CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

CREST newsletter

DECEMBER 2025

CHERE CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

CREST CANCER RESEARCH ECONOMICS SUPPORT TEAM

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Perspectives on Time Toxicity of Palliative Systemic Cancer Treatments

People affected by cancer – and their caregivers – often dedicate substantial time coordinating and attending appointments, travelling to treatment centres, and managing the practical demands of therapy. Recently, these time commitments have been described as a *"toxicity"* of treatment, highlighting that time devoted to treatment represents an additional burden alongside more familiar downsides such as physical side-effects[2]. This issue may be especially salient for people with advanced cancers, where treatment benefits are typically modest and patients may spend up to one-third of their remaining lifespan engaged with the healthcare system[3].

Although research has begun to quantify time spent on treatment-related activities, far less is known about how this time burden is experienced in daily life. This study aimed to understand stakeholder perceptions of time spent receiving cancer care. To do this, we conducted semi-structured interviews with people receiving treatment for advanced gastrointestinal cancers and with their caregivers, recruited from one metropolitan and one regional hospital in New South Wales.

Twenty patients and ten caregivers participated (60% aged 55–74; 50% female; 50% regional; 55% with colorectal cancer). Five themes emerged from responses: (1) treatment as work; (2) opportunity costs of receiving care; (3) treatment time as an investment; (4) the role of time in treatment decision-making; and (5) strategies for managing treatment-related time. Participants found the time demands of treatment burdensome. Many described treatment as akin to an "unpaid job." Coordinating, receiving, and recovering from treatment becoming the central activity of their lives, often at the expense of meaningful personal or social activities.

Perceptions of time burden were shaped by understandings of treatment benefit, the severity of side-effects, and psychological reactions to illness. Despite these challenges, most participants viewed treatment as an investment in their health. Several participants described practical and psychological strategies to help manage the logistical and temporal demands of therapy. While time considerations influenced daily life, they were not major drivers of treatment decisions.

This study contributes a foundational understanding of 'time toxicity' from an Australian perspective. The findings highlight that the temporal demands of cancer treatment are an important contributor to overall treatment burden. However, the extent to which healthcare contact time is perceived as burdensome is likely to be highly subjective. Although some time must inevitably be exchanged to receive healthcare, many aspects of treatment-related time may be modifiable. These findings suggest avenues for designing interventions that improve communication about treatment-related time demands, streamline burdensome components of care, and promote care delivery that is concordant with patients' values, goals, and preferences.

Contributed by: Dr Samuel Stevens

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Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group (ANZUP)

Some recent ANZUP news highlights

ANZUP's trial portfolio continues to grow. We currently have 5 ANZUP-led and 1 co-badged trial in recruitment. We also have 17 studies in follow-up, and many currently in development. You can read more about our trials on our website here.

Best of GU Oncology Evening Symposium

We held our Best of GU Evening Symposium on Wednesday 12 November in Adelaide. The Best of GU is a collaboration between ANZUP and the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ). Hosted by Professors Ian Davis and USANZ President Damien Bolton and chaired by the co-convenors the 2026 ANZUP Annual Scientific Meeting, Craig Gedye and Lisa Butler. The event was a great success, with positive feedback including this from one of our members, "*I found the meeting to be an excellent source of information especially finding out what advances are occurring across many specialities. The networking was excellent.*"

The event is a key engagement and educational event in the ANZUP annual calendar. Our speakers were Dr Craig Gedye, Prof Lisa Butler, Phuong Tran, Dylan Bartholomeusz, Andrew Fuller, Rick Catterwell, Dixon Woon and Shomik Sengupta, who shared their insights into the latest management and clinical trials and translational research in urogenital and prostate cancers from highlights of 2025 meetings across Australia and the world.

Many thanks again to our sponsors, Astellas, AstraZeneca, Bayer, Eisai, Johnson & Johnson & MSD – who help make these meetings possible.



ANZUP's Best of GU 2025



ESMO Team 2025

ANZUP as ESMO 2025

In October ANZUP was proud to showcase the exciting outcomes from ANZUP's globally significant studies at ESMO in Berlin. ANZUP shared the much-anticipated ENZARAD results, as well as presenting four posters - ENZA-p, TheraP and two for ENZAMET. It was great to see many ANZUP studies feature once again on the global stage and is a testament to what our investigators are doing to improve the lives of those people impacted by Below the Belt cancers. You can read more about ENZARAD on our website, as well as our other studies that were presented.

Our inaugural 'Putting the NZ in ANZUP' Workshop held in Auckland

On Friday 12 September 2025, we held our inaugural New Zealand ANZUP Workshop – 'Putting the NZ in ANZUP' in Auckland convened by Nicky Lawrence and Craig Gedye. The one-day workshop achieved its purpose to bring together cancer clinicians, researchers, health system leaders, industry partners, and patient representatives to explore how New Zealand's unique healthcare, clinical trials and research environment can create cancer clinical trials and translational research that both succeed locally and/or reach across the ditch to Australia. We also acknowledged the important role that our colleagues in Aotearoa have played in ANZUP Cancer research so far.

We heard from an array of incredible speakers who shared their expert knowledge and facilitated an environment for insightful discussion and valuable learnings.

#ANZUP26 ASM – Save the date!

The ANZUP 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting is being held in Adelaide from 28 – 30 June with the convening committee, ably co-convened by Craig Gedye and Lisa Butler. Our theme for 2026 is ***"What Matters Most"***. Registrations and abstracts will open in late 2025, and we look forward to seeing you in Adelaide!

Real stories, latest research – all in 'A Little Below the Belt'

We're excited to share the latest issue of A Little Below the Belt, your go-to source for everything happening in the world of Below the Belt cancers.

Inside this edition:

- Meet the experts and advocates leading the fight.
- Below The Belt Cancer 101 – A quick guide to symptoms and risk factors for prostate, testicular, penile, kidney, and bladder cancer.
- Treatment Options & Clinical Trials – Explore the latest approaches and how research is changing lives.
- Real Stories, Real Impact – Read personal experiences from patients and their journeys.
- ANZUP Highlights – Key research milestones, community initiatives, and fundraising efforts.
- Meet The Team – Get to know the faces driving the research forward.

Read the full magazine online here

ANZUP Cancer Trials Group Limited

Breast Cancer Trials (BCT)

47th Annual Scientific Meeting

Breast Cancer Trials (BCT) invites you to the 47th Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), to be held at the Sofitel Brisbane Central from 29–31 July 2026. This premier event provides an invaluable opportunity to stay up to date with the latest in breast cancer clinical trials research.

The full and extensive program will include:

- A Trials Coordination Forum for staff involved in the conduct of BCT trials at their institution.
- A Concept Development Workshop providing opportunities to discuss new protocols, future trials and emerging research ideas.
- Two days of scientific sessions featuring updates and reviews of current breast cancer clinical trials research.
- Sponsored breakfast, lunch and dinner symposium sessions.
- A conference dinner.
- A Trainee and Early Career Day on Saturday 1 August 2026, with an accompanying dinner on Friday night.

We are also pleased to introduce two new sessions to the 2026 program: a Scientific Welcome Session and a Welcome Event and Abstract Viewing session.

Confirmed Guest Speakers:

- **Dr Jana de Boniface:** A general surgeon trained in Berlin and Stockholm, specialising in oncoplastic and reconstructive breast surgery. She is currently a consultant at Capio Saint Göran's Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden.
- **Dr Sara Hurvitz:** Professor of medicine, co-director of the Santa Monica–UCLA Outpatient Oncology Practice, Medical Director of the Clinical Research Unit at the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Director of Breast Oncology at UCLA.

Further information, including the detailed program and full speaker list, will be available in the coming months. Delegates include leading clinicians, researchers and clinical trials professionals from across Australia and New Zealand.

Early-bird registrations close at 11:59 pm on 31 May 2026.

Register today: bct2026.org

Welcoming Our New CAP Chair

BCT is pleased to welcome Ms Merryn Carter as the new Chair of our Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP), following the leadership of outgoing Chair, Ms Lesley Gilham.

Merryn has been a dedicated advocate for people affected by breast cancer since her diagnosis in 2010. She joined the BCT CAP in 2018 and has been a strong voice for ensuring patient perspectives remain at the centre of our research.

Her consumer leadership extends nationally. Merryn was a founding member of the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Consumer Reference Panel in 2022, has contributed to the MRFF Genomic Health Futures Mission Evaluation Review and Expert Advisory Panels, and is a member of the NHMRC-MRFF Consumer Advisory Group. She has also volunteered with Professors Jane Visvader and Geoffrey Lindeman at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute Breast Cancer Laboratory since 2014.

We thank Lesley Gilham for her significant contribution as CAP Chair and look forward to Merryn's leadership as the panel continues to support meaningful consumer involvement across our clinical trials research.



New CAP Chair, Ms Merryn Carter



Looking for the Perfect Christmas Gift?

The 2026 Australian Women's Health Diary is the perfect Christmas gift, secret Santa and stocking filler!

This diary does more than help organise our lives every day, it's packed with expert health advice important to every woman - like breast, heart, family, finance and mental health, along with diet, exercise and lots more.

Plus, you'll be helping identify new treatments for the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian women, giving hope to the 56 people diagnosed with breast cancer every day.

You'll feel great knowing you've given the gift of life this Festive Season.

Grab your copy from Newsagents, Woolworths, Participating Post Offices and womenshealthdiary.com.au

DID YOU KNOW?

CREST RESOURCES

We have a dedicated section on our website full of resources to help incorporate health economics and pharmacoeconomic analyses into trial protocols!

On our page we have available:

- Proforma documents for conducting an economic evaluation
- How to collect data
- How to estimate QoL scores
- Various factsheets and templates
- Video recordings of past workshops and webinars such as using Medicare data and HTA..and more!

Resources

Health Expenditure in Australia – Cancer and Other Neoplasms

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released in October this year the health expenditure report for 2023-24[1]. The report includes spending in hospitals, primary health care, referred medical services, support services (patient transport services, aids and appliances, and administration), research, and capital expenditure.

Australia spent $270.5 billion on health goods and services, corresponding to an average of $10,037 per person and 10.1% of the gross domestic product. Most of this funding comes from the Government (69.6%), with hospitals accounting for the largest share ($113.8 billion).

The highest-spending disease area was cancer ($19.7 billion), followed by cardiovascular diseases ($16.9 billion) and musculoskeletal disorders ($16.3 billion) (Figure 1). Expenditure on cancer has doubled in the last 10 years, and has been the highest spending disease group since 2017-18.

For cancer, spending was higher for males ($10.5 billion) than for females ($9.2 billion), peaking in the 70-74 years of age group (Figure 2).

The top 3 spending cancers for females were breast ($1.8 billion), lung ($0.8 billion) and bowel ($0.8 billion), while for males these were prostate ($1.6 billion), non-melanoma skin cancer ($1.2 billion), and bowel ($1.1 billion) cancers[1]. Figure 3 shows cancers and neoplasms with the highest expenditure.

In a context where resources are becoming more scarce by the day, where cancer represents the highest expenditure bucket, providing therapies that represent good value for money remains paramount to ensure a sustainable health care system that provides efficient and equitable care to Australians.

Contributed by: Antonio Ahumada Canale

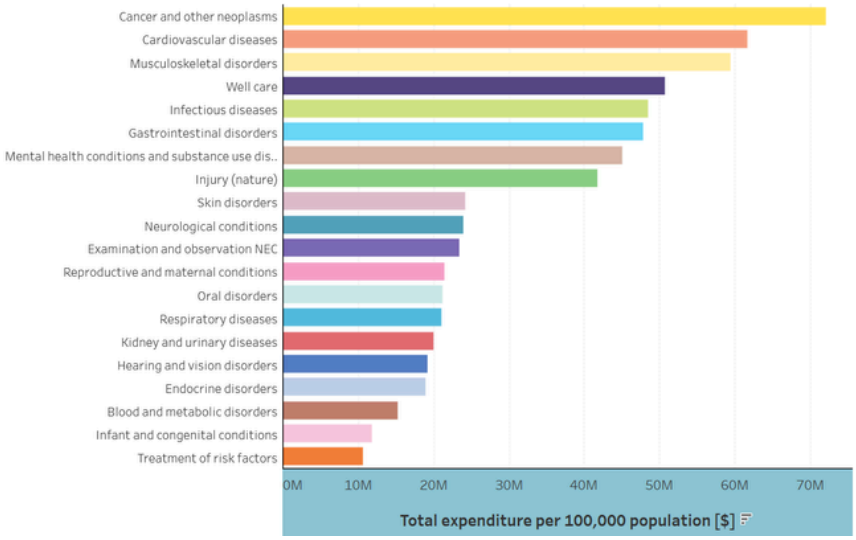


Figure 1: *Expenditure for Burden of Disease groups by area of expenditure, 2023–24*

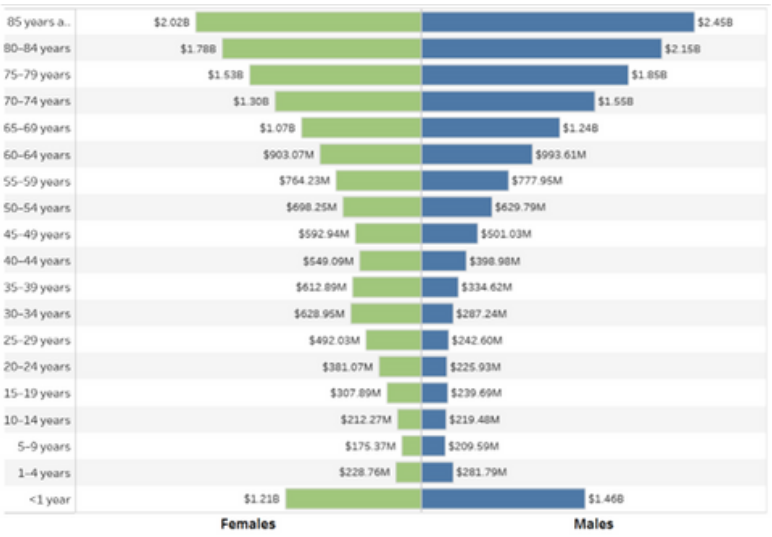


Figure 2: *Total expenditure in cancer and other neoplasms, sex and age group, 2023-24*

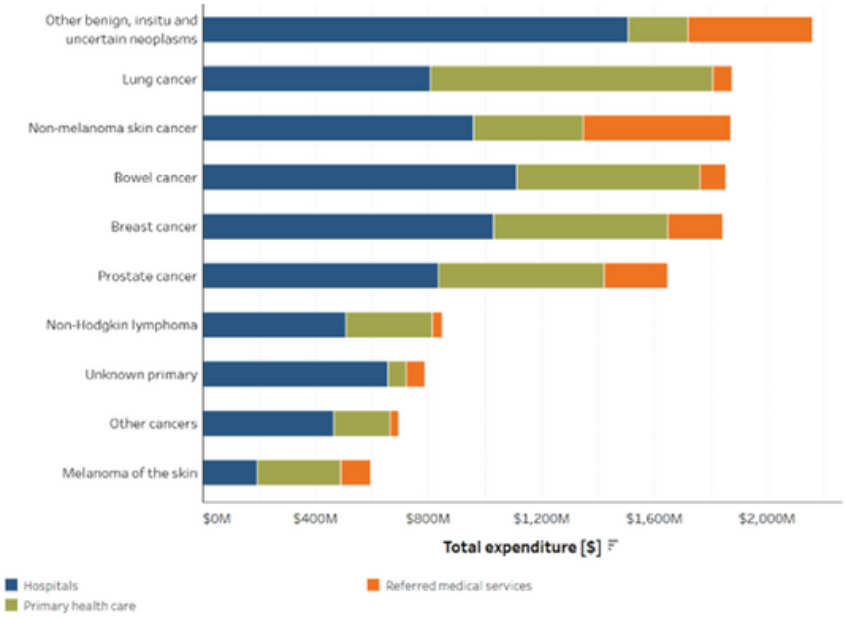


Figure 3: *Expenditure on Cancer and other neoplasms by type, 2023-24*

References

1. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/health-welfare-expenditure/health-expenditure
2. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/health-welfare-expenditure/health-system-spending-disease-injury-aus-2023-24/contents/about

The Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group (TROG)

TROG collaboration brings international skin cancer trial to Australia

TROG Cancer Research recently opened the Australian arm of an international trial aimed at preventing recurrence of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (CSCC), following a groundbreaking collaboration with the US cancer clinical trials group, NRG Oncology.

The **NRG-HN014** trial is a phase III clinical trial targeting patients with CSCC that is locally advanced (stage III or IV), but still removable by surgery. The trial is investigating whether adding immunotherapy drug Cemiplimab prior to surgery for CSCC – either with or without radiation therapy – can extend the length of time patients remain cancer-free and improve outcomes with fewer side effects.

The trial, led by NRG Oncology, is already underway at more than 150 cancer centres across the US and Canada. TROG was accepted as an NRG Oncology Group member in 2024, enabling us to open the HN014 trial at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse in Sydney (COBLH) in October. Congratulations to COBLH Principal Investigator A/Prof Sydney Ch'ng (pictured) and the team, who recently recruited the first Australian participant to the trial.

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne has also launched the trial, while another TROG NRG affiliated site, Wollongong Hospital, opened the trial in November.

The trial is expected to expand to 11 sites and involve 123 participants from across Australia, contributing vital data to inform global findings. Read more about the HN014 trial



A/Prof. Sydney Ch'ng, Principal Investigator for the NRG-HN014 trial at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse

TROG 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting: Don't miss Earlybird registration

Have you locked the TROG Cancer Research 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) into your calendar?

Earlybird registration rates are open until 19 December 2025 for the meeting, being held 17-20 March 2026 at the Pullman Albert Park in Melbourne, Victoria.

An exciting program is planned, with the theme: *Driving Intelligent Trials: Smarter designs, empowered consumers, AI-driven insights, and strong trial systems for better research outcomes*.

We delighted to announce the keynote speaker is **Professor Joost Verhoeff** (pictured), a global leader in precision radiation oncology from the University Medical Center Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Professor Verhoeff was recently appointed as Chair of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Radiation Oncology Scientific Council (ROSC), providing strategic leadership and oversight of ROSC, which serves as the advisory body shaping EORTC's radiotherapy research agenda across Europe.

Full-day workshops to advance your knowledge and skills

TROG's **Technical Research Workshop (TRW) and Clinical Research Education Workshop (CREW)** will be held on Tuesday 17 March 2026 to kick off the ASM.

CREW will host a specialised TransCelerate accredited training program, focusing on the latest revision of ICH GCP E6 (R3). This course will be led by Eleanor Allan from Caledonian Clinical Training, a respected leader in clinical research education who has been delivering high-quality training for over 25 years.



Prof. Joost Verhoeff, from University Medical Center, Utrecth University, The Netherlands; the keynote speaker at the TROG 2026 ASM

The TROG Technical Research Workshop (TRW), aimed at radiation therapists, medical physicists, and radiation oncologists, is designed to facilitate active participation in clinical trials, promote the adoption of cutting-edge technologies in research, and build technical expertise across multidisciplinary teams. The workshop also provides practical training on trial implementation, quality assurance, and advanced treatment techniques, while offering a platform for networking, collaboration, and discussion of emerging innovations in radiation oncology research.

See the workshop programs and register now for the 2026 ASM.

SDA Grant opportunity for emerging investigators

TROG recently launched a new grant opportunity targeting emerging investigators.

Applications for the TROG Secondary Data Analysis (SDA) Grant are open to TROG Members. It will provide one Emerging Investigator each year with AUD$3,000 to support a secondary analysis project using TROG trial data.

The grant, which is sponsored by Newcastle-based commercial real estate agency, Commercial Collective, aims to encourage innovative and feasible secondary data analysis and build the capacity of early-career researchers in radiation medicine research.

Applications close 16 January 2026.

Find out more and apply for the SDA Grant or find out more about becoming a TROG member.

Australasian Leukaemia & Lymphoma Group(ALLG)

ALLG MDS05/D3 MESSAGE Clinical Trial opens for patients with transfusion-dependent Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS)

The MDS05/D3 MESSAGE clinical trial is evaluating the effectivness of a new therapeutic combination of targeted drug amsulostat (SNT-5055) with hypomethylating agent ASTX727. Led by Associate Professor Anoop Enjeti (Calvary Mater Newcastle), this phase 2 multi-centre trial will be conducted over four years at 10 Australian sites. Up to 30 patients will be eligible to receive the new treatment regimen, which aims to improve survival outomces and reduce the reliance on fortnightly blood transfusions required for this type of MDS, addressing a high unmet treatment need.

A/Prof Enjeti said, *"Reducing the amount of blood transfusions is not only a huge benefit to these MDS patients but also reduces the significant burden this treatment causes to the healthcare system. Australian blood banks are facing an ever-increasing demand for red blood cells alongside a shrinking donor pool. By replacing blood transfusions with a new, effective treatment regimen, we can alleviate the burden on the system."*

The ALLG MDS05/D3 MESSAGE trial has been funded by the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and industry partners Syntara and Taiho.

2026 ALLG HSANZ Clinical Trial Fellow Announced

ALLG announced the appointment of our second ALLG HSANZ Clinical Trials Fellow, Dr Safir Belbachir (Fiona Stanley Hospital). Dr Belbachir's research project will investigate how pharmacogenomics influences the metabolism, efficacy and toxicity of cyclophosphamide, a key treatment used to prevent graft versus host disease (GVHD) after allogeneic stem cell transplant. By combining genetic sequencing data with detailed clinical outcomes, the study seeks to identify key gene variants that predict drug response and toxicity risk after transplantation.



2026 ALLG HSANZ Fellow, Dr Safia Belbachir, pictured with ALLG CEO Delaine Smith and Scientific Advisory Committee Chair, Prof Judith Trotman

The ALLG & HSANZ Fellowship is a joint initiative providing opportunities for early career researchers to build experience for a successful career in blood cancer research through undertaking a research project and providing access to ALLG's extensive research network. For more information on the Fellowship, click here.

ALLG at ASH 2025

ALLG members have eight presentations at the 2025 American Society of Hematology (ASH) Meeting. Congratulations to all ALLG investigators and teams involved in the following trials:

Oral Presentation:

- MM25 Viber-M – Dr Shirlene Sim
- NHL35 PACIFIC – Dr Katharine Lewis, Professor Chan Cheah

Poster Presentation:

- MM23 SEALAND – Dr Matthew Rees, Professor Hang Quach
- AMLM22 D4 CADENCE – Dr Victoria Ling, Professor Andrew Wei
- AMLM27 Impress – Professor Steven
- MM22 FRAIL M – Dr Sueh-Li Lim, Professor Andrew Spencer
- NHL27 Relevance – Professor Judith Trotman
- ALLG HSANZ Fellowship Project – Dr Arina Martynchyk

ALLG November Scientific Meeting

ALLG's biannual Scientific Meeting took place from 11-14 November 2025 in Melbourne with over 450 delegates hearing from leading local and international blood cancer experts across our Scientific Plenary Sessions.



ALLG also held a well-attended Laboratory Science Workshop for members, scientists and researchers, with sessions on spatial transcriptomics, MRD monitoring and phased-variant sequencing, and epigenetic therapy.

Our newest ALLG Life Member, Peter Kempen AM, was announced at the Scientific Meeting. As ALLG Board Chair, Peter has made significant contributions to ALLG's success over the last 15 years, playing a vital role in shaping our direction and supporting our mission of *Better treatments...Better lives.*

The 2025 ALLG Annual Review also launched at the Scientific Meeting and is available to download at www.allg.org.au. This publication gives an overview of the last 12 months across ALLG's trial portfolio, global research collaborations and our tangible impact for people with blood cancers.

We welcome new and current haematologists and professionals to join the activities of the ALLG. Learn more about ALLG's Scientific Meetings and how to join ALLG.

For More Updates Follow us on

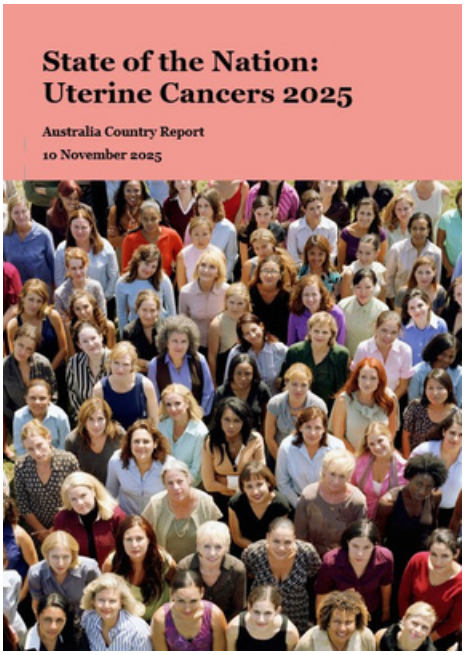
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ALLG Australasian Leukaemia & Lymphoma Group

50th Anniversary ALLG 1973 – 2023

Better treatments... Better lives.

Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG)



State of the Nation: Uterine Cancers Reports 2025

ANZGOG has released the first-ever State of the Nation: Uterine Cancers reports for Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The comprehensive, evidence-based analyses highlight the rising incidence of uterine cancers and the urgent need for coordinated national action.

These landmark reports provide a clear picture of current challenges, emerging trends and critical gaps in awareness, research and equitable care. They will serve as important sector-wide resources to guide planning, collaboration and future investment across Australia and New Zealand.

For more information and to read the reports www.anzgog.org.au.

International Speakers Confirmed: ANZGOG'S 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting

"On the Edge: Translating Innovation into Action"

Dates: Wednesday 25 March – Friday 27 March 2026
Location: Gold Coast, QLD



Building on the momentum and near-record attendance of our landmark 25th Anniversary ASM in 2025, the 2026 ASM invites us to shift our focus forward. It's a call to action: to ask what's next, to push boundaries, and to translate today's innovation into the impact of tomorrow.

The 2026 ASM will be a dynamic forum for bold thinking, practical collaboration, and action-oriented discussion about the future of gynaecological cancer research.

We are thrilled to confirm the three international keynote speakers:

- Dr Kathleen Moore, Gynaecological Oncologist, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma, USA (Medical Oncology Keynote),
- Dr William Small, Radiation Oncologist, Loyola University Chicago, USA, and
- Professor Woo Yin Ling, Gynaecological Oncologist, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Register now: www.anzgogasm.org.au

ANZGOG Trial Update

In October, ANZGOG hosted its annual Research Development Day in Sydney, an energising and collaborative event that brought our research community together to shape the future of gynaecological cancer research. Close to 80 ANZGOG committee members, researchers, clinicians and community representatives attended, contributing fresh ideas, valuable insights and robust discussion focused on developing new research concepts.

ANZGOG is fortunate to have a highly active and committed membership working both locally and internationally to advance clinical trials across Australia and New Zealand. Together, our ongoing leadership and collaboration will continue to drive opportunities for women with a gynaecological cancer to access innovative, world-class research.

ANZGOG clinical trials open to recruitment:

- Gynaecological clear cell carcinoma trial **DOVE**
- 2 vulval cancer studies - **STRIVE** and **ANVU**
- Recurrent Malignant Ascites **REZOLV3R**
- Quality of life/end of life study **PEACE**
- Three endometrial cancer trials, including **ENDO-3**, **XPORT-EC-42** and E**N.10/TAPER**.

ANZGOG Advisory Service trials open to recruitment:

- Ovarian cancer trial: **RAMP 301**

For more information on ANZGOG's trials, please visit www.anzgog.org.au

#AdvancingResearchSavingLives

ANZ GOG | Advancing research *saving lives*

Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association (ANZSA)

ANZSA ASM in Hobart

The 2025 ANZSA Annual Scientific Meeting in Hobart brought together clinicians, researchers, consumers, and carers to explore collaboration, innovation, and patient-centred care in sarcoma management.

The meeting opened with ANZSA Director and ASM convenor Professor Fiona Maclean and Tasmanian Senator Wendy Askew, highlighting the importance of teamwork and research in improving outcomes. Long time Consumer Advisory panellist Natalia Dewiyani shared her inspiring 10-year cancer-free journey, reminding everyone of the power of resilience and connection.

Sessions across the two days showcased cutting-edge research and clinical advances. Our international guest speaker from Atlanta US, Professor Jason Yustein, presented new therapies for high-risk paediatric sarcomas, while sessions on pathology, CRISPR research, and precision immunotherapy highlighted innovations in diagnosis and treatment. Research grant recipients also presented their work, including strategies to enhance immune responses in rhabdomyosarcoma.

Patient-centred care was a strong focus. Presentations on Patient-Reported Outcome Measures, AI in early sarcoma was explored across clinical workflows, and integrating palliative care emphasized holistic approaches, especially for adolescents and young adults.

Community Connect session presented a wonderful opportunity for sarcoma consumers and researchers to share their experience. ANZSA director and CAP chair Sarah Cheung explained the role of the Consumer Advisory Panel, psychologist Dr Toni Lindsay shared coping strategies for fear of recurrence, and researcher Dr Ian Parish presented new immunotherapy approaches for liposarcoma.

The Great Debate sparked a lively discussion about centre-based versus shared regional care. David Coker and Hilde Kleiven went head-to-head,



ANZSA CAP Chair, ANZSA Director Fiona McLean, CAP Natalia Dewiyani, Tasmanian Senator Wendy Askew, ANZSA CEO Denise Caruso

followed by a Consumer Panel reflecting on the real-world challenges of accessing treatment close to home.

The meeting concluded with the Judges' Awards, with Barnaby Kelly winning the Choong-Dickinson Best Oral Presentation Award for his presentation titled- Genome-wide pooled genetic screening reveals mediators of cisplatin resistance in osteosarcoma. Best poster awards were awarded to Lylee Le, Dr Selvi Jegatheeson and Tiruneh Adane Birlie. Congrataultions to all by contributing to high quality clinical and scientific research.

ASM 2025 inspired attendees to continue advancing sarcoma care through collaboration, research, and innovation.

Research Update

Prospective study evaluating the treatment outcomes for localised Recurrent, resectable retroperitoneal LiPoSarcoma (ReLaPSe)

This study aims to collect prospective data on the treatment outcomes in patients with first localized, resectable recurrent retroperitoneal liposarcoma undergoing curative intent treatment. Participant details regarding diagnosis, treatments, outcomes, complications and survival status will be captured after patients are enrolled into the study and at specific time. The study is progressing well, with 5 patients recruited so far. Currently there is 7 sites open, with more coming on board and we expect our international patient to be recruited soon.

Biomarker Observational Study of Biomarkers of Disease-related Outcomes in Patients (LMS BioMarker)

The LMS Biomarker study aims to examine the correlation of change in the biomarker ctDNA with progression free survival. Blood and tissue will be collected at baseline and various timepoints for DNA analysis. The study has recruited 8 patients and the first shipment of samples to the lead site in the United States is planned before the end of 2025, marking a key step in this international collaboration.

Risk Stratification for Patients with First Local Recurrence of Retroperitoneal Liposarcoma (FLORRAL)

This ANZSA led international collaborative study aims to characterise the anatomical location of the first local recurrence in patients with retroperitoneal sarcoma and then to describe and understand the patterns of recurrence and the different treatment approaches for these recurrences. FLORRAL continues to build momentum, increasing to 12 participating sites nationally and internationally with a total of 96 patients data collected to date.

ANZSA
Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association

Using Medicare data in cancer trials

Medicare data are the most accurate source of administrative health care data in this country. It contains individual level data of all medicines that were dispensed on the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme (PBS), and all services that were provided under the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). Services Australia holds Medicare data for a maximum of 4.5 years.

What are MBS services?
Medicare covers services that are provided out-of-hospital (e.g. in doctor's consulting rooms) as well as in-hospital services provided to private patients whether they are treated in a private or public hospital. Importantly, it excludes services provided to public inpatients i.e., the MBS does not hold information on services provided to public inpatients. The government assigns each service a MBS item number and MBS Fee. The list of items can be found in the MBS at www.health.gov.au/mbsonline.

What are PBS items?
The PBS contains pharmaceuticals subsidised by the Australian Commonwealth Government. The list of items on the PBS can be found at https://www.pbs.gov.au/pbs/home.

Why should I use Medicare data in my trial?
It provides us with information about the use of medicines and services not being directly evaluated by a study, e.g., medicines for the treatment of adverse events, or pathology services for monitoring. The use of MBS and PBS data can supplement data collected from trial records to describes patterns of healthcare use and estimate resource use and costs. Using Medicare data can help avoid recall bias as the data capture what services and medicines patients received and when they were received.

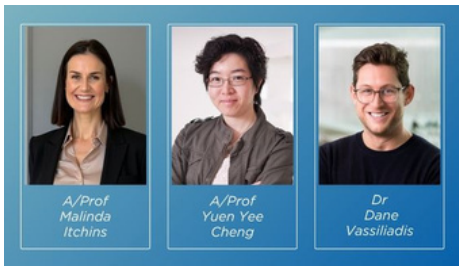
How can I access Medicare data?
Figure 1 shows the process by which you can collect individual data for your trial participants.

For further information, check the CREST Medicare Factsheet or the Services Australia website. If you need assistance with this process or further guidance, please contact our team: crest@uts.edu.au.



Figure 1: *Process for collecting Medicare data from Services Australia*

Thoracic Oncology Group Australia (TOGA)



TOGA Announces Recipients of the 2026 Inspirational Research Grants

For the third consecutive year, these grants—funded entirely by the extraordinary generosity of our philanthropic donors represent a critical investment in cutting-edge research across thoracic cancers. We are thrilled to support three projects that hold immense promise for improving prevention, treatment, and quality of life for patients and their families.

Focus on ALK-Positive NSCLC and Mesothelioma Research

We received a multitude of high-quality applications, and the chosen projects hold immense potential to benefit the thoracic research community. The three recipients for the 2026 Inspirational Research Grants are focused on advancing research in ALK-positive Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) and mesothelioma.

Project: DYNAMALK-PET: A Correlation Study of DYNAMic ct-DNA and PET in ALK+ NSCLC
Recipient: A/Prof Malinda Itchins

DYNAMIC-PET, a sub-study of DYNAMALK, will directly compare what is seen on PET scans with what is found in the blood. By combining PET imaging with ctDNA, this research aims to give doctors earlier and more accurate ways to decide whether to continue or change treatment—improving care and outcomes for patient as ALK+ NSCLC can be detected earlier and more accurately than with imaging alone.

Project: Biomarker Discovery for Predicting Immunotherapy Response in Mesothelioma Patients
Recipient: A/Prof Yuen Yee Cheng

Mesothelioma is an incredibly aggressive and challenging lung lining cancer, and current treatments often fall short. Excitingly, research has identified a highly promising new strategy: a combination immunotherapy using two immune-boosting drugs, PD-1 and TIGIT inhibitors.

This new project is now focused on translating this success to patients by identifying biomarkers: the biological clues that predict who will benefit most from this drug combination. Based on the results, the learnings will be used in designing miRNA-based drugs to explore new treatment options that could offer better results with fewer side effects for patients.

ALK Positive Australia and TOGA Collaboration

In addition to the general research grants, TOGA is proud to announce a collaborative grant with ALK Positive Australia. This grant specifically supports research dedicated to ALK+ Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC).

Project: Identifying Dependencies of Drug Tolerant Cells in ALK+ Lung Cancer
Recipient: Dr Dane Vassiliadis

A major challenge in cancer treatment is the emergence of Drug-Tolerant Persister (DTP) cells, which survive therapy and drive tumor relapse. Currently, little is understood about how ALK+ DTPs arise, adapt to treatment, or develop the resistance that causes relapse.

This project will combine these two proven approaches, using an established mouse model of ALK+ DTP cells, to gain a deeper understanding of these resistant cells. The ultimate goal is to identify and validate new therapeutic targets that can be leveraged to specifically eradicate ALK+ DTP cells.

The future of thoracic cancer research depends on sustained support. The Inspirational Research Grant program is powered exclusively by the generosity of philanthropic donors. We invite you to share this vital initiative to ensure that TOGA can continue to fund projects like these, driving forward innovation that truly improves patient outcomes.

Upcoming Events and Education

Save the date for TOGA's 2026 Events TOGA always has upcoming events both online and in-person. Join us for at the next education event:

Small Cell Lung Cancer Masterclass
March 20, 2026 | Melbourne

This masterclass, to be held as a face to face event in Melbourne, is an advanced interactive workshop aimed at healthcare professionals and covering emerging changes in standard of care.

Annual Scientific Meeting
July 15 – 17 | Melbourne

The TOGA 2026 ASM offers a tremendous opportunity to market to one of the largest gatherings of researchers, clinicians, and professionals in the field of lung cancer and thoracic oncology across Australasia. The meeting provides broad company profiling, networking with lead clinicians, and opportunities for future research collaborations.

See all 2026 events

Conversations in Lung Cancer Podcast

A go-to podcast for in-depth insights into lung cancer. Tune in for conversations with leading experts, inspiring stories, and the latest updates on clinical trials. Stay informed and empowered in the fight against lung cancer.

Listen on Apple or Spotify



ANZSA
Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association

GI Cancer Trials (GCT)

GI CANCER TRIALS

Introducing our new name: GI Cancer Trials

The Australasian Gastro-Intestinal Trials Group (AGITG) and the GI Cancer Institute will now be known under a single name, speaking directly to our purpose: **GI Cancer Trials**.

With it, we're making it easier for partners, collaborators, and the public to immediately understand who we are and the vital role we play.

We're grateful for the support of our partners in cancer research, and look forward to continuing our important work together under the banner of GI Cancer Trials.

Our new name was launched at our Annual Scientific Meeting. Our public launch will take place on 3 February 2026, when our website, social media channels, and public communications will transition to the new identity.

Learn more about the name change

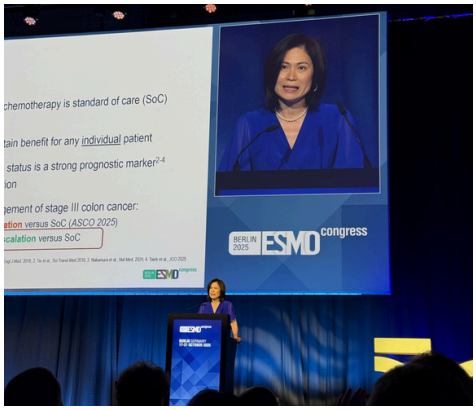
DYNAMIC-III findings presented at ESMO

In October, Professor Jeanne Tie presented results from the colon cancer trial DYNAMIC-III for the ctDNA-negative cohort in a Presidential Symposium at the 2025 ESMO Congress.

Patients who had no ctDNA detected had much better outcomes than those with ctDNA detected; recurrence risk is low for ctDNA-negative patients. The findings showed ctDNA-informed treatment de-escalation is feasible, with markedly reduced oxaliplatin usage and fewer hospitalisations from treatment side effects.

These findings were concurrently published in Nature Medicine.

Read more about the findings
Access the Nature Medicine publication



Prof Jeanne Tie presenting DYNAMIC-III at 2025 ESMO Congress

INTEGRATE IIb results presented at ESMO

Professor David Goldstein also presented results from the phase 3 intergroup trial INTEGRATE IIb for gastric and gastro-oesophageal cancer at the 2025 ESMO Congress. The results showed that the combination of regorafenib and nivolumab (RegoNivo) did not improve median overall survival when compared to currently used chemotherapies, although progression-free survival in both groups was similar.

Compared to currently used chemotherapy, RegoNivo showed higher overall response rate and median duration of response; higher disease control rate at 12 months and overall; and prolonged deterioration-free survival.

Read more about the findings

Recap: 27th Annual Scientific Meeting, Tarntanya/Adelaide

The 2025 AGITG Annual Scientific Meeting was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre between 24–27 November. Convened by A/Prof Sina Vatandoust, the Meeting showcased ways to foster greater collaboration across the membership. The Meeting also focused on partnerships across all areas of GI cancer research, including our growing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to help reduce barriers to join clinical research studies.

Thank you to all our invited faculty and program contributors, and congratulations to all award winners this year:

- **Prof Timothy Price**, John Zalcberg AO Award for Excellence in GI Cancer Research
- **Dr Cass White**, Early Career Researcher Award for Excellence in GI Cancer Research
- **Chia Chia Tan**, Christine Aiken Memorial Award for Excellence in Study Coordination
- **Austin Health Cancer Clinical Trials** and **Sunshine Coast University Hospital**, Excellence in Site Performance

We also congratulate Dr Thomas Hansen on being awarded the Russell Conley Anal Cancer Grant. This community-funded grant was established in memory of our long-serving Chief Executive Officer, Russell Conley, who passed away in November 2024 following a diagnosis of anal cancer.

We hope to see you at our next ASM in Nipaluna/Hobart, 24–27 November 2026.

Stay up to date with our news

Follow us on LinkedIn for more updates.



See you at our next ASM in Nipaluna/Hobart, Tasmania! Pictured: Prof Bogda Koczwara (medical oncology), Vicki Rutten (cancer nursing), Dr Meredith Johnston (radiation oncology), Dr Norma Bulamu (health economics)

Quality of Life Expert Service Team (CQUEST)

SAVE THE DATE!
Upcoming CQUEST Seminar

A core PRO set for Australian cancer care: Findings from the Pan Cancer Initiative

Date: Tuesday, 24 February 2026
Time: 4.30 PM - 6 PM AEDT
Link: will be sent to registered participants

The Cancer Quality of Life Expert Service Team (CQUEST) will be holding a seminar to discuss the findings of the Pan Cancer Initiative (a co-funded partnership between Movember and the Australian Government) and what it means for cancer research.

Full details to come early in 2026!



CREST Updates

Happy CREST-mas!

CREST would like to wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas!

Don't forget, the best gifts are high-value: great impact for a low cost. Happy cost-effectiveness!

Stay safe and may the holiday season bring you the joy (and rest) you deserve!

We look forward to catching up in 2026.

UTS closure

A friendly reminder that UTS will observe soft closures between:

- Monday, 15 December to Friday, 9 January 2026.

Additionally, the Christmas shutdown period will be:

- Thursday, 25 December to Friday, 2 January 2026.

During these periods, there will be limited support available. Please continue to send your requests to crest@uts.edu.au and the team will respond when available.



TRAINING & MENTORING

CREST STRUCTURED TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

If you're working on a clinical trial or cancer research, understanding health economics components is vital. The Structured Training Opportunity program is designed exclusively for members of Cancer Australia Clinical Trials Groups (CTGs).

As an STO participant, you'll receive:

- Expert guidance from a CREST health economist for your eligible project
- 30 to 40 hours of mentoring (typically across three months)
- Face-to-face sessions at the CREST office (complemented by online, phone and email support).

Find out more here.