

impossible

NEWS | AUTUMN 2025



Cancer research boost

Lambros take one step at a time

Royce rejoice

Robot performing its first cases

Nurses Fund

Successful launch of project



theAlfred
FOUNDATION



Director's
report
Patrick Baker

Welcome back to impossible and another exciting year for The Alfred.

One thing that never changes is the ongoing need for innovation and improvement to maintain our position as a healthcare leader in Australia and around the world.

We are immensely grateful for all the support we receive, but we also often need help to step beyond the limits – and that is where our tremendous network of donors, like yourself, are so influential.

I hope when you read the stories in this newsletter, that you will be similarly inspired by both those that give – and their motivations for doing so – as well as their immediate results, and the potential of those into the future.

One can only be encouraged by people like Lachie and Stef Lambie, whose dedication to improbable physical feats has led to hundreds of thousands of dollars being donated towards cancer research.

Elsewhere in this edition, read about how new equipment is impacting the way our service operates, and the ways in which people experience appreciation for all that The Alfred does. This includes those involved in community fundraising, for which there are always different and interesting and effective ways that people are inspired to show their support for The Alfred.

Once again, thank you for your commitment and support. I am constantly impressed and humbled by the impact that each contribution has on making The Alfred a leader of excellence in healthcare.

If you have any feedback for us, it is always highly appreciated. Please email us at foundation@alfred.org.au or phone (03) 9076 3222.

Warmest regards,

Patrick Baker
Director, The Alfred Foundation

Cover image: Associate Professor Vivek Naranbhai and Director of Oncology at The Alfred Professor Mark Shackleton.



Bayside Health to benefit 1.2 million Victorians

More than one million Victorians will benefit through the formation of the new Bayside Health (working title) – a voluntary merger between Alfred Health, Peninsula Health, Kooweerup Regional Health, Bass Coast Health and Gippsland Southern Health Service.

Peninsula Health chief executive Helen Cooper said the merger, which will come into effect from 1 January 2026, is an important step in improving health outcomes for the local community.

“The complementary nature of the five health services means we will be able to provide the full spectrum of care for the 1.2 million people we’ll serve through this network,” she said. *“Access to specialist care will become easier and more seamless under Bayside Health.”*

“The community will enjoy a more connected healthcare experience, and we will continue to deliver the very best of care for everyone, close to home.”

Alfred Health chief executive Adam Horsburgh said the new network will build on existing collaborative relationships across all five organisations and is a natural progression of the journey the health services are already on with community.

“We already provide services across Victoria, including shared patient pathways with Peninsula Health, for a range of services including surgery, neurology and cardiology,” he said.

“This positive change is a natural progression to better realise the power of partnership. It will build on the strong history of collaboration between our hospitals and will open greater opportunities to develop care.”

The new health service will deliver even better and more connected care in the community for the newly expanded south-east region.

A ‘potentially groundbreaking’ gift

The prospect of “potentially huge breakthroughs” in sarcoma research at The Alfred will be much greater, thanks to a future donation.

Inspired by The Alfred’s essential research into the area, Nick and Fifi Lambiris are dedicating a significant part of their estate to The Alfred in honour of their daughter, Irene, via a gift in their Will.

“We want to make a difference to those who may face this terrible disease.”

Nick and Fifi, the parents of Irene Lambiris

Irene was diagnosed with sarcoma in 2019 – a rare and insidious form of cancer that forms in the body’s connective tissues, such as bones, muscles and fat. Most often emerging in people under 40, sarcoma dictates a particularly complex pathway to management and treatment.

Dr Malaka Ameratunga, the Head of Molecular Oncology and Rare Cancers at Alfred Health, said developing innovative approaches to treat rare and aggressive cancers such as sarcoma is *“an urgent, unmet need”*.

“This gift is potentially groundbreaking,” he said. *“It is an area of research where we can hopefully make breakthroughs on the pathway to conquering the disease.”*

Nick and Fifi said providing a pathway for future research into sarcoma was the best way to honour their daughter.

A valuable team member across several government departments until her illness, Irene was one who always cared for others.

“Irene was a positive young lady with so many interests. We raised her to look on the bright side and always think of others,” Nick and Fifi said.

Irene volunteered at Vision Australia Radio and was an enormous support to her loving parents, still managing to squeeze in a full social life among some wonderful friends. Caring for her aging parents as long as she could, Irene ultimately passed away last year at the age of 55.

“We want to make a difference to those who may face this terrible disease,” Nick and Fifi said.

The gift will progress The Alfred’s essential research on the road to conquering sarcoma and leave an enduring legacy thanks to the appointment of an Irene Lambiris Fellow, a senior role in sarcoma research.

“The entire cancer team at The Alfred is deeply grateful for the Lambiris’ future gift, as it is only with such dedicated support that we can begin to overcome the hurdles that surround the most challenging cancers for the whole world to benefit,” Dr Ameratunga said.

To enquire about leaving a gift to The Alfred in your Will, please contact the Gifts in Wills team at giftinwill@alfred.org.au or phone (03) 9076 3222.



Right: Irene Lambiris with her parents, Nick and Fifi.

New technology set to make a huge impact

A \$2 million grant from Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF) is already making a great impact in the Paula Fox Melanoma and Cancer Centre.

Awarded to Alfred Health and Monash University to establish the ACRF Centre for Dynamic Immunology, this groundbreaking project aims to transform cancer immunotherapy by leveraging advanced imaging technologies to monitor immune responses in real time.

The innovative research aims to tailor immunotherapy approaches to the unique cancer and immune biology of each patient.

This will be accomplished by tracking how a cancer patient's immune system responds to immunotherapy and predicting harmful side effects by identifying early signs of adverse effects of neurotoxicity.

Professor Mark Shackleton, Director of Oncology at Alfred Health, said the project fitted perfectly into the centre's approach to provide individual, holistic care to patients and place The Alfred and Australia at the forefront of global cancer immunology research.

"Part of treatment is understanding the cancer itself, but also how a person's body and immune system responds to that cancer," he said. "That is quite different from person to person."

"We think the next revolution of personalising cancer care is to take these factors into account. Our aim through this centre and this funding is to develop the methods that we think everyone will be doing in the future, as soon as possible."

This includes using the state-of-the-art whole-body Quadra PET-CT imaging technology, which will be delivered soon.

Aiding access to this transformative technology are fundraising efforts from the likes of Lachie and Stef Lamble - otherwise known as the Lambros.

The enterprising young brothers were further inspired to continue to raise money for cancer research and ACRF after they got a firsthand look at the centre in February.



"We wanted to inspire people to keep moving forward and fighting through their battles."

Stef Lamble

"This didn't feel like a hospital at all - it felt like a place you could come as a patient and get the personalised care that you need to overcome the cancer in an environment that feels so comfortable," Lachie said.

A/Prof Naranbhai added that all money donated has immediate and future impact for cancer care.

"I think the most important thing is that it is helping to save lives now, but it is going to help many, many, many more lives in the future," he said. "So any money given, whether a penny or a cent, or more than that, is definitely going to help patients now and in the future."

Taking things more than just one step at a time, the pair ran from Perth to Melbourne within 100 days last year, raising almost \$250,000 in the process.

They have even bigger aspirations in 2025, planning to run from the top to the bottom of the United Kingdom throughout August - travelling about 50km a day - and raise one million pounds in the process (\$2.4 million). The donations would be split equally between ACRF and Cancer Research UK.

"We understood that exercise is such a crucial part for those people battling cancer, and it is such a good way to inspire a nation to get behind the cause and put one foot forward, one step of the way, across Australia," Stef said. "And that's what we did. We wanted to inspire people to keep moving forward and fighting through their battles."

"This is why our messaging was 'march against cancer'," Lachie added. "We believe that, like Vivek said, you have a multidisciplinary approach and if everyone is marching against cancer together, it's so much easier to find solutions."

The brothers were inspired to raise money for cancer research after losing one grandmother to cancer and have another be treated for it. Having never set foot in a cancer centre before, Lachie and Stef toured the world-class facility alongside Prof Shackleton and Associate Prof Vivek Naranbhai.

Stef said that he was *"taken aback"* by what he witnessed: *"It was a crazy experience seeing so many different health professionals coming together to collaborate and make great, groundbreaking research actually come to life."*



Lachie and Stef, the 'Lambros', were inspired by what they saw in the centre.

Donate today

Scan the QR code or head to donate.alfredfoundation.org.au



Above image: Associate Professor Vivek Naranbhai, Lachie Lamble, Professor Mark Shackleton and Stef Lamble tour the Paula Fox Melanoma and Cancer Centre.

Successful launch for Nurses Fund

Last year we celebrated the launch of the new Alfred Health Nurses Fund.

A special event was held to kickstart the fund, with more than 300 people attending, and was moderated by Alfred Health Board Director Chloe Shorten.

She spoke of the “special something” that distinguishes an Alfred Nurse, while the panel of nurses said opportunities to extend learning, visit sites of global best practice and undertake patient-centred research were key to building and maintaining a culture of excellence.

“Opportunities for professional development are priceless and contribute to better outcomes for our patients, who are always at the heart of everything Alfred nurses do,” Chief Nursing Officer at The Alfred, Professor Ged Williams, said.

“With the establishment of the Nurses Fund, more nurses can access valuable training, educational programs and undertake research that saves lives.

“I’m proud to be a personal supporter of this project.”

Another person who was inspired to contribute to the fund is Virginia Cable. Virginia was trained at



Alfred Health Board Director Chloe Shorten, Director of Nursing Education and Professional Development Judy Reeves and Chief Nursing Officer at The Alfred Ged Williams at the lunch.

The Alfred and is currently a registered nurse with Alfred Health in the Department of Infectious Diseases Clinical Research Unit.

“I have been lucky enough to travel overseas for work in Africa, London, Israel and more recently three working visits to Timor-Leste,” she said.

“Nursing has greatly enriched my life and I would be thrilled for other nurses to get to have experiences like mine.”

The first disbursements of the fund will be announced in May.

To find out more, including how to support the Alfred Health Nurses Fund, visit alfred-nursing-event.raiselysite.com

Right: Virginia trained to be a nurse at The Alfred hospital.



It's a way of giving back'

Julie Cooper demonstrated the extent of her gratitude to the Victorian Melanoma Service (VMS) at The Alfred by organising the Bonnie Roberts Melanoma Fundraisers.

Her mother, Bonnie, received specialist care at The Alfred for a rare form of melanoma after being diagnosed in 1999. Her care was overseen by Professor John Kelly, who founded the VMS at The Alfred in 1994 and headed it until 2018, for 25 years.

The VMS is a statewide, multidisciplinary consultative treatment service for people with melanoma. Its research aims to enhance detection and prevent deaths caused by melanoma.

“We’re Tasmanians, so Mum would travel to the VMS for the best care that she could receive,” Julie said. “It’s been a tough battle, but the VMS has been absolutely amazing.”

Julie decided to help out in 2011 after being “shocked” to discover how the service was funded.

She consequently organised five annual fundraising dinners at The Victoria Golf Club, receiving tremendous aid from friends, businesses and associates.

More than \$140,000 was raised for the VMS; something which Julie is very proud of. Apart from the cost of the dinners, all the money raised went to the VMS.

“It was really quite overwhelming,” she said of the response. “I feel truly grateful to everyone for the amazing support that I was given and what that enabled the VMS to do for others struggling with melanoma.

“It’s really satisfying to know that what you’ve done will make a difference to others.”

Bonnie was diagnosed with another rare melanoma on the eyelid of her remaining eye, causing her to become blind at the end of 2023.

She passed away in July 2024, and her life was celebrated at a High Tea to celebrate her remarkable life last October.



Dan Ussher, a transplant recipient at The Alfred, competed at the National Transplant Games.

Gold for Dan at Transplant Games

Any time that Dan Ussher can pull on the Team Alfred top at an event, he feels proud.

He went one better in October, representing Victoria at the National Transplant Games in Canberra.

Winning gold medals in the lawn bowls singles and pairs, Dan also took part in the cycling 10km time trial, 30km cycling road race, seven-a-side soccer and darts.

But all this activity was only possible thanks to The Alfred, coming around a significant milestone which marked a kidney transplant procedure at the hospital.

“The Alfred saved my life,” Dan said. “I love it. It’s the world’s best hospital.

“I’m very proud to be from The Alfred because it is a great hospital and has great people. The quality of care is at a world standard in many ways. It is just a wonderful team.”

Dan, 46, was among many participants at the event who had a connection to The Alfred, including hospital volunteer Steve Payne.

Dan also received the Spirit of the Games award – but those attributes were something that came naturally to him.

“Transplantation is an isolating thing, so to have all these people from across Australia playing sport in proper facilities was really amazing,” he said.

“It was easy to have a positive attitude and encourage people in that environment, because that’s what the whole event is about – it is a celebration of life and it reflected in a great atmosphere.”

Robot Royce moves into action

A special new starter joined The Alfred surgery team in February, with ‘Royce’ the surgical robot performing its first cases.

Named after former Alfred Director of Urology, Associate Professor Peter Royce, who co-founded the hospital’s Brachytherapy Prostate Cancer Clinic, the da Vinci Xi Surgical System is set to improve patient outcomes and elevate research and training for clinicians.

The system, which was co-funded by donor John Knowles and A/Prof Royce, will help keep The Alfred surgeons at the forefront of innovations in keyhole and minimally invasive surgery.

Royce’s ability to improve surgical precision and control will result in fewer complications and faster recovery for patients, according to A/Prof Jeremy Grummet, Director of Urology.

“We’re pleased to be able to incorporate a world-class robotic surgical system into our work, because the efficiencies that contribute to a better experience for patients are quite significant,” he said. “Shorter recovery times mean patients can avoid an extended hospital stay and return home sooner, while ensuring we can care for other patients awaiting these surgical procedures sooner.”

Royce will assist surgeons on a range of minimally invasive cancer procedures at The Alfred Centre, including for kidney, prostate, bowel, colorectal, head and neck cancers, as well as cardiothoracic cases.

Royce’s arrival also heralds a new era in training opportunities for surgical trainees, with its configuration meaning a senior surgeon and trainee surgeon can operate together.



Alfred Health Chief Executive Adam Horsburgh with John and Coral Knowles.

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*Our community making
the impossible possible*



Hair-raising help

A Melbourne girl who donated her hair and helped raise thousands of dollars to give to The Alfred in 2021 has returned to her root source of inspiration.

Lexi has been growing her hair since it was last cut three years ago, in order to donate it for wigs for cancer patients suffering hair loss due to chemotherapy, and has also raised a further \$1586.

"I have been growing my hair so I can donate it again," she said. "I also want to raise money to help people with cancer because my Nanna has gone through cancer treatment more than once at The Alfred hospital and I know they save lives."



Running for Team Alfred

Running events have been a consistently popular way for people to raise money for The Alfred.

More than \$100,000 has been raised during the past two years from our biggest events, which include Run Melbourne in July and the Melbourne Marathon in November, with hundreds of people representing Team Alfred.

Join us once again at Melbourne's largest winter running event of 2025, where more than 25,000 runners will embrace the thrill of running through the city's closed streets and iconic landmarks in events that are 21.1km, 10km and 5.5km long.



Happy Tatts

A Traralgon family is trying to give back to The Alfred as a form of thanks.

Cheryl Wille is the owner of Happy Tatts, an airbrushing (temporary) tattoo business that has a design for which proceeds of sales are donated.

"The Alfred hospital has had a huge impact on our family's fight against neuroendocrine cancer. We wish to raise funds and awareness of this rare form of cancer, to enable earlier diagnosis and find new treatments," she said.

"Together we can help make a lifechanging difference to people living with neuroendocrine cancer."

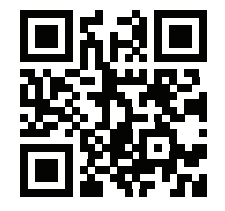
*Make the
impossible
possible*

See reverse for details on how to donate to The Alfred Foundation, or scan the QR code below



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