

What is the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute?

At the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute, we aspire to reach the highest standards of medical research whilst fostering innovation and creativity in cancer research.

The Institute mission is to advance the understanding and treatment of cancer by making an Internationally recognised contribution to cancer research.

The Institute aims to achieve its mission by...

- Aspiring to reach the highest standards of medical research
- Fostering innovation and creativity in cancer research
- Contributing to and participating in the international cancer research community
- Making a strong contribution to the health care of regional Victoria
- Making a significant contribution to the education of scientists and of patients and families touched by cancer
- Adhering to the highest standards of ethics, transparency and accessibility, and remaining independent of any vested interest
- Placing great value on the central importance of the generosity of our donors
- Sourcing appropriate funding through ethical methods

The Institute aims to continue its research and operations through donations from the community, from sponsorship and from partnerships with the business community. We are proud to launch key Events throughout the year to bring a public face to our research supported by Fiona's Dream, The Melbourne Cup Luncheon and the Ballarat Cycle Classic.

We gain inspiration from being local to Ballarat and proud to provide a prestigious and internally recognised facility.

We are a community funded research institute that relies and places great value on the generosity of our donors and supporters.



“Act as if what you do makes a difference...for it does”

The History of the Institute

When Ballarat teenager Fiona Elsey lost her cancer fight in 1991 she couldn't have imagined how her courage and inspiration would motivate her community to support the cancer research work of oncologist and clinician haematologist, Professor George Kannourakis, and fulfil her dream to build a research facility in Ballarat, in the heart of regional Victoria.

The Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Laboratory was opened in 1998. Now there are three laboratories with two major redevelopments completed in October 2007 and May 2009. These redevelopments include: the Bruce Stafford Laboratory, the Troon Auditorium and a new Development Office.

The newly named Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute, houses not just the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Laboratory but also this world-class laboratory and facilities. This has provided state-of-the-art facilities for scientists and the development office.

Professor Richard Boyd, Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratory Director officially opened the 2009 redevelopments on 12 May. This latest redevelopment was made possible by a generous donation from Graeme and Millie Troon.

The Future of the Institute

Following a decision of St John of God Hospital to reclaim the Institute's current premises, The Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute has moved to the newly opened Technology Park Central in Federation University's SMB Campus in Ballarat's CBD. The State Government has kindly provided \$75,000 to Federation University to assist with the relocation of the Institute but the total cost will be around \$300,000.

Relocation of the Institute has recently taken place in January 2015 following works to equip the space as a specialist cancer research hub and has provided the Institute's scientists and administration with facilities of an international standard. Whilst the proposed move was unforeseen, this creates a wonderful opportunity to future proof the Institute to continue and expand our exciting research programs into cancer. This move ensures the Institute continues to grow and develop as an independent and internationally recognised research facility for years to come.

The Institute will continue its research and operations through donations from the community, from sponsorship and partnerships with local business and through fundraising events. We look forward to a strong and productive collaboration with other research teams at Federation University's Technology Park Central to contribute to the further understanding of cancer.

Today the Institute is making enormous progress in unlocking the riddles of cancer. The Institute is also undertaking a world-first trial into individualising chemotherapies for patients.

Current Research Projects

The Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute is currently undertaking the following projects;

- **Chemosensitivity lung cancer trial**, FECRI is undertaking a world-first trial of randomising laboratory testing of chemotherapy drugs prior to treatment in patients with advanced lung cancer and mesothelioma. Currently 14 patients have been enrolled in this trial, with results of this trial been eagerly awaited by many overseas groups.
- **Studies on the causation of Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis**, a rare cancer of the immune system in both children and adults. We have discovered a new immune cell that may be involved in the causation of this disease. Results of this study will be published in an international peer reviewed journal later this month.
- **Studies on immune cells in blood and solid cancers**, led by Associate Professor Stuart Berzins. These studies aim to better identify immune cells that may play a role in the development or progression of cancer. A number of PhD and honours students from Federation University are involved with these studies.
- **Studies on chronic lymphocytic leukaemia** cells and immune cells to determine the molecular changes that lead to the progression of disease and cancer in general. Professor Kannourakis has followed over 100 patients with CLL over many years and has collected multiple blood samples, which will be used to look for changes in the immune cells that identify potential new targets for the activation of the patients immune system to attack developing cancer cells. These studies are in collaboration with Associate Professor Berzins's group. It is anticipated that the future of cancer treatments will predominantly involve re-activating the patients immune cells to attack cancer cells rather than chemotherapy.

“Through world class research we aim to bring hope to those touched by Cancer”