



NEWSLETTER

YOUR IMPACT

71

**funding applications supported by the
Foundation to fund equipment items,
therapeutic programs and room renovations**

As a healthcare charity we recognise the positive impact expressions of gratitude can have during the care experience. We are honoured to partner with donors and supporters in expressing their gratitude, whether that be through honouring a loved one or healthcare worker, sharing a story, or making a gift.

Funds raised provide support for medical equipment and research, refurbishments that help make spaces less clinical, provision of therapeutic programs and comfort items. Gifts positively impact the patients and families we serve in the wider Canberra region who are in of need treatment at public hospital, health care or walk in centre.

Thanks to the generous gifts over this past financial year, the Foundation was able to support 71 funding applications which included 15 applications within the Grant Round. The funding has been distributed across areas of **Canberra Hospital, University of Canberra Hospital, Centenary Hospital for Women & Children, Canberra Region Cancer Centre, community health and walk-in centres.**

This wonderful support has enabled the purchase of innovative medical equipment, supported clinical trials and therapeutic programs as well as refurbishments of away from bed spaces.



EXAMPLES OF KEY ITEMS FUNDED:

Paediatric Hal

Hal is an advanced paediatric simulator that is capable of simulating life like emotions. Specialised lifesaving procedures can be practiced on the mannequin in a safe environment. The mannequin is designed to help clinicians develop specialised skills and improve the team dynamics needed to effectively communicate, diagnose, and treat young patients.

Image credit: Gaumard Scientific, gaumard.com



Portable Cardiac Ultrasound Machine

This machine is intended to be used for outreach clinics in rural communities where patients will be able to see a travelling cardiologist from the Cardiology Department. As a large proportion of our patients travel from outside of the Canberra region into the Cardiology Department at Canberra Hospital in Woden, we are aiming to provide localised care within the surrounding communities to provide better service to our rural neighbours. This service will give people who have difficulties travelling to Canberra Hospital an opportunity to see a specialist in their home community and have availability of the important diagnostic procedure of the portable cardiac ultrasound machine.

Image credit: GE Healthcare <https://www.gehealthcare.com.au/>



Obi Feeding Device

The Obi Feeder will allow patients to independently feed themselves. It allows patients to control what, when and how much food they wish to consume at mealtimes. Trials have indicated that the use of an automatic feeder may result in increased consumption of a meal, reduced patient fatigue, improved enjoyment of a meal and increased opportunity for socialisation with others over a meal.

The Obi Feeder makes eating enjoyable again, and not a chore.

Image credit: WILA Innovations Pty Ltd www.wila-products.com.au



2 recliner chairs for Pathology

The new recliner chairs at the Canberra Hospital Pathology clinic will increase comfort for pregnant women who have needed to fast for a particular blood test which can take up to 2.5hrs to complete. This may mean they feel faint or unwell while waiting to conclude their testing. Being able to lie down with their feet up is a great support and comfort for these expecting mums.

Image credit: Dalcross Medical Equipment, <https://www.dalcross.com.au/>



**CANBERRA
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION**

JIM'S CANCER JOURNEY

In March, Jim's life completely changed. Jim had back pain but didn't think much of it. Back pain was just a result of wear and tear.

A third trip to the doctor changed all that. A lesion had eaten through a spinal disc and collapsed it. On 30 March he was given the results of the scan he'd had the week before, which revealed metastasised cancer. It was emphasised that it was "very serious, very widespread, and very aggressive".

This came as a complete shock to Jim's family. *"My mind was trying desperately to process information, but it was my body which betrayed me - my heart stopped beating, my ears echoed, my head spun, my bladder leaked, my lungs deflated, and my stomach heaved. All I could do, for some moments, was to try, and it did take effort, to breathe in, and then to breathe out,"* remembers Anne Molan, Jim's wife of 49 years.

"The immediate priority, which was conveyed very clearly to us, was to identify the primary cancer. We understood also that given the advanced state of the cancer, our best chance of immediate - or any - treatment being somewhat effective was if the primary cancer were prostate. We faced further tests, consultations and anxiety, until a PET scan on 8 April confirmed that all lesions were secondary prostate cancer," says Anne.

Jim's Oncologist phoned to advise that he would start hormone treatment the next day. *"This was the best news possible, and celebrated by all our kids and families who had joined us,"* continues Anne. Jim started treatment on Friday 9 April, and it continues. He received six sessions of radiation therapy at the CRCC. *"We had appointments with the helpful Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse allocated to us, radiation oncology nurses, technicians, and five appointments with his fabulous Radiation Oncologist. The radiation was primarily for pain relief, and to accelerate the repair of the disc."*

They do face challenges during treatment - *"the one that concerned me most was Jim's pain (which was so bad on diagnosis that hospitalisation was suggested - he declined),"* says Anne.

The challenge that concerned Jim more than any other was to accurately predict how effectively he would be able to perform his duties as a parliamentarian whilst



Jim and Anne celebrate at 'The Bell' in early May 2020, marking the end of Jim's short radiotherapy course.

receiving treatment. Anne is particularly appreciative that *"all Jim's clinicians were as passionate as I about doing everything possible to control his pain, and were very sympathetic to the particular nature of his role as a Senator. They were keen to work with him to ensure that he was able to work as much as possible, and as often as he needed in the office."*

Jim is currently still receiving treatment. The family's hope is that Jim emerges from this course of treatment as one of the lucky people whose advanced prostate cancer can be controlled with oral medication and regular monitoring.

"To all the staff at the CRCC, we would like to say: Thank you, most sincerely, for the kindness, care and interest you have so readily extended to all of us, including the family. We are overwhelmingly grateful," says Anne.

"We decided to make a donation to the Canberra Hospital Foundation to express our appreciation for the magnificent dedication and work of all staff of the CRCC, and to contribute to the establishment of the Wellbeing Centre."

As was the case when their eldest daughter Sarah was diagnosed with bowel cancer, the family hopes to raise awareness by sharing their story and encouraging others to see their doctor early if they feel something isn't quite right. *"I have often been informed by both bowel and prostate cancer specialists that it is personal stories that are most effective in raising awareness of cancer, in prompting someone to check a symptom, in making a decision to schedule an appointment,"* says Anne. The earlier cancer is detected the higher the chances of survival, the more lives are saved.

IMPROVING LIVES OF LOCAL CANCER PATIENTS

Building a Comprehensive Cancer Centre - 'Your Space' Cancer Wellbeing Centre

One in two Australian men and women will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85¹.

Living with cancer and its associated side effects can impact on patients' wellbeing as well as the lives of families and carers.

By continuing to advance significant developments in cancer services for the ACT and regional population the vision is to bring well established benefits of wellbeing programs to cancer patients here in Canberra. An internationally recognised Comprehensive Cancer Centre that will enhance the treatment, research, complementary therapies and emotional support in one integrated facility at the Canberra Region Cancer Centre (CRCC) will be realised by building this dedicated wellbeing centre.



In recent years, most major cancer centres have established wellbeing models of care in the form of integrated wellbeing centres and resources to deliver better integrated patient care and improve outcomes and quality of life for patients. At CRCC some wellbeing service delivery currently occurs, however research has demonstrated that patients want access to, and receive more, supportive care services and survivorship resources at their hospital. The current pandemic has demonstrated even more how important wellbeing strategies and resources are to patients and that any Cancer Care Service needs to consider and integrate virtual education and information provision.

The new Cancer Wellbeing Centre has been given the name Your Space. Its vision is to be a dedicated and nurturing sanctuary for cancer patients undergoing active treatments, and their families.

Your Space will be a welcoming and comfortable non-clinical space for patients and carers to relax, rest and create opportunities to meet other cancer patients and their carers, as well as community service providers. It will be committed to providing support to those who are undergoing cancer treatment, as well as to the carers of patients.

The centre will support individuals undergoing active cancer treatment in the ACT and surrounding region. A range of wellbeing and supportive care programs will be offered to cancer patients, from time of diagnosis, active treatment and in the transition to the post treatment phase.

Helping those affected by cancer when they need it most

Canberra Hospital Foundation has raised \$1.39m in Phase 1 of our fundraising campaign to support this build; Phase 2 is about to launch with a target to raise a further \$1.2m through donations or gifts in kind.

The expected completion date of the Centre is mid to late 2022.

Community support through donating towards this important project will have an immense and real impact on the cancer journey of local patients and their families.

You can help those affected by cancer when they need it most - let's make Your Space a reality, together; join with us to build a comprehensive cancer centre here in our local community.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. Cancer in Australia: In brief 2019. Cancer series no. 122. Cat no. CAN 126. Canberra: AIHW.



YOUR SPACE

CANCER WELLBEING CENTRE

Supported by Canberra Hospital Foundation

Approximately 30% of cancer patients are from regional NSW

Each day at Canberra Region Cancer Centre, located at the Canberra Hospital, approximately:

- **100 patients receive radiation therapy treatment**
- **120 patients receive chemotherapy treatments**
- **130 patients attend for medical appointments**
- **over 200 calls are received**

Each month there are more than 550 new referrals.

FROM CHALLENGING BEGINNINGS TO HAPPY FAMILY LIFE

Denver and Michelle Farrar moved to Canberra from India. Denver moved to Australia to study in 2004 and his wife Michelle joined him a few years later in 2011. Enjoying the Canberra lifestyle, the young couple chose to start a family, and excitedly began to prepare to welcome a new life to their household.

Unfortunately, the pregnancy turned out to be an extremely stressful time. At their 12-week check-up, their baby was diagnosed as high-risk for Down Syndrome and the couple were referred to the Fetal Medicine Unit at Canberra Hospital. From then on, Michelle had to have regular check-ups, first weekly, then every three days and then daily.

In week 31 they received the terrifying news that the baby was not growing and needed to be born as soon as possible.

Zane was born via C-section on 12 November 2015 at 31 weeks and 4 days. Weighing only 990g, Zane was so little that he could only manage 0.1ml of milk at a time.

Zane was in a humidicrib in NICU for over two months. Born with scarring on the lungs, Zane also had to be on CPAP, which helps the lungs function, for close to a month. It was a tough time for the family.



Baby Zane



CANBERRA
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION

"Having a child for the first time, everything is new for the parents, it's a whole new world. We didn't know there is a place called NICU, so finding yourself in that environment was a bit of a shock." remembers Denver.

"But the nurses and doctors at NICU just made everything so easy for us."

"You learn all these new terms." Denver remembers being asked by a doctor if he or his wife were working in the medical field or if they were doctors. "But you start to learn all that. You just pick up all that, I guess. And you know your son inside out."

"It's hard because you can only touch him with your hand, you can't cuddle him." says Denver.

"But after 2 or 3 weeks we were slowly able to give him cuddles and hold him. And have that important skin to skin contact with his mother and have that connection. Those first weeks were very difficult and sometimes it plays in our head. But we always knew that he was in best hands."

"The hardest part [was] that we couldn't stay with him overnight. So we had to come home and go back there every day. It's very hard if your child is not with you."

Michelle was on maternity leave and Denver was on parental leave for the first month. Each waking minute possible they spent at the hospital with Zane.

"We had a dog as well and we couldn't leave it with anybody because we don't have any relatives here in Canberra. So it was like having another child waiting in the house for us."

So we'd come back home, cook and do whatever we needed to do. Then again as early as possible in the morning by 7 we were in the hospital. Then I'd come back home cook lunch and take some back to the hospital to my wife. Then come back home again and back to the hospital. It used to be that back and forth."

There were a number of scary moments for the family during the time in NICU. The most terrifying moment was when Zane had to have blood transfusions about 3 weeks after he was born.

Zane only weighed close to 1 kg at that time. "When he had the blood transfusion suddenly, he kind of bloated, his face, his hands and legs got swollen, he looked like he had put on half a kilo. That was quite stressful and probably one of the scariest moments." remembers Denver.

After two months in NICU Zane was moved into the Special Care Nursery. That was a big milestone. He was then moved to the children's ward where he spent a few days before finally being able to go home on 26 January, after spending 3 months in hospital.

Zane was sick quite often when he was small. He had to have grommets inserted, and his tonsils removed. When he was about two years old, he had pneumonia and was admitted to hospital for a week. That was another challenging time for the family. That's when they discovered that he was asthmatic due to the scarring of his lungs when he was born.

Zane started crawling a bit later. *"But then when he did start crawling, he started crawling really fast,"* laughs Denver.

His speech is a little bit behind the other kids, and he started going to speech therapy about a year and a half ago. He needs to wear glasses. But he's come a long way. He has caught up in terms of development with other kids his age.

Denver remembers there was a board at NICU with cards and pictures of babies who have been at NICU showing how their life started and how they are now. *"Every time we used to walk past, we would look at it and say 'one day that will be us,'"* remembers Denver.

Luckily, after a tough journey, that has become a reality for their family, Zane is a thriving little boy who will turn 6 in November.

"The things he does in the park now are just unreal which even other kids find hard to keep up with. He is super active, he never sits around and plays quietly, he is always on the move. He is full of life, very feisty, he's a red head as well," laughs Denver.

"All the doctors and nurses in NICU are fantastic, they just do an amazing job. They do it with a smile. There are no words in the dictionary to praise them, to explain how grateful we are to them. The only thing I can say, the one word to describe them is they are like superheroes," says Denver quite emotionally.

"We are very grateful for what they do every single day, the way they look after the kids. And most importantly, they don't just look after the kids but the parents as well, they comfort and counsel them, and offer them a shoulder to cry on."

"Because of what we went through with Zane my wife Michelle and I, we just wanted to give back. We make a regular monthly donation to the Foundation. I would encourage anyone who is in a position to help to do the same to save many more kids and premature babies like Zane," says Denver.

Zane celebrating Christmas



The 'Whole Nine Months' ACT program, launched in February 2019 and funded through the generous donation from the Liangis family, has seen 45 fewer preterm births compared with the previous five-year average.*

*Canberra Health Services, Annual Report, 2019-20

Thanks to your kindness, you are helping a growing number of people in our community overcome hardship or distress caused by illness, disability or injury. You are helping to reduce the impact a hospital stay has on the rest of a patient's life; we could not fulfil our role and vision without people like you who strongly believe in our work and purpose.

We truly thank you for your most generous support and commitment to our vital work.

"Our ward for the past few months has had the privilege in providing end of life care to quite a few patients. The bed covers, may they be knitted or patchwork, are the first items our nursing staff use to comfort the patients in their last days or weeks.

Feedback from the patients has been:

"they feel very special"

"it reminds them of home" and

"they provide warmth and comfort".

Feedback from the patients' families has been:

"the blankets are something they can take home to remember their loved ones" and their loved ones smell remains."

These blankets and quilts are very special to our family's and a vital part of our ward in providing a keep sake and to provide love and care towards our patients.

Staff member, General Medicine Ward CCC, 7B.

"Life's been pretty good to me in most respects, and it makes me feel good to do things for others when I can."

Bob, Grateful Patient



Cuddle bed

"Witnessing and facilitating beautiful moments during the worst day in a family's life is profoundly moving. So, it is with deep gratitude to the Hospital Foundation that we tell this story of a recent death where we used both the Foundation funded Cuddle Bed and the Foundation funded Delta Dog to facilitate a beautiful and intimate death. Both the dog-loving patient and the distressed family member settled with the consolation of proximity to each other and the comforting touch of 'man's best friend.'

With thanks for funding such worthy projects."

Tess Knight, ICU

"Just wanted to feedback back to you our first interaction with our new staff member on the ward. The patients (and staff) were very happy with the visit. I noticed it lifted patients' spirits on the wards, and especially on Adolescents with our mental health patients, it gave us another strategy to use to facilitate our engagement with them."

**Staff member, Adolescent & Medical Wards,
Department of Paediatrics, Centenary Hospital
for Women and Children**

Thank you

LIFE GIVING



**CANBERRA
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION**