

# Annual Report 2023

The Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation acknowledges the Muwinina people whose land we stand on today and pay our respects to Elders past and present

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# Our vision

Create better health outcomes.

# **Our mission**

To engage the community to fund and facilitate medical research and associated activities to improve health outcomes for Tasmanians.

# **Our values**

The Foundation is dynamic, resourceful, transparent and we act with integrity.



# From the **Interim CEO**

As I step into the role of Interim CEO at the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation, it's with a profound sense of pride that I look back on all that we have achieved over the last year. Steph Furler is taking a well-deserved break to welcome a new joy into her life, and during this time, I am committed to not only maintaining but also building upon the incredible legacy of our Foundation. The dedication, hard work, and unwavering support from our community that has led to these accomplishments is truly inspiring. I'm excited and hopeful that I can contribute positively during my tenure as Interim CEO.

The past year has been marked by remarkable achievements, a testament to the power of our collective effort. Our team's dedication and our community's support has propelled us toward significant milestones in medical research and community impact. The generosity of our donors has been the cornerstone of our mission, enabling groundbreaking research initiatives that promise to transform healthcare and improve lives.

From innovative approaches in prostate cancer research to pioneering early detection studies in dementia, the impact of your support is profound. The 2023 research grant recipients are concluding their studies, and the projects undertaken by the 2024 recipients hold great promise for the future of healthcare. Each initiative underscores our commitment to advancing medical research for a healthier, more resilient community.

I am immensely grateful for the dedication and expertise of our Board and team of hard-working staff. Your commitment is the bedrock of our success. Together, we have raised over \$1.3 Million this year, demonstrating the trust and confidence our community places in the importance of our mission. Our community initiatives, including the Easter Egg Hunt and the International Women's Day Breakfast, have not only raised critical funds but have also fostered a spirit of unity essential to our shared mission.

Looking back, every grant awarded, every research project funded, and every step forward has been a result of your belief in our cause. As I take on this role, I am eager to continue this journey with you, pushing the boundaries of medical research and striving for outcomes that improve the health and well-being of our Tasmanian community.

I am proud of what we have achieved together and hopeful for what we can accomplish in the future. Your continued support is invaluable, and I look forward to working with all of you, hearing your stories, and building on our shared achievements.

Thank you for the warm welcome into this incredible community. Together, we are making a significant impact, shaping a brighter, healthier future for Tasmania.

Warmest regards,

John Stubley

John Stubley Interim CEO Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation

# From the **Board Chair**

As the Board Chair of the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation, I look back on the past year with immense gratitude and respect. Our community's unwavering commitment has propelled us to new heights, and I extend my appreciation to each of you who has contributed to our success.

Thanks to your support throughout this year, we have been able to pay out over \$800,000 towards critical research projects that align with our strategic goals. We have made significant progress in various areas including maternal and child health, chronic diseases, and mental health. We appreciate your generosity and look forward to continuing our efforts to make a meaningful impact on people's lives.

I am delighted to share that our 2024 Research Grant recipients are undertaking projects that hold great promise for the future of healthcare. These initiatives, ranging from new ways to detect dementia to developing new models of care for older surgical patients, exemplify our commitment to driving positive change in medical research.

Our research projects are funded by our exceptional donors and supporters. Your unwavering generosity is the lifeblood of our Foundation, providing the resources necessary to support these ground-breaking research initiatives. Your belief in our mission fuels our passion and allows us to embark on innovative projects that advance medical knowledge and improve community health outcomes. 2023 saw a boost in revenue from bequests and these legacy gifts will be tremendous additions to Medical Research in Tasmania.

I am grateful to all our dedicated Board members and the hard-working Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation team. Your tireless dedication, passion, and expertise have been instrumental in our achievements. Through your collective efforts, we continue to make significant strides in medical research and contribute to the wellbeing of our community.

As we celebrate the milestones of the past year, including total grant funding over the last 26 years now exceeding \$11.5 million, let us recognise the tangible outcomes of our collaborative efforts. Our researchers have made promising advancements in understanding and addressing various health challenges, from cancer research to the complexities of chronic diseases. These achievements are a testament to our collective dedication and the impact we can make when we work together.

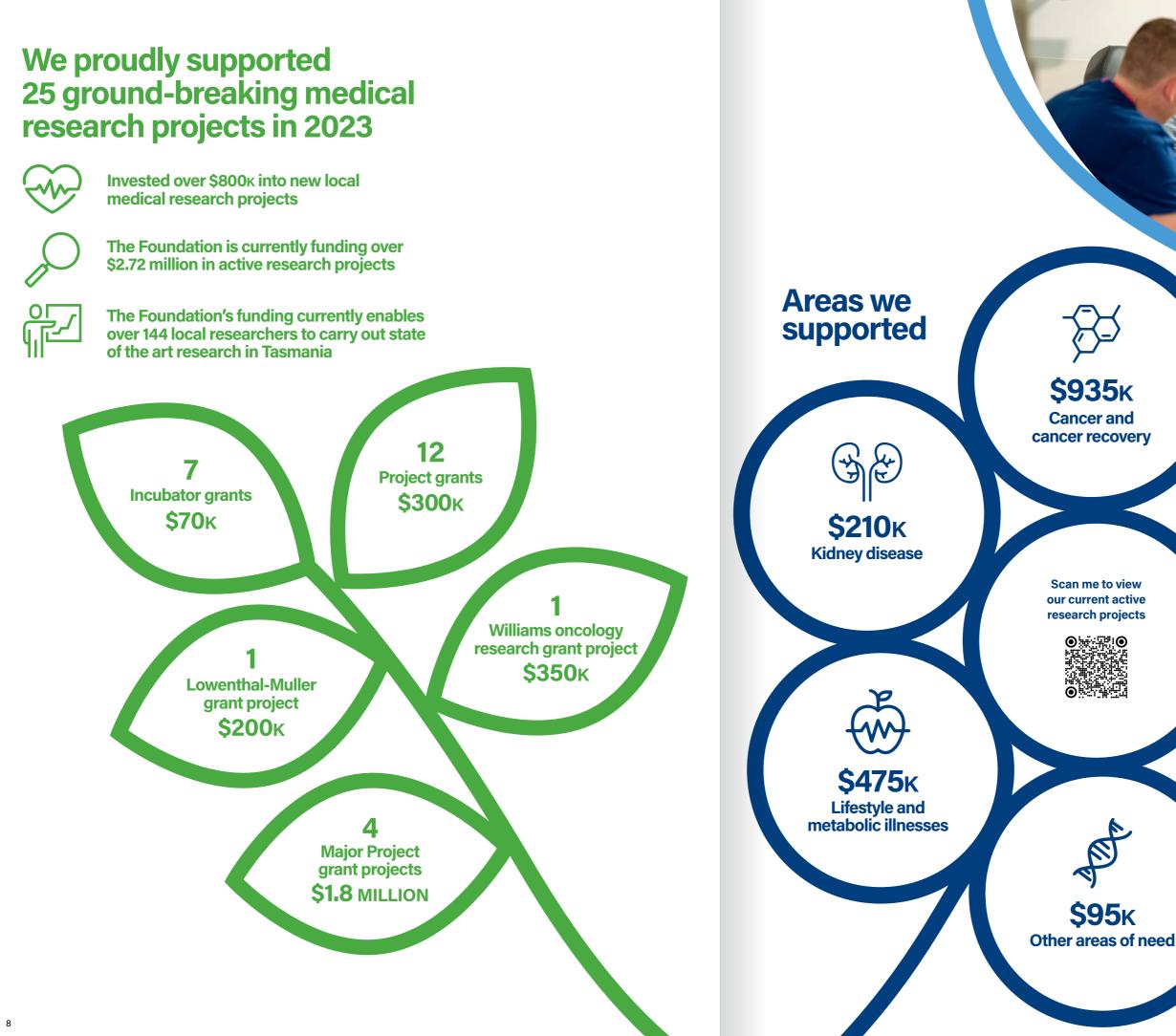
Looking ahead, I am excited about the possibilities that the future holds for the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation. With your support, we will continue to drive innovation, discover new solutions and contribute to the broader health landscape. Together, we can continue to make a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of our community.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to this noble cause.

Warm regards,

Michael Burnett

Michael Burnett **Board Chair** 





# \$945к

Dementia, Parkinson's, and neurological disorders



**\$45**ĸ Stroke and stroke prevention

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# **Supporting local medical** research since 1997



Over \$11.5 million dollars in support of local research projects



26 years of impact on the Tasmanian community



Proudly supported over 345 local medical research projects since inception



Over 472 academic outputs have been produced thanks to the Foundation's support



**Foundation-led research has** resulted in over 35 local, national and international collaborations



# **Financial Statistics**

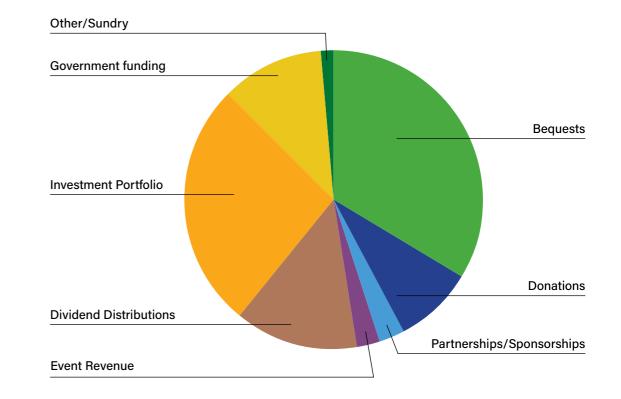


The Foundation connects with over 11,255 people across its multimedia channels.

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The Foundation launched its 'Friends for the Future' bequest program, with 7 members committing to leave a gift in their Will.

Funding source	Dollars	Percentage
Bequests	759,934	33.88%
Donations	192,345	8.58%
Partnerships/Sponsorships	58,077	2.59%
Event Revenue	55,344	2.47%
Dividend Distributions	302,192	13.47%
Investment Portfolio	598,296	26.68%
Government Funding	250,000	11.15%
Other/Sundry	26,739	1.19%
TOTAL	2,242,927.00	100.00%







Over 2,000 ticketed guests joined our 2023 Easter Egg Hunt, and we distributed over 25,000 Easter eggs!

# **Improving prescription practices: Addressing opioid misuse**

In the fight against opioid misuse, Giles Barrington and his colleagues at the Royal Hobart Hospital have been conducting crucial research into how opioids are prescribed in the Emergency Department (ED).

Supported by the generous backing of the Foundation's platinum partner, the John's Group, this research aims to understand and improve prescribing practices to tackle the growing concern of opioid misuse both in Australia and worldwide.

Focusing on the prescription patterns of oxycodone, the team embarked on a study comparing two periods: January to June 2019 and January to June 2021. A fundamental change during this time was halving the default number of oxycodone tablets prescribed from 20 to 10 in response to the pharmaceutical benefits advisory committees' revision of opioid pack sizes when prescribing for acute pain. The results showed an increase in total prescriptions inline with increasing ED presentations but a significant drop in the number of tablets per prescription, indicating a positive shift towards reducing opioid availability and potential misuse. The study also noted differences in prescribing patterns based on physician experience, patient age, and sex, hinting at areas for further research.

The reduction in default prescription quantities proved to be a simple yet effective way to alter prescribing behaviours, emphasising the potential of such interventions to lessen the impact of opioid misuse. Mr Barrington presented these findings at the Australasian College of Emergency Medicines' 37th Annual Scientific Meeting in Canberra, underlining the importance of data-driven decisions in prescribing practices.

This important work highlights the power of targeted research in combating public health issues and celebrates community support's role in advancing medical research. This research would not have been possible without the support of the Foundation's platinum partner, the John's Group. Mr Giles Barrington reported, "This grant has enabled pioneering research and strengthened the research team, facilitated the employment of a full-time study coordinator, and promoted a culture of research, education, and data-driven decision-making within the ED".

The study's results provide crucial evidence for minimising harm from potentially abusive drugs prescribed in the ED and hold promise for broader applications in safer prescribing practices.

Right Project CIA, Giles Barrington

#### "

This important work highlights the power of targeted research in combating public health issues and celebrates community support's role in advancing medical research.

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These insights shape considerations for telehealth's broader application, especially postdischarge from the Emergency Department. "

> Right Project CIA Dr Niamh Chanman

Her support has been the catalyst for critical research aimed at enhancing the delivery of the Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinic (RACPC), a crucial component of our comprehensive cardiac care system, ensuring top-quality care continues even in challenging times.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the RACPC swiftly adapted to a telehealth approach, maintaining uninterrupted care amidst health service disruptions. This transition was pivotal in meeting patients' ongoing needs while safeguarding their health and that of the healthcare staff.

Supported by Mrs Pitman's donation, Dr Niamh Chapman, chief researcher, and Dr Andrew Black, a leading local cardiologist, spearheaded a study revealing that telehealth not only reduced the necessity for additional cardiac tests but also remained a safe and effective method for supporting patient's post-chest pain. These insights shape considerations for telehealth's broader application, especially post-discharge from the Emergency Department.

Under Dr Chapman's leadership, a 'process evaluation' of the RACPC was conducted. This research approach identified the essential components needed to successfully deliver the clinic and assessed the viability of expanding telehealth to increase patient accessibility. This pioneering study marks the first formal evaluation of the processes underpinning a successful RACPC, potentially influencing the development of a national strategy to support RACPCs across Australia.

Through her philanthropy, innovation, and commitment to technological advancement, Patricia Pitman's legacy is paving the way for a future where comprehensive, accessible cardiac care is a reality for all Tasmanians. Her contributions underscore the transformative impact of visionary support in healthcare - improving patient outcomes, enhancing quality of life, and potentially setting a national benchmark in cardiac care delivery.

#### Scan me to watch the Foundation's Research Matters **Heart Health seminar**

Right Dr Andrew Black with the Foundation team at Research Matters - Heart Health during World Heart Week

# **Enhancing recovery:** Leading cardiac care for chest pain patients at the **Royal Hobart Hospital**

#### Thanks to the visionary generosity of Mrs Patricia Pitman, the Royal Hobart Hospital has taken significant strides in advancing cardiac care for Tasmania's 37,000 heart condition sufferers.





At the Royal Hobart Hospital, a vital challenge is being addressed - one that impacts the wellbeing of future generations: maternal obesity. This pressing issue, with its extensive consequences for mothers and newborns, has met a strong adversary in Dr Michelle Kilpatrick and her team.

Top right Project CIA, Dr Michelle Kilpatrick

Scan here to learn more about the HiPPP study, and other research giving newborn Tasmanian's the best start to life.





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**Recognising that** standalone lifestyle interventions fall short, the HiPPP study emphasises the importance of arming clinicians with the training, resources, and support necessary to provide personalised, woman-centred care.

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Bolstered by the generous support from the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation's donors, the Health in Preconception, Pregnancy, and Post-Birth (HiPPP) study was initiated. This groundbreaking project aims to weave evidence-based lifestyle interventions into the fabric of routine antenatal care.

Tasmania grapples with the highest rates of overweight and obese individuals in Australia, a reality compounded by food insecurity and a high proportion of young mothers facing social disadvantages. The state's alarming pre-term birth rate, the highest in the country since 2015, is a stark indicator of the urgency to address maternal health. This backdrop of health challenges sets the stage for the HiPPP study's mission: to usher in a new era of maternal healthcare that understands and actively combats these issues.

Dr Kilpatrick and her team, fuelled by a deep understanding of the impact of lifestyle choices on the health of both mother and child, have taken a comprehensive approach. Recognising that standalone lifestyle interventions fall short, the HiPPP study emphasises the importance of arming clinicians with the training, resources, and support necessary to provide personalised, woman-centred care. "The collaborations formed and the impacts we've been able to achieve through these would not have been possible without the support of the Foundation. We thank the donors for their support in improving the health of mothers and babies in Tasmania," Dr Kilpatrick reflects on the journey.

healthcare community.

This initiative, aligning with the Foundation's mission to enhance the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians, stands as a shining example of what can be achieved through collective action and generous support. It tackles a critical health issue head-on and lays the groundwork for a healthier future for mothers and their babies.

As we reflect on the HiPPP study's achievements and ongoing mission, we extend our deepest gratitude to the donors whose generosity has been instrumental in this endeavour. Together, we are not just witnessing a change in maternal healthcare; we are part of a movement that holds the promise of a healthier, brighter future for Tasmania's next generations. Through continued support and collaboration, the Royal Hobart Hospital's antenatal service is poised to make a profound and lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian mothers and their children.

The study carefully advanced, assessing how health tips are included in regular medical care and creating new resources for healthcare workers and pregnant women. This approach highlights a solid dedication to using methods backed by scientific evidence. Partnerships with esteemed institutions like the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the University of Southampton have enriched this endeavour, paving the way for disseminating crucial knowledge and practices.

As the HiPPP study garnered international recognition, winning the People's Choice award at a health conference in 2021, it became a testament to the power of collaborative effort and innovation in addressing maternal obesity. Developing a network of Tasmanian Healthy Conversation Skills trainers represents a forward-thinking step, ensuring that the study's insights and strategies will resonate throughout the

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**Dr** Mohammed Salahudeen is proud to be enhancing the care of Tasmania's elderly population.

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Top Right Project CIA, Dr Mohammed Salahudee



The dangers of anticholinergic drugs for older adults have become increasingly apparent, with risks including hospitalisations, falls, cognitive issues, and, notably, a higher risk of developing dementia with long-term use.

The more anticholinergic drugs taken, the greater the risk. Dr Mohammed Salahudeen has taken a leading role in addressing these concerns through a groundbreaking study to reduce the use of such medications in individuals aged 65 and over. This initiative focuses on understanding the impact of changing prescription habits and aims to improve patient outcomes by considering these long-term risks.

With a dedicated team, Dr Salahudeen laid the groundwork for this project in early 2022, securing necessary approvals and bringing Clinical Research Assistant Mr Glen Bayer on board. The team's efforts included educational workshops for healthcare professionals, highlighting the importance of this project and garnering positive feedback.

The study was characterised by rigorous data collection and analysis involving 350 patients before and after the intervention. This process revealed a significant reduction in the use of anticholinergic medications. A standout innovation from this research was implementing a 'sticker alert' system for healthcare providers designed to optimise medication prescribing practices.

Dr Salahudeen's initiative marks a significant step forward in enhancing the care of our elderly population, showcasing a proactive approach to mitigating the risks associated with anticholinergic drugs. The project's success underscores the value of targeted research and the potential for improved healthcare practices made possible through the support of our generous donors. This effort not only benefits older adults but also sets a precedent for future research and healthcare standards.

Your generous contributions make these vital research projects possible, enhancing the well-being of our seniors and the entire community. Thank you to our donors for significantly impacting the health and future of our elderly population.

# Advancements in blood cancer research: A testament to legacy giving

In the world of medical research, progress is often sparked by the kindness of people who want to make a difference. Mrs Betty Rose Bateman was one such person.

Her gift has led to significant steps forward in blood cancer research at the Royal Hobart Hospital. Dr Niles Nelson, known for her commitment to fighting blood cancer, has been leading this charge, thanks to the support from Mrs Bateman's generous bequest.

Dr Nelson's team is working hard to learn more about what causes blood cancers by looking at the genes of families in Tasmania with a history of these diseases. They've been gathering families with a lot of blood cancer cases and looking at their DNA to find clues that could help doctors treat or even prevent blood cancer in the future.

This information is crucial because it helps the researchers compare and understand the genetic factors that might make someone more likely to get blood cancer.

Their findings have been remarkable. For the first time, they've identified specific genes in Tasmanian families that could lead to blood cancer. This finding is a significant step forward because it helps everyone understand more about how blood cancer works and opens new ways to think about treatment.

Dr Nelson's determination to keep exploring and learning more about blood cancer is unwavering. She is committed to finding even better ways to help patients.

This project wouldn't have been possible without Mrs Bateman's thoughtful gift. Her legacy is making a real difference in the fight against blood cancer. As we move forward, we're grateful for her support and excited about the future of blood cancer research. It's a great example of how one person's foresight and generosity can lead to breakthroughs that benefit us all.



Project CIA. Dr Niles Nelso

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This finding is a significant step forward because it helps everyone understand more about how blood cancer works and opens new ways to think about treatment.

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## **Our Events**

#### **Cradle Mountain** Huts Walk

The Foundation joined forces with the Tasmanian Walking Company to offer an exclusive, guided trek along the Overland Track in Cradle Mountain National Park. This all-inclusive package was tailored for those seeking to revel in Tasmania's natural beauty while making a meaningful contribution to a noble cause. Thanks to these philanthropic participants' exceptional generosity, the Foundation raised an incredible \$6,250.

#### International Women's Day

After several years, the Foundation returned to the Hotel Grand Chancellor for a delightful morning, celebrating the remarkable women who enriched our lives on International Women's Day. It was a privilege to have Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC as the keynote speaker, who graciously shared personal insights from her career, her time as Governor, and inspiring anecdotes that resonated with our attendees. The Foundation continued its partnership with ABC Hobart Radio, showcasing ten remarkable female researchers and industry trailblazers who are achieving substantial progress and acting as sources of inspiration in their respective domains on their breakfast show with Ryk Goddard. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our attendees, the Foundation successfully raised \$5,685 in minor event fundraising and realised a profit of \$7,620.

# **Research Grants Launch**

In February 2023, the Foundation hosted its annual Research Grants launch at the historic Hadley's Orient Hotel in Hobart. We were elated to have our esteemed Board members, steadfast supporters, and grant recipients join us for the evening, where we unveiled a compelling line-up of upcoming projects set to receive Foundation funding in the year ahead. Thanks to the unwavering generosity of our supporters, we were delighted to share that we were injecting a further \$800K worth of funding into local medical research.

#### Easter Egg Hunt

The Easter Egg Hunt remains a cherished and iconic Easter tradition in Hobart. Celebrating its eleventh year at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, the event drew thousands of enthusiastic attendees, eager to embark on their annual scavenger hunt for Cadbury Chocolate treasures. With the invaluable backing of sponsors like Chemist Warehouse, Optus, Pulse Hobart, and Cadbury, this event consistently sells out before the gates open. The 2023 edition set a record, generating a profit of \$24,771, including \$2,179 in minor fundraising.



### **Research Matters**

The Foundation introduced an engaging series of free speaker seminars showcasing researchers and clinicians funded by the Foundation, with a primary focus on health concerns relevant to the local community. In 2023, we directed our attention towards dementia, featuring presentations by Associate Professor Jane Alty and Dr Jess Collins; prostate cancer, with insights from Dr Liesel Fitzgerald, Dr Kelsie Raspin, and Dr Nick Davies; and heart health in honour of World Heart Day, featuring Dr Andrew Black. These sessions attracted robust attendance and received enthusiastic praise from participants. We anticipate hosting four additional Research Matters seminars at our partner, St Lukes Hobart Wellness Hub, in 2024.



#### **Friends for the Future Bequest Lunch**

In September, the Foundation hosted its inaugural 'Friends for the Future' bequest lunch, marking a significant milestone in our engagement with those who have expressed their commitment to leaving a bequest to the Foundation. During this memorable event, attendees had the opportunity to delve into inspiring firsthand accounts of research endeavours funded by the late Mrs Betty Bateman through the insights of Dr Niles Nelson. Attendees also had the chance to have their questions addressed by our fantastic event and legal partners, Butler, McIntyre and Butler. The event achieved resounding success, and we eagerly anticipate organising more 'Friends for the Future' lunches, extending invitations to additional Foundation supporters to join the Friends for the Future bequest society in future years.



The Foundation's Spring Soiree took place at Aura, one of Hobart's newest and vibrant venues, marking the conclusion of a successful year of research endeavours. This special occasion brought together Board members, steadfast supporters, research teams, and Foundation partners to commemorate the conclusion of 2023 and learn about the remarkable research achievements made possible by the unwavering support of the Foundation's donors. This event owes its success to our outstanding partners, St Lukes, and included an engaging Q&A session with up-andcoming sleep scientist, Sam Bramich.

# Are you interested in hosting a fundraiser for the Foundation?

#### Do you have an idea for a fundraising event in mind? We're here to assist!

Don't hesitate to contact us on (03) 6166 1319 or research@rhhresearchfoundation.org, and we'll guide you every step of the way.

> Scan to find out more about **Community Fundraising**





## Our corporate partners make it possible

We're thrilled to collaborate with incredible organisations that share our commitment to enhancing the health and well-being of Tasmanians.

Their support enables us to undertake the crucial work we're passionate about each year. Together, we've brought joy and community spirit to life through events like our Easter Egg Hunt and celebrated empowerment at our International Women's Day breakfast. Our partners are the heroes behind the scenes, providing essential funding for our research grants program. In 2023 alone, they generously contributed over \$186,775 in sponsorship funding and in-kind support to the Foundation. Through these collaborations, we can make a significant impact, and we're profoundly grateful for each partnership that helps us move closer to our goals.

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### **Foundation partners**

NOUH





#### **Event partners**



**Solstice** 





#### **Media partners**







# **HANSENYUNCKEN**











Lawyers Est. 1824







# **Our People**

Our Board is responsible for guiding the Foundation's strategic direction, exercising financial responsibility and policy making. Our Board and Committee members generously volunteer their time and receive no remuneration for their service to the Foundation.

#### The Foundation has three Board Committees:

- The Business Development Committee which oversees the fundraising activities for the organisation.
- The Scientific Research Advisory Committee which provides strategic guidance on research projects.
- The Investment, Finance and Risk Management Committee which provides advice on financial performance, budget development and oversees the audit.

#### **Our Board Members**





Michael Burnett Chair



Andrew Davis Board member



Deputy Chair

Professor Graham Zoskv Board member





Public Officer



Leani Vilioen Kathryn Berry Board member and Secretary



Alex Cordova Board member



Raz Haroon Board member



#### This specialist committee provides strategic guidance on research projects.

- Prof. John Burgess, Endocrinologist at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Director of the Endocrinology Laboratory at the Royal Hobart Hospital, and the Professor of Endocrinology at University of Tasmania
- Prof. Peter Dargaville, Staff Specialist in the Newborn and Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital and Professor Research Fellow in Neonatology at Menzies Institute for Medical Research
- Prof. Jo Dickinson, Select Foundation Fellow Cancer Research at Menzies Institute for Medical Research
- A/Prof. Melanie Greenwood, Associate Professor Nursing at the University of Tasmania
- A/Prof. Rosemary Harrup (Chair), Foundation Board Member and Director of Cancer and Blood Services at the Royal Hobart Hospital
- Dr Kim Jose, Senior Research Fellow at Menzies Institute for Medical Research
- Dr Eric Moses, Community Professorial Cancer Research Fellow at Menzies Institute for Medical Research
- Prof. Andrew Palmer, Director of the Health Economics Research Group at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research
- Dr Martin Schultz, Senior Research Fellow at Menzies Institute for Medical Research
- Prof. Graeme Zosky, Foundation Board Member and Associate Dean Research at the College of Health and Medicine at the University of Tasmania

#### **The Business Development Committee**

This committee oversees the fundraising activities and business development opportunities for the Foundation.

- Hayden Armstrong (Chair), Foundation Board Member
- Andrew Davis, Foundation Board Member and Executive Transformation, Digital and Strategy at TasNetworks
- Anna Grant, Director at Butler McIntyre & Butler
- Raz Haroon, Foundation Board Member and Managing Director of Gloo
- Leani Viljoen, Foundation Board Member and Director of Operations of the College of Health and Medicine at the University of Tasmania

Nick Bedding

Treasurer

Professor

Rosemary Harrup

Board member



#### The Investment, Finance and Risk Management Committee

#### This dedicated committee provides advice on financial performance, budget development and oversees the audit.

- Nick Bedding, Foundation Treasurer and Managing Director of Symic Pty Ltd
- Michael Burnett, Foundation Chair
- Kathryn Berry, Foundation Secretary and CEO of Hobart Private Hospital
- Andrew Davis, Foundation Board Member and Executive Transformation, Digital and Strategy at TasNetworks
- Zach McArthur, Director Intend Financial

#### **The Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation Team**

- Stephanie Furler, CEO
- John Stubley, Interim CEO
- Dominique Hurley, Finance and Operations
- Julie Turnbull, Research and Administration
- Joscelyn Binns, Events
- Brodie West, Marketing, Communications and Development



# Thank you

Thank you for your dedication to making a positive impact on local medical research and the health and wellbeing of your Tasmanian community.

Without the support of people like you, we simply could not do the work we set out to do each year.

We look forward to continuing to achieve great things with you in 2024 and beyond.



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# **Contact us**

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact us:

Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation

- A Ground Floor, 22 Elizabeth Street, Hobart 7000
- **P** 03 6166 1319
- E research@rhhresearchfoundation.org