



**Clifford Craig
FOUNDATION**

Health • Research • Hope

PRICELESS

THE NEWS BULLETIN FOR SUPPORTERS OF THE CLIFFORD CRAIG FOUNDATION

SEPTEMBER
2023

HEART HEALTH IS IN YOUR HANDS

**HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU HEARD SOMEONE SAY:
“I WANT TO IMPROVE MY FITNESS AND HEALTH WHEN THE
WEATHER GETS WARMER, AND THE DAYS GET LONGER!”**



Well, as we head into Spring, we say there has never been a better time to commit to leading a more active lifestyle.

Heart disease kills two Tasmanians every day. Let that sink in a little bit...

Our state has the highest incidence of people living with heart disease in Australia.

In fact, Tasmania's prevalence of heart disease (9.5%) is 2.9 percentage points higher than the national average of 6.6 per cent.

We can and must do better!

Throughout September, as part of the Clifford Craig Foundation's annual heart health awareness campaign, we are urging you, our community, to commit to leading a healthier lifestyle.

Your heart health is in YOUR hands, and there are steps we can all take to reduce our risks.



This month we challenge you to:

GET MOVING

Regular physical activity is one of the best things you can do for your heart health. Increasing your physical activity from as little as 10 minutes a day to the recommended 30 to 45 minutes a day, five or more days of the week, can help reduce your risk of heart disease and heart attacks.

GET A CHECKUP

If you've been putting off a health check, make this the month you speak to your doctor. Some risk factors are connected, including cholesterol levels and blood pressure. Regular health checks can help to identify early warning signs of disease.

EAT A HEALTHY DIET

Diet is an important risk factor in coronary heart disease. A healthy diet can help protect the heart, improve blood pressure and cholesterol, and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. How much you eat is also just as important as what you eat. This includes avoiding takeaway and processed foods.

CHECK IN WITH A MATE

Is there someone in your life who might need some support to take any of the above steps? This month we encourage you to check in with a loved one and encourage them to take the next step in improving their health. Plus, exercise is way more fun when we do it together!

SEE INSIDE:

• A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO • STUDIES INTO LONG COVID • MS TRIAL UNDERWAY AT LGH • END OF AN ERA FOR ANNE O'BYRNE SITE • SOUP AND SANDWICH SUCCESS • A HEALTHY EATING RECIPE

Keeping your heart healthy is something you can work on every day. But if you need some motivation, throughout the month of September the Clifford Craig Foundation will be sharing inspirational stories from people in our community whose lives have been impacted by heart disease. Plus, tips and tricks from health professionals for how you can kickstart a healthier future. Stay up to date via cliffordcraig.org.au.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Spring is my favourite time of year because we can finally say goodbye to the shadows of winter and begin to witness the new season colours, warmer weather, and longer days.

For the Clifford Craig Foundation, it's an important time on our activity calendar as we undertake our annual "heart health" awareness campaign. Spring is the perfect time to encourage our population to embark upon a healthier lifestyle that will help reduce the risks of heart disease.

Unfortunately, and alarmingly, the North and North-West regions of Tasmania contain the highest number of individuals who are clinically at high-risk of cardiovascular disease in Australia. In fact, Tasmania's prevalence of heart disease is 2.9 percentage points higher than the national average of 6.6 per cent.

With our partners, St.Lukes Health, throughout the month of September we will be undertaking a major health awareness campaign to highlight the significance of heart disease and what "we" can do to reduce the risk of heart attack.

The old adage of "prevention is the best medicine" is very relevant with heart disease and there are some simple steps that can be followed for a Healthy Heart. These include:

- Become active and introduce some regular physical activity into your lifestyle;
- Eat intelligently & control your intake of cholesterol, calories, and sugars.

The right balance between food intake and exercise is vital for a healthy heart, plus it enables us to maintain an optimistic mental attitude in the knowledge we are doing something positive.

"Taking responsibility for heart health" will be our key message and I not only encourage you to embrace the campaign message, but encourage your family, friends and colleagues to join with you and adjust to a healthier lifestyle.

Please join with us to reduce heart disease in our region and personally enjoy the fruits of a healthier lifestyle.

Peter Milne
Chief Executive Officer

YOUR SUPPORT IS SHAPING A HEALTHIER FUTURE



Thank you to everyone who supported our mid-year Research Appeal.

In the lead up to the end of financial year we asked you to help us 'fill the cup' in support of medical research right here in Northern Tasmania.

We are pleased to report this appeal raised more than \$40,000.

Your generous donations will help ensure we keep the brightest medical minds in our state, focused on finding cures and better treatments for the illnesses that impact our community.

Thank you for making medical research a priority.

We couldn't do it without you!

SCAN ME

HELP US
Fill the Cup
& SAVE LIVES

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH A SPECIAL VIDEO.

RESEARCH UPDATES

BARIATRIC CLINIC

A new Allied Health Metabolic Clinic is providing psychological and dietetic support to patients before and after surgery, as part of a new initiative based on and around research.

In Tasmania, about a third of the adult population is believed to be obese. However, the health issue often overlaps physiological, psychological and dietetic domains.

As a result, health professionals are starting to rethink their approach to obesity by focusing more on the person and their lived experience.

A study led by Chronic Condition Psychologist Dr John Mercer is a great example of translational research supported by the Clifford Craig Foundation that is now directly benefiting patients.

First commenced in 2018 and aimed at improving bariatric surgery outcomes, this study has resulted in publications and provided important insights into the population of people living with weight issues in Tasmania.

This includes the factors that may aid or hinder a positive surgery outcome – such as the social, psychological, and systematic factors.

Now, a new Allied Health Metabolic Clinic has been established in Launceston based on the results of this research, providing psychology and dietetic support to both endocrinology and surgery intervention pathways.

Opened earlier this year, alongside Dr Mercer the clinic consists of two psychologists and two dietitians and represents an Australian-first multidisciplinary model of care.

As Dr Mercer explained, the Clinic is aimed at ensuring patients are informed and prepared before surgery, so they can get the best possible outcome.

“We wanted to understand what the lived experience of our patients was, and then design a service based around that,” Dr Mercer explained.

“People’s relationship with food is not quantified - it’s not used to work out who is going to be a good candidate for surgery and who is not going to do so well.

“It’s more about what people need as individuals and making sure patients are informed about their treatment options.”

Dr Mercer said he would like to see this integrated approach of dietitians working side-by-side with psychologists become a template for how Tasmania thinks about working with metabolic populations.

“This is how I like to explain it:

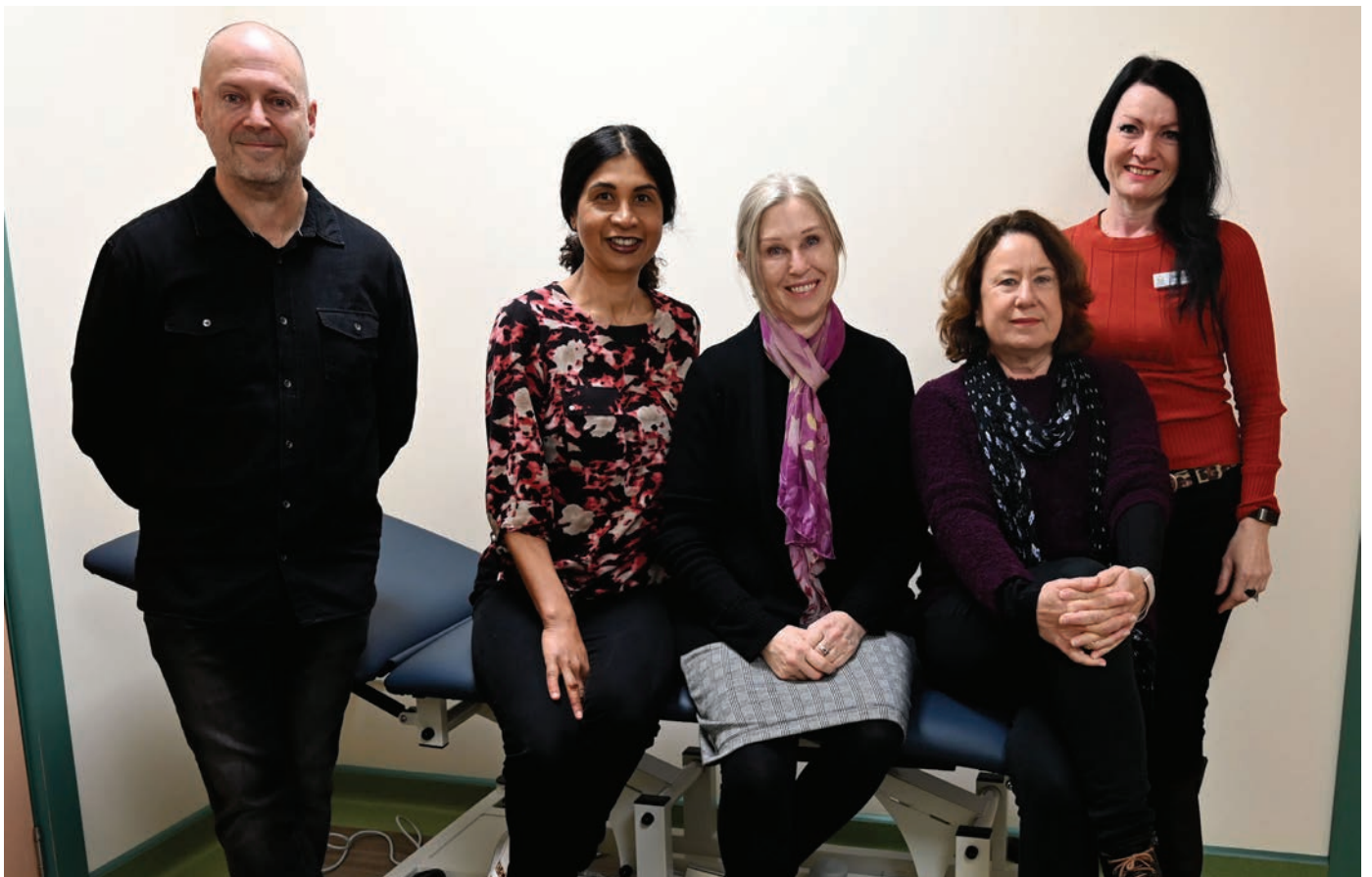
“Sometimes I think to myself: ‘I want a chocolate cookie’.

“But then I think: ‘no I shouldn’t. But I really want it. But I shouldn’t because I will put on weight’.

“But then I will have the cookie anyway.

“So, all that internal monologue is the psychology part. The nutritional aspect of the cookie – that’s the dietetic part. So, for the individual, that stuff is never separate. So why separate it in care?”

The work of the clinic is now informing ongoing research.



Dr John Mercer with Clinical Lead René du Plessis, Psychologists Patricia Aitken and Ros Herriman, and Dietitian Sharon King.



HOW THE NORTH-WEST OUTBREAK INFORMED ONE OF THE FIRST STUDIES INTO LONG-COVID

It's been more than three years since Tasmania's North-West was gripped by an outbreak of COVID-19, resulting in a public health emergency.

Between March 20 and April 13 of 2020, there were 138 COVID-19 cases linked to the North West Regional Hospital at Burnie, North West Private Hospital and the Mersey Community Hospital.

This was prior to the development of COVID-19 vaccine and therefore represents a cohort of individuals experiencing primary infection to the original Wuhan strain of SARS-CoV-2.

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world led to an unprecedented response from the global research community in the pursuit to find an effective treatment and a vaccine for the virus.

Tasmania has played a key role in this, specifically out of the Tasmanian Vaccine Trial Centre at the Launceston General Hospital.

This includes some of the first insights into 'long-COVID', with many of the North-West healthcare workers who contracted coronavirus during this outbreak volunteering to participate in a collaborative research study.

Led by the LGH's Director of Infectious Diseases, Professor Katie Flanagan, the study involved the collection of blood samples from people involved in the NW outbreak, in addition to samples collected from COVID-19 patients in Melbourne.

At the time of commencing this study, very little was known about the long-term effects of COVID-19 on the immune system. The study therefore focused on diverse immunological factors including immune cells, DNA structure and autoantibodies.

This study compared the immune responses of people who had fully recovered from COVID, those with ongoing symptoms, and those who were working at the NWRH during the outbreak, but didn't experience COVID-19.

Sample analysis remains ongoing, but a study published in the journal *Frontiers in Immunology* tested reactivity to a panel of 102 disease-specific autoantigens and 6 SARS-CoV-2 antigens to examine the relationship between COVID-19 and autoreactive immunity.

Calprotectin was the most commonly recognised antibody (22.6% of the COVID-19 volunteers), and reactivity to it was associated with return to healthy normal life post-COVID-19.

This suggests that it may play a protective role against developing long-COVID.

Professor Flanagan said future studies may address whether these autoantibodies may provide functional protection.

"Interestingly, the COVID-19 individuals had antibodies to Omicron variant spike protein many months before this variant existed, demonstrating that immunity to the original Wuhan strain of SARS-CoV-2 provides protection against later variants, before they emerge," she said.

"The identification of autoantibodies as potentially protective indicates a need to not only explore the induction of autoimmunity post COVID-19, but to understand specific targets that may be involved in pathology or protection.

"Future analysis investigating the longitudinal antibody response to antigens identified in this study and their correlation with disease severity and outcomes, may give insights into the roles of autoantibodies in long-COVID."

The Tasmanian cohort of this study was funded by the Clifford Craig Foundation.



MS TRIAL UNDERWAY AT LGH

An exciting new clinical trial measuring the effects of magnetic brain stimulation (MBS) on people with multiple sclerosis has commenced at the Launceston General Hospital.

A phase two trial, Taurus.2 is being coordinated by the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

The Clifford Craig Foundation is supporting the Northern Tasmanian component led by Neurologist Dr Lauren Giles.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic illness that affects a person's central nervous system, with the resulting nerve damage disrupting communication between the brain and the body.

A lifelong disease for which a cure has yet to be found, MS impacts more than 25,000 Australians - but there is hope.

An interventional study, TAURUS 2 commenced at the LGH in August and aims to determine whether magnetic brain stimulation improves the MS functional composite score for people living with MS.

MBS can non-invasively and painlessly activate nerve cells in the human brain and can be used to change nerve cell activity. MBS is currently used to treat depression, but has only been used for MS in the research setting.

As part of the study, patients living with MS will attend clinics over a five-month period and be randomly assigned to a treatment group - the MBS group or the placebo group.

The placebo is a fake MBS that looks and feels like the real thing, but with no brain stimulation. Patients won't know which group they are in until the study is completed.

Participants are also required to have Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) before and after each MBS or placebo sessions, to assess whether MBS effectively increases brain myelin levels.

Over 100 people with MS have been recruited for this trial which will be conducted at sites in Northern Tasmania, Victoria, NSW, WA and Queensland in addition to the Menzies Institute for Medical Research in Hobart.

HOSPITAL ROUNDS

Director of Research appointment

Congratulations to Professor Nicholas Shackel, who has been appointed the Director of Research for Hospital's North and North-West.

As Director of Research, Professor Shackel will help lead the establishment of a Research and Innovation Centre at the Launceston General Hospital.

The role comes after many years of strategic planning by the Clifford Craig Foundation, for the betterment of research governance in North and North-West Tasmania, and represents an exciting new chapter for research excellence in our state.

A new role within the Department of Health, the Director of Research will work with internal and external partners, research bodies and clinicians to progress the shared vision and goals for research practice, development and translation within Tasmania.

This includes fostering research education, training and mentoring in Hospital's North and North-West, building research capacity and greater research collaboration within Tasmania and interstate research organisations, and overseeing improved participation in clinical research.

A gastroenterologist at the Launceston General Hospital, Professor Shackel is a passionate advocate for translational medical research and advancing clinical education.

The Research and Innovation Centre will be established on Level 1 of the Northern Integrated Care Services (NICS) building on the LGH campus, with a joint funding commitment from the state and federal governments.

It is expected to significantly enhance Tasmania's capacity to recruit skilled medical professionals, attract further research dollars to the state and provide translational solutions to the health issues faced by our regional communities.



Nicholas Shackel

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH COURSE

The Clifford Craig Foundation is continuing its commitment to education at the Launceston General Hospital, with more than 50 healthcare workers recently completing our 2023 Introduction to Research Course.

With the goal of providing clinicians in medicine, nursing and allied health with the skills to undertake their own medical research projects, the course was facilitated by Research Fellow Dr Sarah Young, Professor Nicholas Shackel and Dr Kath Ogden.

Held over six-weeks, topics included research design and theory, qualitative and quantitative research methods, biostatistics, ethics, governance and tips for getting work published.

We caught up with two participants – Clinical Nurse Consultant Fiona Taylor and Clinical Dietitian Soraya DiNuzzo – to find out what they thought.

Fiona Taylor, Clinical Nurse Consultant



Fiona Taylor

Fiona is a Clinical Nurse Consultant at the Tasmanian Specialist Immunisation and Allergy Clinic.

With a Master of Public Health, she has always had an interest in medical research, but said she'd never had the opportunity to explore it - until now.

"I feel that through Clifford Craig, there is a real momentum for people to be encouraged to get involved in medical research. I think this course really emphasised that," she said.

"The Introduction to Research Course presented an overview of research with a focus on how research can inform practice and the complexities of research in the health care setting.

"The course was interactive and the presenters were encouraging. It was wonderful to see the passion for research within the THS and the possibilities."

Soraya DiNuzzo, Clinical Dietitian



Soraya DiNuzzo

Soraya is an Accredited Practising Dietitian at the LGH, currently working in oncology.

Looking to brush up on her medical research knowledge, she thought the Introduction to Research Course would help her do just that.

"Until recently, I hadn't had much to do with research since university," she said.

"Providing evidence-based care is the cornerstone of Dietetic practice.

Being up to date with research and the evidence base underpins all that we do, and I thought it was time I also contributed to the research base."

She said she benefited from the opportunity to network with a range of different professions.

"Within allied health we have catch ups, but there is not really a lot of opportunities hospital-wide where you would get a med student, a dietitian, a physio, senior physio, consultant all together in one place," she said.

"The presenting team were very approachable and knowledgeable and were able to relate these topics back to practical examples of study ideas we provided or areas they've previously worked in."

The Foundation looks forward to providing further education initiatives like this in the future.

END OF AN ERA FOR ANNE O'BYRNE SITE

Plans for a new private hospital co-located with the Launceston General continue to progress.

Calvary's private hospital will now be built on the existing Anne O'Byrne site, on the corner of Howick and Charles streets, Launceston.

The original site identified for the hospital – 52 Frankland Street – will now become home of a new Mental Health Precinct, which will be built as part of the government's 10-year, \$580 million LGH Masterplan.

In July a development application was lodged to demolish the Anne O'Byrne Building – first constructed in the 1960s – to make way for the new private hospital, due for completion in 2026.

The LGH masterplan is being completed in four stages over the next decade, with *stage 1 completed* late last year.

The name and recognition of Anne O'Byrne, who was a founding member of the Clifford Craig Foundation, has not been lost from the LGH precinct.

The tunapri mapali building – meaning "lots of knowledge" in palawa kani – is now home to the Anne O'Byrne Education Centre and administrative facilities.

Under the masterplan the office of the Clifford Craig Foundation, currently on level 5 of the LGH, will also be moved to the Northern Integrated Care Unit with the establishment of a new *Research and Innovation Centre*.



SOUP AND SANDWICH SUCCESS

Our Launceston Friends of Clifford Craig have pulled off another successful fundraising event in support of the Foundation.

More than 700 sandwiches and seven boilers of soup were served at the Friends' Soup and Sandwich Luncheon in July, featuring guest speaker Dr Paul Hanson.

Now in its 13th year, the annual event raised more than \$4000, with Dr Hanson recalling tales from his recent adventures climbing Mt Kilimanjaro, and his career as a GP in Tasmania.

Each year the Friends group raise on average \$30,000 in support of the Foundation's medical research program in Northern Tasmania.

About 20 volunteers helped prepare the food and festivities.

Thank you to everyone who made this event possible.



EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS



There are many ways people can show their support for the Clifford Craig Foundation.

For staff at the Launceston General Hospital, one of the easiest ways of giving back is through our Gold Coin Club.

Through the program, staff can choose an amount they would like to be deducted from their weekly wage, which is then donated back to us.

All funds raised support the Clifford Craig Foundation's medical research program and education initiatives.

The program has been running since the Foundation's inception more than 30 years ago and is a great example of how "every little bit counts" when it comes to regular giving.

As a way of saying thank you to our Gold Coin Club members, each year we randomly pull two names out of a hat and treat them to something special.

Up first this year was LGH Theatre Nurse Robyn Lind, who has been donating through the Club for the past 23 years.

Congratulations Robyn and thank you for your support.

If you would like to know more about our Gold Coin Club, call the Foundation office on 6777 6010.



The Clifford Craig Foundation will be increasingly contacting our interested supporters via email.

If you would like to receive the latest news and updates from the Foundation, please provide us with your preferred email address, via admin@cliffordcraig.org.au or call 6777 6010.

You can also subscribe directly via our website at cliffordcraig.org.au.



BETTER
HOSPITALS.
CHANGING
LIVES.

HOW WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED?



A gift in your Will to the Clifford Craig Foundation is one of the most thoughtful and significant ways to leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Every gift, large or small, matters!

By leaving a bequest, you will leave a legacy supporting others long after you're gone.

You'll be making a lasting contribution to our mission to find better treatments and cures for the diseases and illnesses affecting our loved ones.

It will enable the Foundation to improve health outcomes in our community through medical research, education and improved patient facilities at the Launceston General Hospital.

You can choose to leave a gift for general charitable purposes – meaning the funds are directed to where they are need most.

Alternatively, you can outline a specific purpose for your gift such as research or a particular department that is close to your heart.

To discuss leaving a gift in your Will to support the work of the Clifford Craig Foundation, or to receive a copy of our bequest booklet, please contact our office on (03) 6777 6010 or email admin@cliffordcraig.org.au.



HEALTHY EATING RECIPE MUSHROOM POT PIE



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Heat a large frying pan over medium high heat. Once the pan is hot, add the olive oil and mushrooms.
3. Cook the mushrooms, stirring as little as possible, until golden brown and reduced in size, about 6-8 minutes.
4. Reduce the heat to medium and add the onion. Cook for another 2-3 minutes, until translucent.
5. Add the carrots and cook for 2-3 minutes.
6. Add the garlic, herbs, salt, pepper, and paprika. Stir to cook through, about 30 seconds.
7. Add the water or broth and bring to a low boil.
8. Whisk the arrowroot flour into the 2 tablespoons of water. Add this to the boiling liquid in the pan and stir.
9. Spoon the mushroom mixture onto a baking dish.
10. Top with the puff pastry, and roll the edges underneath to create a tidy appearance. Cut a couple of slits in the top of the pastry for steam to escape.
11. Bake for 22-24 minutes, or until the pastry is a dark golden colour and the filling is bubbling. Cool for five minutes before serving.

Recipe courtesy of Eatwell Tasmania

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 700 grams mixed fresh mushrooms roughly chopped
- 1 medium onion diced
- 2 medium carrots thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 teaspoons fresh herbs rosemary and thyme are excellent
- ½ teaspoon sea salt to taste
- ½ teaspoon black pepper to taste
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- 300 ml water
- 1 package puff pastry trimmed to fit baking dish (about 200 grams)

SAVE THE DATE

FRIENDS OF CLIFFORD CRAIG GARDEN FÊTE

When: Sunday, November 26

FRIENDS OF CLIFFORD CRAIG MELBOURNE CUP LUNCHEON

When: Tuesday, November 7

CLIFFORD CRAIG FOUNDATION 2024 CHARITY BALL

When: Friday, May 10

DARE SHOT LECTURE

When: Tuesday, November 21
with Dr Sarah Lee

FOR THE DIARY