



Health • Research • Hope

PRICELESS

THE NEWS BULLETIN FOR SUPPORTERS OF THE CLIFFORD CRAIG FOUNDATION

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2024



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FIRST LOOK

PLANS FOR THE LAUNCESTON GENERAL HOSPITAL'S NEW RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTRE ARE PROGRESSING, WITH THE PROJECT NOW ENTERING THE FINAL STAGES OF DESIGN.

The fit for purpose centre represents a first for Northern Tasmania, housing all of the research interests of the LGH within one facility.

It's expected to significantly enhance growing demand for services, with space for clinical trials, research, education and additional support staff.

Located on the first floor of the Northern Integrated Care Service Building, plans for the new 1300 square-metre Clifford Craig Research Centre include five clinical workrooms, five consult rooms, as well as multiple meeting rooms and workstations.

The office of the Foundation will move from its current site on level 5, with Tasmanian Health Service and Foundation staff to co-locate within the new facility.

Director of Research Professor Nicholas Shackel said the centre represents a major expansion of the work the Foundation currently does, and will ensure

the world's best clinicians are incentivised to come and work in our region - contributing to the next big medical breakthrough.



"This will provide for the LGH to be recognised nationally as a leading centre of research excellence," he said. "It will also greatly increase Tasmania's participation in ground-breaking medical research, on both a national and global scale."

The Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tasmanian Government to establish the centre in late 2022, after securing \$4 million in funding from the state and federal governments.

The Health Department will also employ a Research Business Coordinator, Clinical Trials Manager and Research Nurse Coordinator to oversee the centre.

Construction is expected to commence by the end of the year.

2024 MEDICAL RESEARCH GRANTS

This year the Clifford Craig Foundation is proud to announce funding for eight exciting new research projects, with grants totalling \$215,000.

They include novel approaches to breast cancer treatments, respiratory infections, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, orthopaedics and palliative care.

Clifford Craig Chairman Dr John Batten AM said the combination of these newly announced grants, along with the existing research program and scholarships will see the Foundation allocated more than \$900,000 to medical research in Tasmania's North and North-West in 2024.

"These grants alongside the Foundation's evolving education initiatives and medical equipment appeals are wonderful examples of how community support is shaping a healthier future for our state," he said.

More details inside.



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MESSAGE FROM THE “DEPARTING” CEO

It has been 32 years since the Clifford Craig Foundation was established as the independent community foundation to support the Launceston General Hospital and more broadly, the population of Northern Tasmania.

The inaugural Chief Executive Officer was Mrs Toni Maloney who worked tirelessly with her Chairman Dr John Morris and a passionate establishment committee to lay the building blocks for this wonderful and very important organisation.

Now, in 2024 the leadership of the Foundation will again be undertaken by a female with the appointment of Vanessa Cahoon to replace me upon my retirement at the end of March. Vanessa is an excellent appointment, and she brings an impressive skillset and enthusiastic approach which will see the organisation continue its upward momentum to serve as the health promotion charity for the region. Coincidentally, the handover to Vanessa is taking place as we celebrate International Women’s Day.

I stepped into the role of Chief Executive in 2009 and throughout the ensuing 15 years have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with a talented and supportive team that has seen significant growth for the Clifford Craig Foundation and the achievement of many milestones. Today, we can be very proud of the role this organisation undertakes to improve health outcomes for the people of North and North-West Tasmania.

I’m not going far. At the request of the Board, I will remain in a limited capacity to oversee the completion of the new Research and Innovation Centre which will commence construction this year. This is a development that I have overseen from the beginning and will ultimately see our region recognised as a centre for research excellence.

This has been one of the most remarkable experiences of my life. To all of my colleagues, friends, and our donors, supporters and volunteers, thank you for making the past 15 years so special.

Cheers

Peter Milne
Chief Executive Officer

**AN EXCITING
UPDATE ON OUR
CHRISTMAS APPEAL**



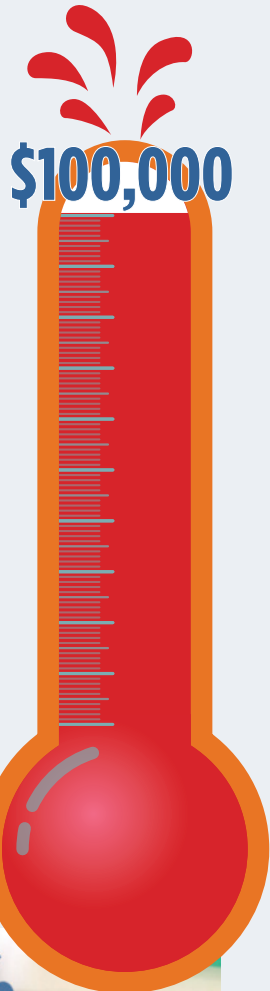
Late last year the Clifford Craig Foundation set an ambitious fundraising target to help secure 4 new neonatal bedside resuscitation units for the Launceston General Hospital, as part of our annual Christmas Appeal.

We are thrilled to report that we have now raised the required \$100,000, thanks to overwhelming support from the community and some very generous last-minute donations!

We will now get to work on ordering these life-saving devices to be used across the LGH Paediatrics Department.

Your donation will help ensure every baby born at the LGH is given the best start in life.

Thank you again to everyone who supported this appeal. We look forward to keeping you updated on this exciting development.



A TRIBUTE TO OUTGOING CEO PETER MILNE



Written by Clifford Craig Foundation Chairman Dr John Batten AM

Peter Milne has been the face and voice of the Clifford Craig foundation for the last 15 years, but like all good things, his stewardship of the Foundation is coming to an end. Peter is stepping down at the end March, ending a career that has grown this Foundation into a well-governed, influential organisation that has improved the access and outcomes of healthcare for many in Northern Tasmania.

Peter joined the Foundation as CEO in 2009. Over his tenure, by virtue of his energy, enthusiasm, innovation, humour and gentle humility, has grown and nurtured a high-performance team – gaining

community trust, consolidating our reputation as the charity of choice in Northern Tasmania.

Through the support, encouragement and facilitation of translational medical research, and participation in multi-centred global trials, comes a greater understanding of disease and disease management, resulting in better outcomes for all in the community. Financial support for such research through the Clifford Craig Foundation has continued to grow under Peter's stewardship, reaching almost one million dollars annually.

Staff education, keeping clinicians abreast of the latest research and management strategies, is essential

for professional development in such a dynamic exponentially growing field, enabling the most contemporary medical management for our community. Combined with the purchase of essential state of the art equipment, continues to benefit the clinician's ability to manage the community's health needs locally.

I speak on behalf of the Board and Staff of the Clifford Craig Foundation when I say these landmark highlights have been underpinned by Peter's vision. He leaves a stellar legacy for the community of Northern Tasmania.

Enjoy your retirement Peter, and thank you.

FOUNDATION RECOGNISED AT LAUNCESTON BUSINESS AWARDS

The Clifford Craig Foundation is now an 'award-winning' organisation, with our work recognised at this year's Launceston Chamber of Commerce Spirit Super Business Excellence Awards.

The Clifford Craig team attended the 2024 Gala Awards Dinner on March 16, where we were finalists in three categories.

- Excellence in Community Service
- Excellence in Health & Wellness
- Building Exceptional Communities

Excitingly, we were thrilled to take home two awards - Excellence in Community Service and Excellence in Health and Wellness.

As our outgoing CEO Peter Milne put it, this recognition has been 32 years in the making, with this the first time the Foundation had submitted an entry for these esteemed awards.

The Foundation felt incredibly proud to have been named a finalist in such strong company, and even prouder to have taken home two awards.

Thank you to the Chamber for this recognition, and congratulations to all the other finalists and award winners.

The Foundation's work would not be possible without the ongoing support of the community we serve, so we would like to share these awards with all the volunteers and generous supporters of the Clifford Craig Foundation.



Development of a novel probiotic approach to fight *Haemophilus influenzae* biofilms in the respiratory tract - Dr Brianna Atto - \$76,650

Most people are familiar with the approach of taking probiotics to improve gut health. But what if a probiotic could be utilised in the respiratory tract to prevent infections?

The bacterium, Nontypeable *Haemophilus influenzae* (NTHi), is a major cause of respiratory infections.

This includes chronic middle ear infections in children and lung infections in those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), both of which can be difficult to treat.

This study aims to develop a therapy that can prevent NTHi gaining access to the respiratory tract, disrupt biofilm (bacteria clusters) formation and subsequently prevent infections caused by NTHi, and/or destroy biofilms once they have formed.

This novel approach combines the development of a therapy using a live, non-harmful bacterium that directly inhibits growth of NTHi and a protein-based form of the active agent.

Despite the tendency of NTHi to cause repeat and chronic infections – many with long-term consequences – lead researcher Dr Brianna Atto said there remains limited to no treatment options for it.

“In COPD patients, repeat infections accelerate the decline in lung function- essentially reducing a patient’s lifespan,” she explained.

“In children, repeat ear infections cause damage to the ear, resulting in hearing loss at an important developmental stage of life.



“Right now, we have no way to prevent these infections and antibiotics have limited efficacy – especially when biofilms are involved.”

Because NTHi forms biofilms (bacteria clusters) which can be around 1000-times more resistant to antibiotics, this project could be a significant step forward in treating and preventing NTHi-associated infections.

“For a new therapy to be released into the public as a product, there is a long testing process that has to happen,” Dr Atto explained.

“We have already shown that our new therapy is effective in limiting the ability of NTHi to cause infection (in the lab)- but if it cannot also reduce the

formation of- or eradicate NTHi biofilms, it will have limited use as a therapy in chronic cases.

“This project could give us the last piece of evidence we need to push this novel product into the next stage of development.”

“RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE NO WAY TO PREVENT THESE INFECTIONS AND ANTIBIOTICS HAVE LIMITED EFFICACY...”

About the researcher

Dr Brianna Atto says she has always had a curious mind, including how the world works and a love of microbiology.

So much so that as a young child, she used to ask family members to collect mould samples (usually from spoiled food) so she could examine the different structures under a toy microscope.

Born and raised in Launceston, Brianna graduated with a Bachelor of Biomedical Science with Honours in 2017 and completed a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in 2023 – all at the University of Tasmania (Newnham).

She is now a Research Fellow at the UTAS and a Medical Scientist at the Launceston General Hospital, pursuing her interest in research – this time using real microscopes.

Her main area of research is the microbiology of respiratory diseases and in particular developing novel therapies to prevent and/or treat them.

This includes her current research project, aimed at developing a therapy that can treat and prevent *Haemophilus influenzae* biofilms in the respiratory tract.

“Although a personal vendetta wasn’t originally my intention – it just so happens that when I was a kid, I suffered constantly from the same ear infections I am now trying to prevent,” she explained.

“I hope that in the future, I can help prevent these chronic infections.”

Brianna credits her mentors for her professional development and passion for research, including Associate Professor Stephen Tristram and Associate Professor Robyn Marsh.



Uncovering the role of the mitochondria gene ACAD10 in metformin action and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease - Dr Darren Henstridge - \$24,986

By 2024, it's estimated that more than 642 million people will be living with Type 2 diabetes (T2D) worldwide, and that over half of the adult population will have fatty liver disease.

The increased rates of both conditions has been linked to escalating cases of obesity, which is the primary risk factor.

However, current strategies for the prevention of both T2D and fatty liver disease are limited in scope and effectiveness.

There remains a need to identify and develop targets and strategies for new therapeutic options to reduce the health burden associated with these conditions.

To do this, it is imperative to understand the underlying biology of these conditions, in the organs that are affected.

This novel study, led by Darren Henstridge, will examine a gene that is important in the mitochondria of cells.

Alterations to this gene have been associated with T2D and linked to the action of the diabetes drug metformin. However, very little is known about its physiological function.

This project will investigate if altering this gene improves the action of the diabetes drug metformin and whether it can assist to decrease fat accumulation in the liver.

Darren said this type of discovery work was crucial as it underpins the development of new therapeutic targets for disease.

“THIS PROJECT WILL INVESTIGATE IF ALTERING THIS GENE IMPROVES THE ACTION OF THE DIABETES DRUG METFORMIN...”

“This is novel work. We are using a genetic tool to upregulate the action of a gene so we can study its metabolic actions,” he explained.

“Currently, there are no descriptions in the scientific literature of the effects of increasing the activity of this gene and consequently all our findings will be original.”

Darren hopes this work will start to unravel the function of the mitochondria gene and lead to evidence it is involved in the function of a drug used for patients with type 2 diabetes.

“This being the case, it would provide the rationale to design new drugs to target these cellular pathways.”

About the researcher

Darren has a Bachelor of Science (Honours), PhD, from Monash University and recruited to the University of Tasmania in 2019.

He now works in the School of Health Sciences in the College of Health and Medicine where he is a Senior Lecturer and Researcher and also the School of Health

Sciences Associate Head for Research.

“I think my passion for research comes fundamentally from wanting to understand how the body works,” he said.

“I also enjoy the feeling of knowing I am working on something novel that has never been studied before.

“My main field of interest is metabolism, so I am interested in obesity, type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease, mitochondrial diseases and understanding how exercise is beneficial to your health.”



The effect of Mepitel Film on Inter fractional changes in breast area – Ms Bethany Allen - \$7,700

The introduction of intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) in breast radiotherapy has allowed people with cancer to receive higher, more effective doses of radiation, while limiting the damage to healthy tissues and surrounding organs.

However, this radiation does still cause some damage to the surface of the skin and is something that's considered a common side effect for this treatment.

Health professionals currently use a film called Mepitel, which acts as a barrier between the surface of the skin and clothing and prevents friction and further irritation.

Although effective, when the film is applied it can cause changes to the position of the breast. Because radiation treatments are planned for a certain position, any change in the breast tissue can affect how the dose is distributed.

This study will provide an evidence base to address if Mepitel Film does significantly impact inter-fractional changes in breast area and contribute to a growing body of work as to how this may potentially impact dosimetry.

Considering 20 per cent of all patients at the WP Holman Clinic are breast cancer patients, researcher Bethany Allen said it was important to understand the impact of this change, to ensure radiation treatments are delivered accurately.

"We plan a radiation treatment in a certain position which must be maintained each day the patient has treatment, as treatment is performed with millimetre accuracy," she explained.

"Therefore, changes in the breast tissue may affect how the dose is distributed and this may vary from what has been planned.

"This study will tell us if that change is significant and whether Mepitel is truly the best approach to maintaining our patient's skin integrity."

About the researcher

Bethany Allen studied at the University of South Australia in Adelaide.

She came to Tasmania in 2020 and now works as a radiation therapist at the W.P Holman Clinic.

After commencing her PhD in 2021, she said her eyes were opened as to how interesting medical research can be.

"Research is exciting and in the field of health everything is always changing," she said.

"So as someone that loves learning, the area of health science research is something I am very interested in."

"... IT WAS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF THIS CHANGE, TO ENSURE RADIATION TREATMENTS ARE DELIVERED ACCURATELY."



“RESEARCH
PROJECTS SERVE
AS A VITAL
TOOL FOR
HEALTHCARE”

Unveiling the Landscape of Post-Mastectomy Breast Reconstruction in North and North-West Tasmania: A Two-Phase Journey – Dr Rupak Deshpande/Dr Mikko Larsen - \$46,475

When a patient has breast removal surgery due to cancer, it leaves a lasting impact either through amputation or scarring.

While the timing of this reconstruction can vary, standardised referral pathways exist to facilitate the provision of various treatment modalities.

Put simply, breast removal surgery focuses on survival, while reconstructive surgery aims to improve the patient’s quality of life.

In North and North-West Tasmania, about 29 per cent of breast reconstructions occur within the public healthcare system.

While significant progress has been made in detecting and curing breast cancer, the focus is now shifting to advancing reconstructive surgery to enhance the overall wellbeing of patients after breast removal surgeries.

A Tasmanian first, this study will assess the rates of breast reconstruction in North and North-West Tasmania, including the existing referral pathways and mechanisms within the healthcare system.

As Dr Rupak Deshpande explained, many patients find themselves unaware of the full spectrum of options available to them. Further, they can wait years for a procedure that might not be necessary or appropriate.

“I vividly recall an encounter with a lady who entered the clinic, stating that she was there for an operation

after being informed about the need for breast reconstruction,” Dr Deshpande said.

“Upon further discussion, she revealed she was content with her current body image and her reason for seeking surgery was simply a misunderstanding – she believed she was awaiting another operation.

“This underscores the importance of comprehensive patient education before deciding on reconstructive procedures.”

This study has the potential to provide clinicians with a comprehensive understanding of the clinical journey that patients undertake after being diagnosed and treated for breast cancer in Tasmania.

“Research projects serve as a vital tool for healthcare providers to adapt and improve, ensuring that patient care aligns with contemporary standards and is responsive to the evolving landscape of healthcare needs,” Dr Deshpande said.

“Beyond the medical aspects, it offers a unique opportunity to delve into the social and psychological impact of post-cancer ablation breast surgery on a woman’s life.

“Such a holistic understanding is crucial for tailoring patient care, support, and interventions to address the diverse challenges that individuals may face in their journey towards recovery and well-being.”

About the Researcher

A qualified plastic surgeon from Mumbai, Rupak completed his training across three major hospitals in India, with breast reconstruction forming an integral part of his training.

Having already published research in the area of breast reconstruction in the prestigious Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery, his work is now focussed on the technical aspects of breast reconstruction.

“I felt the pressing need of research which focussed on patient reported outcomes and am happy and thankful that the Clifford Craig Foundation has provided me with the opportunity.”

DR LAUREN GILES

2024 Medical Research Grant Recipients

TAURUS.2 – magneTic brAin stimulation foR mUltiple Sclerosis – Dr Lauren Giles – \$11,000



Multiple Sclerosis is the most common cause of neurological disability affecting young people in Tasmania.

Caused by inflammation and demyelination of central nervous system, MS leads to progressive neurological disability.

Whilst there are many treatments for MS, none of these repair areas of damage due to demyelination.

The TAURUS trial will assess whether magnetic stimulation

improves remyelination in people with MS, with 20 sessions of magnetic brain stimulation to be performed over a one-month period.

A multi-centre trial coordinated by the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research, the Clifford Craig Foundation is proudly supporting the Northern Tasmanian component of this trial with additional funding.

Led by Neurologist Dr Lauren Giles, the inclusion of the Launceston General Hospital MS clinic provides patients with MS in North and North-West Tasmania access to this exciting trial.

Additionally, participation in this trial will further enhance the growing recognition of the LGH Neurology Department as being actively involved in research activity.

Dr Giles said the research team were very grateful for the support of Senior Specialist Radiographer Joanne Brumby, who has gone "above and beyond" in learning a new MRI technique – never before used at LGH.

DR MAXINE GLANGER



Researchers Associate Professor Odette Spruijt, Dr Maxine Glanger, Peter Westcoast and Jessica Hall.

STUCK IN BED: design factors impacting quality of life for patients with limited mobility receiving inpatient palliative care - Dr Maxine Glanger - \$9922

Researchers find inspiration for their work in a variety of places. In the case of this project, it was a fridge.

More specifically, the ability of a palliative care patient to access a drink from a bar fridge, without assistance.

Many factors impact mobility for patients with life-limiting illness. Examples include movement-related pain from bone metastases, frailty related to cancer and neurological impairment – such as with motor neurone disease.

So, after noticing a bed-bound patient was unable to reach their fridge to help themselves to a drink, staff decided to place the fridge on trolley so it could be moved to the patient.

This then led to the question: how does the design of a space impact people with limited mobility?

Many patients live with poor mobility for weeks to months before death and can spend much of their remaining life

“stuck in bed” in a care facility.

In Northern Tasmania, a new public Inpatient Patient Care Unit (IPCU) has received funding and is in predevelopment phase.

This study will seek the opinions of these people about their experience of being a patient in a palliative care unit (hospice).

As lead researcher Dr Maxine Glanger explained, the palliative care team want to understand how the design of hospice room helps or worsens a patient's symptoms, sense of independence and quality of life.

“People hate losing their independence. It's one of the big things we try to address in palliative care,” she said.

“It also often drives a desire for accelerating their death.

“So, if we can create a truly patient-centred environment, where they can actually have some control over their space, our hypotheses is that it will increase a person's sense of independence and wellbeing.”

Fifth year medical students Jessica Hall and Erin Donoghue have been enlisted as student researchers for the study, which will also ask patients and their carers for their ideas to make hospice room design better.

Other members of this research team include Associate Professor Odette Spruijt (Medical Director of Specialist Palliative Care North) and Peter Westcoast (Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialist for SPCS North).

It is hoped that this research will help inform the design of the future ICU unit.

“We are hoping our research will help inform that development, and possibly inform people designing other hospice facilities in the future,” Dr Glanger said.

“It's all about improved, patient-centred design for palliative care patients to improve their independence and dignity, even when they become immobile.”

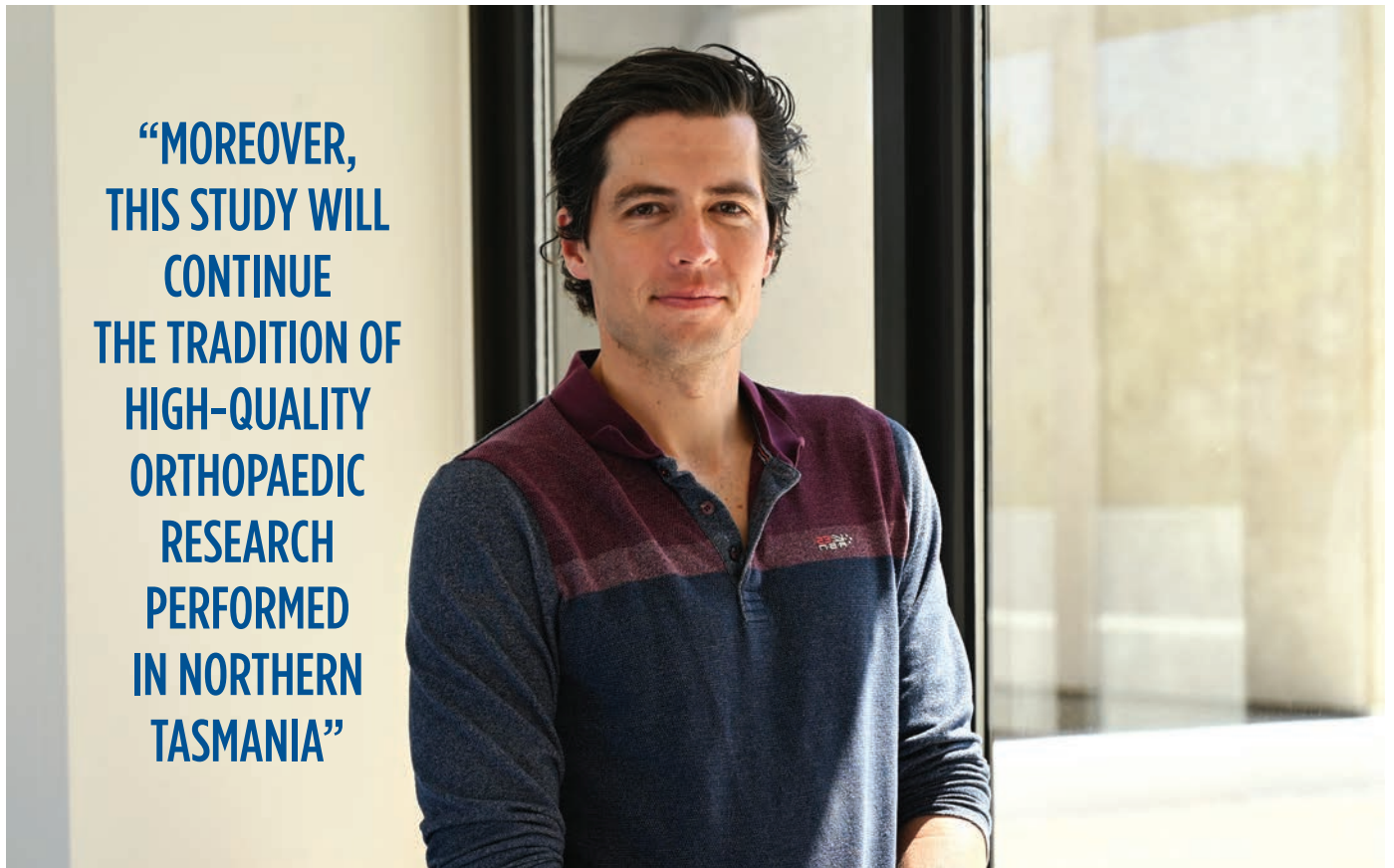
About the researcher

Dr Glanger is a Palliative Medicine Specialist with the Specialist Palliative Care Service, Primary Health North.

Originally from Sydney, she worked as a general practitioner for more than 25 years before changing

fields and completing her specialist palliative care training.

She said she was drawn to the beauty of Tasmania, and now proudly calls it her home, and is based out of the Allambi Building in Launceston.



“MOREOVER,
THIS STUDY WILL
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IN NORTHERN
TASMANIA”

Blood flow restriction as a novel method for rehabilitation after cruciate ligament repair - Dr Laurent Willemot- \$37,344

Given the popularity of athletic participation in Tasmania and the increasing high-level athletic participation in the general population, the incidence of anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction (ACLR) has dramatically increased in recent years.

Despite being one of the most frequently performed and most successful sports injury surgical interventions, ACLR and subsequent rehabilitation are still plagued by significant limitations and controversies.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the claims made by proponents of blood flow restriction (BFR) in the rehabilitation of cruciate ligament reconstruction patients.

As lead researcher Dr Laurent Willemot explained, BFR is a new innovative way to increase muscle volume with lower resistance exercises compared to traditional methods.

However, despite growing hype in bodybuilding and fitness circles, the evidence on BFR remains scarce.

“The huge increase in participation in contact sports by ever younger athletes of both genders, is associated with high rates of ligamentous sports injuries,” Dr Willemot said.

“The need for quick and efficient rehabilitation after surgery to minimise time off, is of primordial concern to the

treating physician, physiotherapist, coach, and team and of course the athlete.

“This project aims to shed light on the effectiveness of BFR. Multiple previous studies have attempted this but were plagued by methodological inconsistencies.

“With this study we hope to avoid those.”

The study will review the strength of quadriceps at different time points in the postoperative phase with the application of blood flow restriction.

If shown to be successful, the study will have a high impact on the local population in reducing the long-term limitations and complications of anterior cruciate repair.

“The hope is to achieve real-world changes in standard rehabilitation protocols after sports injuries leading to less pain, less time off, quicker recovery and return to previous level,” Dr Willemot said.

“Moreover, this study will continue the tradition of high-quality orthopaedic research performed in Northern Tasmania.

“Performing high quality research is also a major attractant for trainees and junior staff hoping to participate in studies.”

About the researcher

Originally from Belgium, Laurent studied at Ghent University and completed a biomedical research fellowship at the Mayo Clinic, before surgical fellowships at Sydney’s Royal North Shore Hospital and now the Launceston General Hospital.

He first came to Tasmania in 2020 as a hand surgery fellow, but is

now a supervised consultant in Orthopaedic Surgery, as part of an international medical graduate specialist pathway.

Despite having an initial dislike for research during medical school, it was during his time at the Mayo Clinic that he learned about the “direct and tangible effects” that

research can have on daily clinical practice.

“Research has a tendency to unravel accepted truths and breakdown barriers to progress,” he explained.

“Like Richard Feynman said: ‘I would rather have questions that can’t be answered, than answers that can’t be questioned’.”

The modification and implementation of an objective tool to assess the carbohydrate counting capability for individuals with type 1 diabetes and their carers in preparation for commencing Continuous Subcutaneous Insulin Infusion (CSII) - Ms Sunita Date- \$1103.00

For people living with type 1 diabetes, the management of their blood glucose through diet and exercise is key to reducing the risk of further complications.

Diabetics need insulin to survive and help maintain blood glucose levels. Because their pancreas is no longer producing the insulin required by the body, this can be achieved by taking insulin via insulin pens or an insulin pump.

Carbohydrate counting is an essential component of type 1 diabetes management. For this to work, the patient is required to identify all of the carbohydrates in their meals, snacks and beverages, and count them in grams.

Prior to commencing on an insulin pump, adults with type 1 diabetes and paediatric clients and their carers are assessed on their ability to count carbohydrates.

However, there is currently limited evidence on the availability of an objective assessment tool for measuring the carbohydrate counting capabilities of people with type 1 diabetes - with consideration to local health literacy and numeracy.

This project involves the modification and implementation of a pictorial questionnaire designed in the United Kingdom, to be adapted for the foods and the people of Tasmania - with regards to literacy and numeracy.

As a diabetes dietitian, lead researcher Sunita Date helps assess the skills and abilities of patients with type 1 diabetes in carbohydrate counting.

She said the process can appear to be subjective in nature, especially if conducted by a dietitian with limited experience in diabetes nutrition management.

“To ensure an objective, non-biased assessment occurs, I felt it was very important to address this question of how I can assess a client with type 1 diabetes objectively and educate them at the same time,” she explained.

“This research project will consider consumer feedback and involvement in its initial piloting of the modified tool.

“I believe it increases its relevance as it considers consumer feedback and is informative in its application.”

The developed questionnaire will be implemented during a routine outpatient appointment and will also be used as a teaching tool.

It's expected to also assist type 1 diabetes patients in identifying foods containing carbohydrates (and how much), and how to calculate carbohydrates from a recipe or a label.

Sunita is hopeful the modified assessment tool will be incorporated into routine practice.

“The tool can be further modified to accommodate Indigenous and migrant populations incorporating foods commonly consumed and familiar to them,” she explained.

“It has the potential to be used at diabetes centres state-wide providing type 1 diabetes assessments prior to insulin pump commencement.”



About the researcher

Sunita is a Senior Diabetes Dietitian with Tasmanian Health Service North, based out of the John Morris Diabetes Centre.

She completed a Masters in Nutrition & Dietetics (Research) at Griffith University, Queensland. Prior to that she completed a Master of Science (Home Science in Food Nutrition and Dietetics) in India at Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai University.

As a clinician with almost 15 years' experience, she said she felt it was vital to participate and complete translational research to ensure both patients and clinicians have experiential learning through the medical process.

“I have a curious personality and like to ask questions – the why, how, when, what questions,” she said.

“I believe we have to constantly evolve and learn daily. I also believe it is important to challenge ourselves and learn and progress in our clinical practice.”

“IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE USED AT DIABETES CENTRES STATE-WIDE...”

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

As part of our commitment to health education, the Clifford Craig Foundation is proud to support two annual Medical Student Research Scholarships, valued at \$12,500 each.

The scholarships are aimed at providing fourth-year medical students with the necessary financial support to undertake a designated independent research project at the Launceston Clinical School and Launceston General Hospital.

Each year we are inspired by the stories of the life-changing impact the scholarships have on a student's educational journey, as they embark on the next step

towards a future in medicine.

After a competitive selection process, we are thrilled to announce the two recipients for 2024-25.

Congratulations to Panayiota (Peta) Antypas and Josephine Reid, who are both studying a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery with the University of Tasmania.

Peta Antypas



Born and raised in Launceston, Peta has always been fascinated by understanding how things work.

While initially interested in law, it was the opportunity to integrate her love of science with a passion for advocacy that led to her pursuing a career in medicine.

Through her scholarship she will be “testing the waters” of a specialty in neurology, with a research project examining the impact of probiotics on social cognition in multiple sclerosis.

She has also been inspired by her own health experiences.

“I had a neurological scare a few years ago where I lost all function in my upper limbs,” she explained.

“It was a really difficult time and a real struggle, but it also helped me develop this really profound empathy for patients.

“That is where my passion for neurology comes from.

“I love the academic side of it, but my own experience of a neurological disability sealed the deal.”

Peta has been completing her degree through the University of Tasmania's rural program, allowing her to complete her first three years of study in Launceston.

Inspired to stay in Northern Tasmania, she said the scholarship provided an extra incentive for her to pursue a career in neurology at the Launceston General Hospital.

“When I did neurology during my degree, I loved it,” she explained.

“The fact that there are still so many unknowns and so many complex conditions. Often patients are living with quite devastating conditions.

“Research goes hand in hand with neurology, and I hope through my work I will be able to help patients – if not now, but into the future.”

Josephine Read



Originally from Adelaide, Josephine moved to Hobart in 2021 to start her medical degree.

She decided to complete her fourth and fifth years at the Launceston Clinical School because of its reputation, as well as the legacy of the LGH as an excellent teaching hospital.

While she remains open minded about a future specialty, she said she is drawn to women's health and hopes to find a research project that aligns with this area of interest.

“I think women's health care has improved a lot in recent decades, but I think there is still a long way to go,” she explained.

“A part of that comes from a lack of research in women's health and women's health issues.

“The way it trickles down into how you practice medicine, the treatment options and even just the way you approach things as a doctor.

“There are still a lot of gaps and I would like to help fill them.”

Grateful for the opportunities that come with her scholarship, Josephine said a major incentive was the opportunity to continue her studies in Launceston, while undertaking medical research.

“The fact I can do this while I am studying is excellent,” she explained.

“I am very much a research novice, so knowing there is a good support team here is really great.

“There is a basis for me to ask questions as I navigate my way through it. It's a safe first step into the research world.”

IN MEMORIAM



The Clifford Craig Foundation extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends and work colleagues of Associate Professor Alasdair MacDonald, who passed away late last year.

The Launceston General Hospital's Director of Medicine, Alasdair has been remembered as an esteemed, respected and loved physician, colleague, mentor and friend.

In his honour, the LGH Acute Medical Unit will be renamed the Alasdair MacDonald Acute Medical Unit, with further plans for his legacy to be recognised with an award in his name.

In January hundreds of people attended a Memorial Service held in Ockerby Gardens, which included tributes from nurses, students, colleagues and his family.

Royal Australasian College of Physicians records show Alasdair participated in more than 50 different committees of many years' involvement with the College.

In a statement, President Jacqueline Small said he was regarded with great affection and would be remembered for his gentle, kind and compassionate manner.

"Alasdair consistently gave generously of his expertise, wisdom, and extensive knowledge, particularly in areas of healthcare policy and advocacy," she said. "He will be greatly missed by all."

PARSNIP PIE



Prep time: 15 mins

Cook time: 35 mins

An autumnal twist on the classic Shepard's Pie—you'll love the creamy nuttiness parsnips bring to this comforting dish!

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 brown onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, grated
- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 500g lamb or beef mince
- 1 bay leaf
- 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- Salt and pepper, to season
- 100ml vegetable stock
- 500g parsnips, roughly chopped
- ½ cup grated cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrot, celery, garlic and cook, stirring for five minutes or until soft. Add the lamb mince and cook for five minutes until onion starts to brown.
3. Add the tomatoes, bay leaf and vegetable stock; bring to the boil. Simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Steam the parsnips for 4-5 minutes until soft (you can also use the microwave to steam parsnips). Add two tablespoons of olive oil and blend with a stick blender or potato masher until nice and creamy. Season with salt and pepper.
5. In a casserole dish place the lamb mixture and then the parsnip mixture on top. Top with cheese and bake in the oven for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

**Recipe courtesy of Eatwell Tasmania*



CLIFFORD CRAIG FOUNDATION 2024 CHARITY BALL

When: Friday, May 10

Where: Hotel Grand Chancellor, Launceston

Theme: Roaring 20's Gangster Glamour

Tickets: On sale now through the Foundation office - 6777 6010 or via cliffordcraig.org.au.

FRIENDS OF CLIFFORD CRAIG MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON

When: Thursday, May 9th, at 12noon

Where: TasTAFE Drysdale Campus

Who: Guest speaker Judi McGee

Tickets: On sale now through the Foundation office - 6777 6010 or via cliffordcraig.org.au.

WOMEN'S HEALTH BRUNCH

When: August - exact date to be confirmed soon.

Where: Country Club Tasmania

FOR THE DIARY