makes our achievements possible.

If you wish to write to me about anything in the newsletter, I would be very pleased to receive your comments.

My very best wishes for 1997.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Burton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Robert Burton

Director

## NO MORE TOBACCO at the MCG

**T**he Test Cricket match at the MCG beginning on Boxing Day was the first Test Match for many years that was not sponsored by a tobacco company.

In 1977, the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria began a campaign to ban tobacco sponsorship of sport.

In the same year the Anti-Cancer Council produced a television advertisement about the Benson and Hedges sponsorship of the Centenary Test Match which was banned from being screened. The script read:

"A well-known maker of cigarettes spent a packet to sponsor the Centenary Test Match. They're not doing it just to be nice. They want you to associate a healthy sport like cricket with smoking their cigarettes. This year 10,000 Australians will die from cancer and heart disease directly caused by smoking cigarettes. We think cigarette sponsorship of sport is the worst kind of hypocrisy. Don't you?"

Since 1977 over 200,000 Australians have died from tobacco-caused diseases.

Dr Nigel Gray was instrumental in the campaign to stop tobacco sponsorship of sport and the recent Test Match was another victory for him and anti-tobacco campaigners.

"It has required persistence to the point of bloody-mindedness, but it has paid off," Dr Gray said.

But as soon as that battle had been won, the Pakistan Cricket Team had to be told by the Australian Commonwealth Health Department to remove tobacco sponsorship from their cricket bats.

## NEW CANCER STUDY of young Victorians

**T**he Anti-Cancer Council's Cancer Epidemiology Centre has released new figures analysing cancers in Victorian adolescents and young adults aged between 10 and 30 years. This a group about which very little has been written. Though cancer is a rare disease in adolescence and young adulthood, it causes around 10 per cent of deaths (75 annually) in those aged under 30 and is the third ranking cause of death after suicides and motor vehicle accidents.

As with cancers of early childhood, very little is known about the causes of cancer in adolescents and young adults though it is thought that genetic factors and inherited conditions may be implicated in some types. However it is possible that in this age group the influence of environmental exposures may also be important.

In Victoria about 420 ten to twenty-nine year olds are diagnosed with cancer each year and incidence increases with age.

The main cancers that affect adolescents and young adults are leukaemias

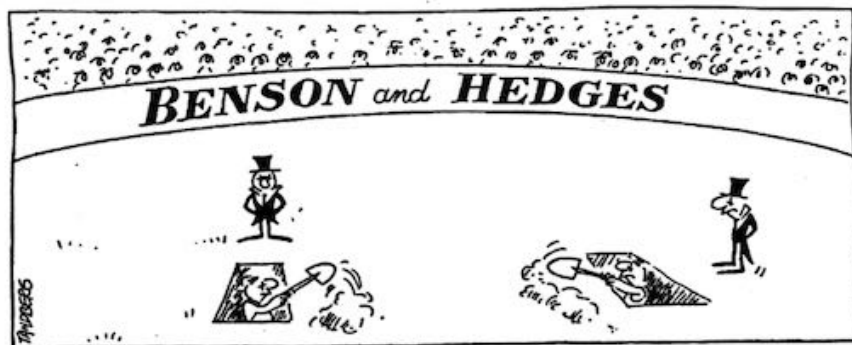
and lymphomas, brain cancers, germ cell neoplasms (mainly testicular cancer) and sarcomas. With increasing age leukaemias and bone tumours become less common.

Malignant melanoma is the leading cancer in both sexes and accounts for almost a quarter of all cancers in this age group. The rates are higher in young women, reflecting either a higher exposure to UV radiation or a higher sensitivity than males.

Death from cancer in early life is rare and with modern therapy only 17 per cent of patients have died 5 years after diagnosis.

The costs associated with the production of *CanStat* were met by the generous assistance of the Edith M & William M Wilson Charity Trust.

The Property Council of Australia recently held a gala ball and the Anti-Cancer Council was the fortunate recipient of funds raised at the event. Just over \$23,000 was raised which has gone towards establishing the Property Council of Australia Research Award. The award is supporting the work of Drs Kola and Hertzog who are studying Ewing's Sarcoma and related tumours in children and young adults.



## DO YOU WANT YOUR bum on your nose?

**A** new television advertisement went to air during SunSmart Week (12-18 January), taking the campaign in a bold new direction.

The advertisement is the fifth created by SunSmart since the skin cancer prevention program began in 1980.

Unlike the earlier advertisements, this ad takes a hard line approach to the

problems of skin cancer, early detection and sun protection. It actually shows the removal of a skin cancer from the nose and a skin graft from the buttock.

Because the ad was so graphic, it was screened after 8.30pm.

It prompted wide discussion across Victoria with many people praising the honest approach. Others found it too

confronting and gory.

However whatever the reaction, the main people who we wanted to direct the advertisement at, young people, told our researchers that they needed to be told the dangers in a straightforward manner.

Our research was showing that despite years of campaigns, young people were still getting burnt each summer and a new SunSmart message was needed.

The advertisement was written, filmed and directed in close consultation with skin specialists and plastic surgeons and is an accurate depiction of the procedure used to remove and skin graft the site of skin cancer.

**T**he annual volunteers' Christmas lunches were an outstanding success again in December and were well supported. Many thanks to

- Ballantynes Chocolates
- Pink Lady Chocolates
- Baker's Delight
- Cadbury Schweppes
- Schweppes Cottee's
- Spring Valley Fruit Juices
- Glenroy Bakery
- Ferguson Plarre Bakehouses
- Haigh's Chocolates.

### CORPORATE GOLF REPORT

ORIX Australia has contributed over \$30,000 to cancer research following its corporate golf event at Woodlands in October. This amount is the largest ever raised at a corporate golf event associated with the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria. ORIX is already planning this year's event for Huntingdale.

The annual Nigel Gray Perpetual Cup played at Huntingdale was won by the talented team of Stephen Layton, Richard Morrow, Tony Smith and Richard Wyrill.

# FUNDRAISING news

### DAFFODIL DAY BULB OFFER

Once again the Anti-Cancer Council is offering bulbs to grow in time for Daffodil Day. To order bulbs look for the enclosed brochure and/or call 1800 677 437.

### 1996 Cup Day Appeal Update

Even though we had the best weather for five years and early crowds were greater than for several years, the computer breakdown at TABs across the state drastically affected our Appeal. This created very stressful conditions for our volunteer collectors. We are extremely grateful for their perseverance. The Appeal raised \$140,000 (goal was \$200,000). Grateful thanks to our sponsors, the TAB, Polaroid Sunglasses and to Sky Channel. Special thanks to Lee Freedman for his support.

### DRIVE AGAINST CANCER

The Drive Against Cancer Golf Days for 1996 raised over \$57,584 from 313 golf clubs and we would like to thank all the Victorian golfers for their support.

### COMING EVENTS

Proceeds of the 14th annual Doll Show presented by the International Association of Porcelain Doll Makers & Teachers will go to the Anti-Cancer Council.

Where: Camberwell Centre,  
Camberwell Road, Camberwell  
Saturday and Sunday, 15 & 16 March,  
between 9.30am and 5pm.

All enquiries: Jude Ridley (03) 9725 6866

Last year the Doll Show raised \$20,000 in support of a special research award established in memory of Helen Trihey.

## WIN a marvellous Mazda



MAZD106Q

**T**he Anti-Cancer Council 1997 Statewide Raffle is now on and we have some fantastic prizes again this year, worth over \$52,940.

Heading the prize list is the latest new Mazda provided with the very generous assistance again of Mazda (Vic).

**1st prize Mazda 323 Astina V6 Auto Hardtop**, valued at \$41,972 including on-road costs. Sponsored by Mazda (Vic).

**2nd prize Shopping spree from David Jones Melbourne**, valued at \$5,000.

**3rd prize 8 nights holiday for two** including

accommodation to Alice Springs (3 nights), Uluru (Ayer's Rock, 1 night), Darwin (3 nights) and Kakadu (1 night) - breakfasts included - valued at \$4,268. Sponsored by Ansett Australia.

**4th prize Beautiful 6 piece Mikasa dinner set**, valued at \$1,200.

**PLUS 20 consolation prizes of Anti-Cancer Council sunglasses**, valued at \$25 each.

Last year our Statewide Raffle raised a net profit of \$128,000 which could not have been achieved without the tremendous support of our

loyal volunteers and donors.

Tickets are now on sale at \$2 each or a book of tickets for \$20. You could also give a book of tickets to your family or friends to sell.

Every ticket offers the chance to win one of the fantastic prizes and also help support cancer research. The Raffle will be drawn at the Anti-Cancer Council on Friday, 27 June, 1997 at 12 noon.

**YES**, I'd like to help sell tickets for the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria.

Please send me  Raffle Books of 10 tickets to sell to my family and friends, **or** I would like to purchase  tickets in my name (please state if you wish the tickets registered in another name).

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... P'Code: .....

Tel: .....

Amount: \$

My cheque/money order payable to the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria is enclosed for \$  or please debit my

Bankcard  Mastercard  VISA  Amex  Diners

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

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

**Please return your coupon to:**  
Appeals Office, Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria  
1 Rathdowne Street, Carlton South Vic 3053

## **VOLUNTEERS** they're priceless

**W**ith an annual budget of only \$15 million, the Anti-Cancer Council manages to undertake work estimated at almost \$300 million. How are the precious dollars donated to us multiplied twenty-fold?

Volunteers. Over 5000 of them and that is just here in Victoria. There are also a few hundred more scattered around Australia and the rest of the world. They do everything from helping with day-to-day administration to sitting on the expert committees that guide our work.

Director of Administration, Paul Davey, believes the value of their contribution is easily measured.

"Without their 'twenty-fold' effect we would still be where we were 20 years ago. Tobacco would still be advertised, lung cancer rates would still be increasing, we would not have heard of Slip!Slop!Slap! or SunSmart and screens such as the Pap



*From left: Bert, Lynette, Phyl, Betty and Judith*

Test and Mammography would either be unavailable or grossly under-utilised. That's how it was in Victoria in 1976."

"Victoria is a world leader in almost every area of the fight against cancer. There's no doubt our team of volunteers are a vital key to this success."

During 1995, our Wednesday Volunteers raised \$1500 in addition to doing their assigned work. Not content with this achievement, Jean Brady presented the Anti-Cancer Council at Christmas with \$1700 raised by the group during 1996.

## **ARE YOUR AFFAIRS** in order?

**B**equests are a large and very important part of the income of the Anti-Cancer Council and make up about 40 per cent of funds raised.

We get many requests from our supporters for information on how to include something in their Will for cancer research. We now have an excellent booklet which contains the wording for including a bequest to the Anti-Cancer Council.

If you are considering a bequest and would like a copy of the brochure, we have enclosed a card in this issue for you to return to us.

Donors or supporters who notify us of a bequest in their Will, will not only assist us greatly in our future planning but also give us the opportunity to say that very special, personal and private thank you.

## **DIAMOND JUBILEE** anniversary gala ball

**I**f you are a supporter of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria or would like to become one, keep April 19 spare in your diaries. As part of its 60th year anniversary celebrations, the Anti-Cancer Council is staging a Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Gala Ball at the World Congress Centre.

The fundraising evening will feature a star studded galaxy of Australian rock and roll legends.

The formal evening will include a sumptuous meal, big band dancing brackets and will be hosted by some surprise guests.

It is an anniversary event not to be missed. Tickets are \$100 and be early to book tables of 10. Call (03) 9279 1114 for bookings or more details.

## **MERCHANDISE** update

**1**996 was another busy year for the merchandise volunteers and staff. The Christmas card and gift mail order catalogue was again a huge success. Many corporate businesses gave us their support by purchasing their cards from us and overprinting them with their own logo and message. Many individuals also showed their support by purchasing from us.

The state cancer organisation wrap-around sunglasses range which is sold through our mail order program and from our shop is now the top selling budget sunglass range on the market in Australia today. The range has been on the market for approximately five years and has expanded continually. This year the range includes 70 different styles and is also sold from major department stores and pharmacies. However, if purchasing elsewhere please be aware of imitations. Our daffodil swing tag is on our product and lists all the state cancer organisations.

### **NEW SUNSCREEN AVAILABLE**

Available now through our shop at 12-22 Victoria Street, Carlton South, is the newly released sunscreen range of the Australian Cancer Society. The sunscreen is available in a range of handy sizes. For the children, sunscreen is available in tubes with Barbie, Bananas in Pyjamas, Thomas the Tank Engine, Batman and Bart Simpson on the front. It is a great way to encourage children to cover up.

The formula in this product is now being exported to the United States and the United Kingdom. The Australian Cancer Society receives a royalty from the sale of this product overseas and throughout Australia.

**NEXT ISSUE:** news about

- Breast Cancer Research Consortium
- National Cancer Control Initiative
- SunSmart summer campaign

Dear  
Doreen



**Doreen Akkerman, Director, Cancer Information and Support Service, answers your questions.**

I have been reading in the papers lately about drugs being available in clinical trials.

**What are clinical trials?**

Randomised controlled clinical trials are a very important part of cancer research and the Anti-Cancer Council, through the Victorian Co-operative Oncology Group and the Medical and Scientific Research Committee, has funded a large part of this research.

Cancer doctors (oncologists) are continually looking for improved treatments for cancer. If early work suggests that a new treatment may be more effective than one that is currently being used, a clinical trial will be carried out to compare the new treatment with the current one. So clinical trials do not only

test drugs, they may deal with new treatments involving surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, biological therapy or a combination of one or more therapies.

Cancer clinical trials have two broad objectives: to identify promising treatments and to determine whether such treatments reduce morbidity (reduced quality of life) and mortality (death). Standard treatments offered today are the result of clinical trials which took place in the late 1970s and early 80s.

**What is randomisation?**

In order to prevent bias, patients are randomly selected to be either a group trialling a new drug or treatment, or one receiving one of the best available standard treatments. Neither the doctor nor the patient is able to choose which group they want to be in. The results of one group are then compared with the other.

**What safeguards does a participant have?**

Ethics committees approve treatment protocols and patients are fully informed of the aims of the trial, the treatment program, possible side effects, their rights and people to contact if they have

further questions.

Not everyone participating in a particular trial will benefit directly from the findings of the trial. This is fully explained before the patient enters the trial and patients are required to sign an informed consent form. During a trial, results are monitored and if a treatment is found to be harmful or not effective, the trial is stopped. Patients may also stop participating at any time during the trial if they want to.

**How does someone get into a clinical trial?**

Every clinical trial is designed to answer a set of research questions and people chosen to participate must fit eligibility criteria. There are many clinical trials taking place in hospitals in Victoria, some of which are part of large national or international trials. Even if patients receive the standard treatment, many cancer doctors believe patients benefit from the careful supervision and attention to detail that is essential for participants in clinical trials. If you are interested in taking part in clinical trials, discuss this with your doctor.

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

# 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: .....

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

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: \_ \_ / \_ \_

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