



IMPACT REPORT

A Season of Reconnecting

As we collectively navigate the enduring presence of COVID-19, we are heartened to witness the emergence of a 'new normal'. The road to recovery has been challenging, yet it is filled with moments that remind us of the resilience and camaraderie that define our Lungitude Foundation community.

I am excited to share with you a season of reconnecting. Our Lungitude Long Lunch event marked a splendid return to in-person gatherings. The success of this memorable occasion, made possible by the generosity of attendees and the tireless work of our Fundraising Committee, signified more than just a reunion. The event also introduced our much-anticipated new Lungitude Lion mascot, a symbol of courage and bravery.

This year's Lungitude Giving Day was another milestone. The heartfelt stories shared by our Ambassadors Leah and Graham resonated deeply with many. Your contributions have not only supported two magnificent causes but have paved the way for further collaboration and research. Details of the impact created are outlined within this report.

We are proud to be able to fund world-class research in Australia with your support. The grants provided for Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction (CLAD) research at The Translational Lung Transplant Research Hub and the Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute are testament to our unwavering commitment to advancing medical science in the field of lung transplantation.

Our Lungitude Lung Transplant Research Presentation, a hybrid event this year, is designed to showcase these incredible achievements and allow supporters to participate in person or online.

In this report, we shine a spotlight on two inspirational figures: The Alfred's newest award-winning Lung Transplant Consultant, Dr. Samantha Ennis, and highly respected nurse

The Numbers



37yrs
first Australian
lung transplant



6 average
lung transplants
per month



1 of the 10
largest lung
transplant
programs globally



1,820
lung transplants
at The Alfred



75yrs
oldest lung
recipient

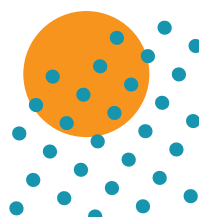
Lynda Holsworth, who is retiring after over thirty devoted years at The Alfred. Their stories echo the dedication that permeates the lung transplant community.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to Katharine Terkuile and Craig Wood for their invaluable contributions during their time as Board members and wish them well as they focus on new endeavours.

We are dedicated in our quest to further aid patients and their primary supporters. The ongoing development of our Peer Support Network and plans to expand our online resources are a promising stride in that direction, reflecting our commitment to education and community.

In closing, let me express my profound gratitude to each one of you. Your unwavering support has not only powered our research but has forged a community bound by empathy, excellence, and hope.

Gordon Jenkins
Lungitude Foundation Chair



Transformational Lung Transplant Research

World-class patient outcomes

The Alfred's Lung Transplant Service have had a very successful and busy year, both from a clinical and research perspective. Clinically, annual lung transplant activity has stabilised, and thankfully the impact of COVID is lessening. They have also had the opportunity of showcasing their research output at important national and international transplant meetings.



THEIR KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PAST YEAR INCLUDE:



Developing a deeper understanding of how donor and recipient HLA (tissue typing) matching and mis-matching affects long-term lung transplant outcomes. Additionally, advanced technological platforms have also provided new ways of assessing donor and recipient matching, and the results from these new systems are already being utilised to help determine the transplant rejection risk for individual patients – (particularly in the setting of infection and cancer transplant complications)



There are clues in some of the cells found in lung fluid (BAL) collected in the early weeks after transplant that link to a risk of developing chronic lung rejection (CLAD). Finding these cell signals early after lung transplant may lead to interventions that can prevent development of CLAD.



They have identified specific donor lung 'passenger cells' which are transplanted with the donor lung, which can help transplant recipients control important infections such as cytomegalovirus (CMV) for months after transplant. They continue to look at these donor passenger CMV-specific immune cells to work out exactly how they help may control CMV infection locally in the lungs, which then indirectly protects the lung transplant patient from developing CLAD.

PROJECT

1

The impact of non-HLA antibodies in donor-recipient matching

IN COLLABORATION WITH VICTORIAN TRANSPLANTATION AND IMMUNOGENETICS SERVICE (VTIS) TEAM OF STEVEN HIHO AND DR LUCY SULLIVAN.

Steven Hiho and the immunology research team have previously focused on identifying the immunological factors of donors and recipient's HLA (ie. their tissue typing) to better predict the best match between donor and recipients, and reduce the impact of HLA antibodies (called donor specific antibodies or DSA) that develop in lung transplant recipients not well matched to the donor. It is well known that having DSA contributes to development of chronic lung rejection (CLAD).

To extend this work, the team wish to investigate a previously poorly understood group of 'non-HLA antibodies' that some transplant recipients appear to develop, to see if this can help explain further why lung rejection sometimes occurs when there is not the traditionally recognised HLA mis-matching between donor and recipients.

Lungitude is proud to support world-class lung transplant research

IN THE UPCOMING YEAR, RESEARCH WILL CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE ON REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF CLAD POST-LUNG TRANSPLANT, WITH PROJECTS EXPANDING THROUGH EXISTING AND NEW COLLABORATIONS.

THE ALFRED'S PATIENT OUTCOMES FOLLOWING LUNG TRANSPLANTATION REMAIN THE WORLD'S BEST WITH **95%** (ONE YEAR) AND **74%** (FIVE YEAR) SURVIVAL RATES

PROJECT**2**

Individualising immunosuppression to harness donor immune cells to prevent rejection whilst minimising infection

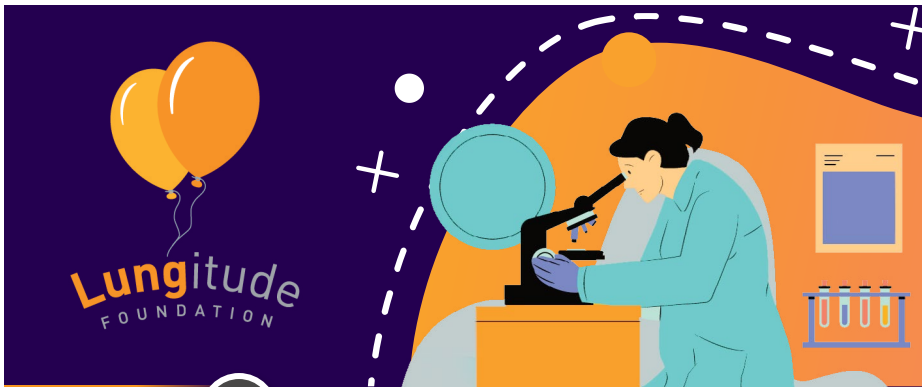
IN COLLABORATION WITH DR BRAD GARDINER, ALFRED HEALTH

Optimising immunosuppression to prevent rejection, particularly CLAD, and at the same time minimising the risk of infection remains one of the major challenges after lung transplantation. This project uses the HLA donor-recipient matching data and immune-biomarkers already identified in their research to date, as well using a new blood test (used previously only to assess CMV infection risk) to try and develop a predictive tool to enable individualisation of dosing of immune-suppressing medication that will also see reduced infection risk.



JEFF GITTUS FELLOWSHIP

Jeff had two lung transplants, and alongside his wife Liz played a pivotal role in enabling the Lungitude Foundation to flourish from day one. The Jeff Gittus Fellowships are generously funded by the Gittus Family and bestowed biennially, granting the successful research applicant a sum of \$20,000.

**PROJECT****3**

Novel biomarkers for predicting chronic rejection

IN COLLABORATION WITH DR DIMITRA ZOTOS, MONASH UNIVERSITY AND RED CROSS LIFEBLOOD.

The researchers have recently identified a new cell marker (biomarker) in patients who developed chronic rejection (CLAD). The laboratory research team plan to use a specifically developed assay to measure this new biomarker in blood samples provided by Red Cross Lifeblood, and compare the results to those found in blood samples already collected over the past 2 years during the current research projects. It is hoped that this new biomarker may help them predict future chronic rejection (CLAD) risk. Additionally, and with financial backing from CSL Ltd, the research team has started a new lung transplant biobank initiative that looks to better understand the causes of primary graft dysfunction.

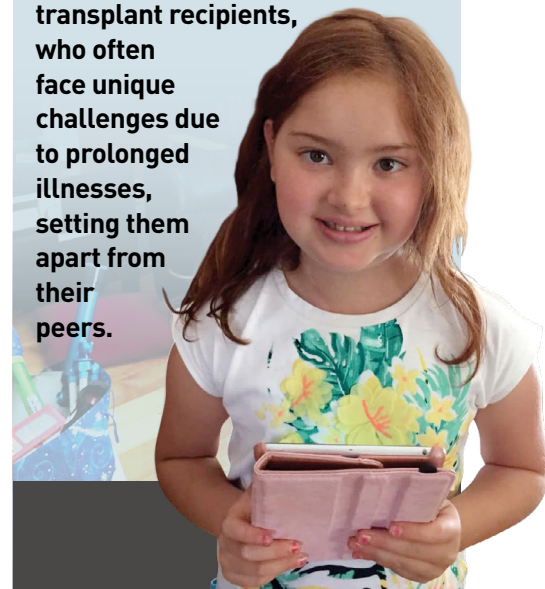
Hear directly about these exciting research findings at our annual Lungitude Lung Transplantation Research Presentation in October.

lungitude.com.au/ourevents

ZOE BROOKES PAEDIATRIC FELLOWSHIP

Zoe and her family have been supporters of Lungitude since its inception, and we are honoured to contribute to Zoe's legacy of helping others by establishing a new Zoe Brookes Paediatric Fellowship.

This fellowship is made possible through Lungitude's fundraising endeavours, including events like our Giving Day. The aim is to sponsor initiatives to aid young paediatric lung transplant recipients, who often face unique challenges due to prolonged illnesses, setting them apart from their peers.



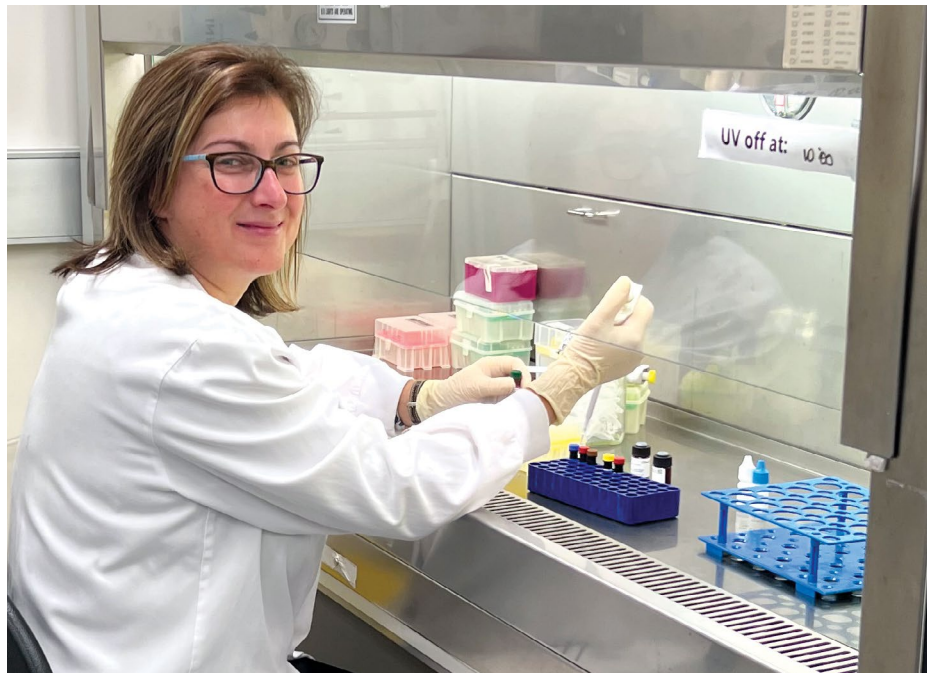
Tackling transplant rejection

with Lungitude Foundation support

When a patient receives an organ transplant, their body sometimes rejects the new organ because it sees it as a foreign invader and tries to attack it. Dr Nicole Mifsud is a Monash researcher who is receiving funding of \$130,000 over two years to study how to control this rejection response.

Lungitude would like to acknowledge the generous funding received from Roger and Lesley Gillespie and Tony Pratt in support of Dr Mifsud's project.

Dr Mifsud works at the Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute (BDI) as a Group Leader studying how the immune system works following organ transplants. Specifically, she focuses on special cells in the immune system called T cells. In certain situations, some T cells play a role in causing problems like drug allergies and organ transplant rejection.



Dr Mifsud explained that when organs are transplanted, there are often genetic differences between the donor and the recipient. Depending on how much difference there is, the immune system may launch harmful attacks on the transplanted organ, leading to rejection or its failure.

To prevent this rejection, patients must take powerful drugs that suppress the entire immune system. However, these drugs cannot tell the difference between harmful and helpful T cells, which makes patients vulnerable to infections and cancer.

Dr Mifsud's goal is to find a better way to monitor the immune response after a transplant. She focuses on

identifying small pieces of protein, called peptides, that decorate the organ and are recognised by the attacking T cells. By understanding the importance of these peptides in triggering strong immune responses, they can develop better monitoring tools to improve the treatment and outcomes for transplant patients.

The funding received from the Lungitude Foundation will help her team use the latest techniques to identify these peptides and advance the development of tools to better manage transplant patients' health. Ultimately, the goal is to make organ transplants safer and more successful for everyone who needs them.

SPOTLIGHT ON... DR SAMANTHA ENNIS

Dr Samantha Ennis is an award-winning Early Career Monash University Researcher who has been part of the respiratory team at the Alfred Hospital, serving as a Lung Transplant Consultant.

Samantha's award-winning research focused on the outcomes of lung transplant patients who had COVID-19, demonstrating that cohorts of patients who were very well vaccinated and who were treated promptly, experienced mild disease and did not have a clinically significant drop in lung function. "Winning the Early Career Researcher at the Transplantation Society of ANZ (TSANZ) Conference is a significant milestone", Samantha says. "To be recognised by your peers for your contribution to your field is very rewarding, and I'm hopeful it will catalyse professional growth and further opportunities".





An Event Like No Other!

Thank you to everyone who supported our fabulous Lungitude Long Lunch on 29 April 2023 at the iconic West Beach Pavilion in St Kilda.

We welcomed the opportunity to reconnect in person with our supporters, have some fun and raise more awareness of what we do.

That alone would see the event as a great success, however thanks to the generosity of businesses, supporters, and bidding on the day we also raised some wonderful funds in support of vital lung transplant research.

A huge thank you to the hard-working and creative fundraising committee who helped make this memorable event possible.

Photo gallery <https://bit.ly/LLL23PG>



READY, SET, GO!



Thank you to those of you who ran, walked, hopped, skipped or jumped during our Lungitude Virtual Challenge last October. A special mention to Swan Hill Primary School and Laura's Legends who participated in memory of lung transplant recipient Laura Benham, an inspiration to so many.



**THANK YOU TO THE
PARDASANI FAMILY WHO
GENEROUSLY DONATED
A NEW RECUMBENT BIKE
FOR THE ALFRED
TRANSPLANT GYM.**

Giving Day Generosity

We were blown away by all your support! Thanks to each of you who donated, we exceeded our target goal of \$100,002 for our Lungitude Giving Day which was amazing.

This year you helped to fund two great causes. Helping to beat chronic lung transplant rejection and Supporting paediatric lung transplant patient research.

- 1** The average life expectancy for an Australian lung transplant recipient is only 7 years and up to 50% of lung transplants develop chronic lung allograft dysfunction (CLAD) within the first five years. More research is desperately needed to prevent this lung transplant rejection.
- 2** New research is keenly needed into initiatives to support young paediatric lung transplant patients, who often face unique challenges due to prolonged illness that sets them apart from their peers.

Your donations will help to unlock the vital knowledge needed to prolong the life of a lung transplant recipient and make a real difference in patients' lives.



LUNGITUDE GIVING DAY AMBASSADORS



Patient Leah and her father Graham (left) who generously agreed to be the faces of this year's campaign! Leah's story is remarkable as she recently underwent a series of transplants, all done at The Alfred using different surgical teams. Leah's lungs were transplanted first by surgeons at The Alfred, then her liver by Austin Hospital surgeons, followed by her pancreas by surgeons from the Monash Medical Centre.

We also gifted one of our new Lungitude Lion mascots to Leah, which we will be doing for lung transplant patients to recognise their bravery and strengths along their journey.

A Legacy of Dedication

Lynda is a passionate nurse with over three decades of experience at the Alfred Hospital, a significant portion devoted to lung transplant research and respiratory medicine. Reflecting on her nursing career, Lynda shares her insights, reflecting on the importance of research and the remarkable patients who inspire her every day.

Lynda's journey began in the demanding world of clinical nursing. Over time, she cared for heart and lung transplant patients in The Alfred Hospital Cardiothoracic Unit. When Professor Greg Snell, Head of the Lung Transplant Service at The Alfred Hospital, offered her the opportunity to join the respiratory medicine research team, Lynda didn't hesitate.

Research is not for everyone, but it was a captivating realm for Lynda. She is particularly fascinated by the research emerging from lab work and eagerly follows the results and observes how they translate into better patient outcomes. Working alongside brilliant minds and medical industry experts has fuelled her passion even more. "The energy is palpable when a researcher comes in with an idea that might make a difference. The opportunity to make a difference is such a driver for them," Lynda shares with admiration.

Throughout her nursing career, Lynda has witnessed remarkable advancements in respiratory medicine. Patients undergoing lung transplants experience immense joy and a renewed lease on life when they can breathe freely. However, the possibility of chronic rejection remains a constant focus for researchers committed to improving patient outcomes and enhancing post-transplant care.

As Lynda approaches her well-deserved retirement, she reflects on what she will miss the most. "It's the people," she says warmly. The amazing colleagues she has known for years, the interactions with them, and the lessons learned are

cherished memories. However, it's the patients who are the true heroes of research. Lynda expresses her gratitude for being with a patient who wakes from lung transplant surgery. "The patients are why we do what we do," she says sincerely.

Lynda emphasises the vital role of donations in supporting researchers. The support enables them to explore different avenues, even if they occasionally lead to dead-ends. Every endeavour contributes to valuable knowledge and guides future resource allocation. "Finding something that we can put a tick in the box is incredibly exciting, as it helps progress research and improve patient care," Lynda explains.

Lynda's journey in respiratory medicine exemplifies dedication, compassion, and the pursuit of making a difference. As she prepares to step into the next chapter of her life, Lynda leaves a legacy that will continue inspiring future generations of healthcare professionals. Her unwavering commitment to enhancing patient outcomes is a powerful reminder of research's transformative impact on countless lives.



LUNGITUDE FOUNDATION Mental Health Initiatives

Did you know that we have a range of mental health resources on our website for both patients and their primary supporters? These include our popular video series where you can hear direct from other patients and supporters, and our 'Coping with Stress' booklets.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our Mental Health Resources Survey which has given us further insights into what other resources to focus on. We will be looking at expanding our current online content as well as more direct support.

We invite patients or their primary supporters to join our Lungitudo Online Peer to Peer Support Network, which enables the sharing of ideas and tips for managing the practical and emotional challenges of the lung transplant journey. Since launching in collaboration with Lung Foundation Australia, we have been able to support one another and have some fun along the way. You are welcome to jump on our next monthly call to check it out. Please contact wendy@lungitudo.com.au for details.

www.lungitudo.com.au/peer-support/

Lungitude Key Supporters

We extend our thanks for your generosity

**Gillespie Family
Foundation**

**The Gittus
Family**

Mr Tony Pratt



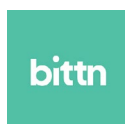
**MONASH
University**

Apt.
WEALTH PARTNERS



**Ken Donovan &
Wendy Futschik**

**The Pardasani
Family**



**The Burnell-
Armstrong
Family**



Willis Partners
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FOUNDATION**

Save the Dates



MAR/APRIL

Lungitude Long Lunch
MELBOURNE

Stunning location, entertainment,
with fabulous food & wine



20 JUNE 2024

Lungitude Giving Day
FUNDRAISER

Double your impact with your
donation matched on the day



OCT EACH YEAR
Annual Research
PRESENTATION

World-class researchers
showcasing their latest
project outcomes



THROUGHOUT YEAR
Fundraising Events

Choose your favourite event
and fundraise for Lungitude

Our Team

BOARD MEMBERS

Gordon Jenkins, Lungitude Chair
Andrew Dunbar, Board Chair
Julie Ramke-Meyer, Treasurer
Wendy Jenkins, Secretary
A/Prof Bronwyn Levvey
Bridget Mullahy (sabbatical)
Matt Gittus

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Wendy Jenkins, Chair
Kerrie Coghlan
Liz Gittus
Cindy Watson
Elise Patterson

YOU CAN MAKE A VITAL DIFFERENCE

- Make a Donation
- Donate Goods & Services
- Sponsor or Attend an Event
- Sponsor the Lungitude Foundation
- Subscribe to our Online Community
- Consider including a Bequest to Lungitude in your will
- Run your own fundraiser supporting the Lungitude Foundation
- Encourage staff, colleagues, suppliers or clients to support us
- Spread the word and follow us on social media

Find out more about how you can support us
www.lungitude.com.au/get-involved/



Have you been receiving our latest emails? Please add the following
email to your address book info@lungitude.com.au
or subscribe to our database www.lungitude.com.au/our-community/



Contact us

LUNGITUDE FOUNDATION
PO Box 25132, Melbourne VIC, 3004



03 9525 2448



info@lungitude.com.au



lungitude.com.au