Lungitude FOUNDATION

IMPACT REPORT

Progress Through Partnership

Every advance in lung transplantation begins with people who believe better outcomes are possible. Thank you for being one of them.

Over the past year, your support has enabled Lungitude to strengthen collaborations with leading researchers across Australia, including at The Alfred, Monash University, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney, Fiona Stanley Hospital, and the Red Cross Lifeblood Victorian and South Australian Transplantation and Immunogenetics Services (VTIS and SATIS). Together, these partnerships are advancing innovative research into earlier diagnosis, improved treatments and better long-term outcomes for lung transplant recipients.

Research is strongest when it is informed by the people it is intended to benefit. As an Australian consumer representative organisation for lung transplantation, we continued to contribute the patient voice and lived experience to major research proposals and grant applications, helping ensure future research reflects the needs and priorities of the transplant community.

Supporting patients and caregivers beyond research remained a key priority. Through our national Peer Support Network and the launch of the first Navigating Transplant self-advocacy series booklet, we continued to provide practical support to help patients and families feel informed, connected and empowered throughout their experience.

One of the highlights of the year was welcoming our community to the Lungitude Long Lunch in Port Melbourne. It was an afternoon of connection and generosity, featuring a fantastic performance by the Royal Australian Navy Rock Band and inspiring stories from lung transplant recipient Jade and her husband David.

Our annual Giving Day once again brought our community together to support life-changing lung transplant research and patient support. Thanks to the incredible support of our donors, we reached our fundraising target within 24 hours. Featuring the story of Jane, her husband Peter and their much-loved dog Gus, the campaign reminded us of the real lives behind every donation.

Thank you also to everyone who supported Lungitude through community fundraising. Whether you organised a go-karting event, golf day, or celebrated a birthday or milestone by fundraising online, every effort helps advance research and support people living with lung transplantation.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to investing in research, strengthening patient and caregiver support, and ensuring the voices of those living with lung transplantation continue to shape the future of care.

On behalf of the team at Lungitude, thank you for your continued support. Together, we are helping shape a better future for people living with lung transplantation.

Gordon Jenkins
Lungitude Foundation Chair

Lungitude Giving Day Ambassadors

This year, Jane, her husband Peter and their much-loved dog Gus featured in our Giving Day campaign. Through their personal story, they helped demonstrate the impact of lung transplantation and why continued investment in research and patient support is so important. Their willingness to share their experience helped to inspire our community to get behind the campaign.

Transformational Lung Transplant Research

KEY FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE PAST YEAR INCLUDE:

TARGETED QUANTIFICATION OF CANDIDATE GENE AND MOLECULAR CLAD BIOMARKERS IN BAL AND BLOOD OF LUNG TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS

– Dr Giulia Iacono, Monash University

This research identified promising changes in lipids (fat-like molecules that play essential roles in cell structure, energy storage and inflammation) that may help predict which lung transplant recipients are at greater risk of developing CLAD. The team found that changes in specific blood lipids were detectable from the time of transplantation, while changes in lipids within lung fluid emerged later and accumulated over the first year after transplant. This suggests that blood-based lipid profiling may provide an earlier indication of future risk, while lung fluid analysis may offer complementary insights into the biological changes occurring within the transplanted lung. Researchers are now identifying the most promising lipid markers across both blood and lung fluid and investigating why these changes occur at different stages.

AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOUNDATION MODEL FOR PREDICTING HEALTH OUTCOMES IN LUNG TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS

– Dr Giulia Iacono, Monash University

This project is developing an artificial intelligence model capable of predicting CLAD before clinical signs appear by analysing complex biological data collected after transplantation. Early results have identified initial biological signals that are most informative for prediction, including gene activity and the lipid markers identified through the companion Lungitude-funded project. These discoveries are helping refine the model and determine which data should be included to maximise its accuracy. As the research continues, larger datasets and additional biological information will be incorporated, with the long-term goal of developing a clinically useful tool capable of identifying patients at high risk of CLAD much earlier than current diagnostic methods.

These projects demonstrate the impact of early research investment, with Lungitude's funding helping the team, including Lungitude's Wendy Jenkins, secure more than $1.7 million in MRFF funding over four years to build on and expand this work.

POST-OPERATIVE ANALGESIA IN LUNG ALLOGRAFT RECIPIENTS (POLAR): A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

– A/Prof Jennifer Stevens, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney

The POLAR study compared two techniques for managing pain after lung transplantation: a local anaesthetic nerve block and cryoanalgesia (freezing the chest wall nerves during surgery). Preliminary findings showed no safety concerns for either approach and no patients experiencing the painful pins-and-needles sensation previously associated with older cryoanalgesia technology. The aim is to now incorporate one or both techniques into standard pain management after lung transplantation.

The study also highlighted an opportunity to improve patient care. Many patients experienced prolonged chest wall and nipple numbness but had not raised these concerns, fearing they would appear ungrateful for their transplant. Their feedback will help strengthen the transplant consent process and better prepare future patients for surgery.

IDENTIFICATION OF IMMUNE TRIGGERS FOR GRAFT REJECTION IN TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS

– Dr Nicole Mifsud, Monash University

One of the biggest challenges after an organ transplant is predicting when the immune system will begin attacking the new organ. Researchers led by Dr Nicole Mifsud at Monash University are investigating the tiny protein fragments, called peptides, displayed on donor organs that may trigger these harmful immune responses.

By analysing lungs, hearts, kidneys and livers, the team has already identified a number of peptide targets shared across different transplant organs and common genetic backgrounds. They are now testing whether these peptides activate the T cells responsible for rejection. This research aims to support the development of a simple blood test that can detect early signs of rejection and help doctors personalise treatment.

INVESTIGATING NON-CLASSICAL IMMUNOLOGICAL MARKERS AND IMPACT ON LUNG TRANSPLANT OUTCOMES – A/Prof Lucy Sullivan, SATIS Australian Red Cross Lifeblood

The researchers continue to investigate two lesser-studied immune proteins, CD36 and MIC-A, to better understand their role in the body's response to a transplanted lung. CD36 contributes to inflammation, while MIC-A helps detect cellular stress. Some people have genetic variants of these proteins or develop antibodies against them, which may affect transplant acceptance or rejection. While MIC-A has been studied in other organ transplants, its role in lung transplantation remains unclear.

Research suggests antibodies to CD36 may harm transplant outcomes, but the impact of genetic variation is unknown. This study is analysing CD36 and MIC-A genotypes and related antibodies in lung transplant recipients from The Alfred, comparing results to outcomes such as rejection and long-term survival. Findings could improve monitoring and enable more personalised care, helping clinicians better predict and manage transplant rejection.

INVESTIGATING CYTOKINE PROFILES IN BLOOD AND LUNGS OF LUNG TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS – Dr Steven Hiho, VTIS Australian Red Cross Lifeblood

Lung transplantation offers a vital lifeline for people with severe lung disease, but ongoing monitoring is crucial to protect the new organ. Cytokines, small proteins that regulate immune activity and inflammation, are an emerging focus in post-transplant care. This study is measuring cytokine levels in blood and lung fluid, collected during routine bronchoscopies, to understand lung health at different stages after transplant. Some cytokines trigger inflammation, while others help calm the immune system.

Using stored samples from lung transplant recipients, researchers are comparing cytokine patterns with outcomes such as stability, infection, rejection, or Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction (CLAD). The goal is to identify immune "signatures" that detect complications early or confirm when patients are stable. Some patterns may be found in blood alone, potentially allowing less invasive, more timely monitoring and earlier interventions.

Jeff Gittus Fellowship

The Gittus Family are delighted to announce that Dr Miranda Paraskeva, Lung Transplant Physician at The Alfred, is the 2026 recipient of the Jeff Gittus Lung Transplant Fellowship.

PRECISION PREVENTION AFTER LUNG TRANSPLANTATION: A RISK-STRATIFIED SKIN CANCER MODEL TO REDUCE LONG-TERM MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY

Dr Miranda Paraskeva's project aims to develop a risk-based screening tool, shifting skin cancer care from reactive treatment to proactive prevention, reducing surgeries, preventing advanced cancer and improving quality of life for lung transplant recipients.

Established in honour of lung transplant recipient Jeff Gittus, the Fellowship reflects the family's ongoing commitment to research that improves the lives of transplant patients and their families.

TARGETED IMPROVING MEDICATION ADHERENCE AFTER LUNG TRANSPLANT WITH A STRUCTURED PHARMACY PROGRAM

Dr Steven Ivulich, Respiratory Services, Pharmacy Department, Alfred Health Alfred – Recipient of the 2025 Jeff Gittus Lung Transplant Fellowship

This project has been underway since September 2025 with new lung transplant recipients receive weekly clinical pharmacy reviews in the transplant clinic for the first month after discharge from hospital, followed by monthly and then three-monthly reviews thereafter.

Approximately 70 lung transplant recipients have received an average of 6 regular pharmacy reviews and approximately 200 adherence assessments have been undertaken during this period. Medication related issues have been identified for 12 of these patients with interventions implemented.
Data analysis is expected to begin soon to determine whether the increased pharmacy reviews has improved medication adherence and lung transplant outcomes for the overall cohort.

Lungitude Foundation Research Grants 2026-2027

We are proud to announce our latest Lungitude Foundation Research Grant recipients. Please join us in congratulating these outstanding principal investigators whose innovative work impacts lung transplant outcomes.

LUNGITUDE FOUNDATION RESEARCH GRANT

SHARED PEPTIDE TARGETS LINKING SENTINEL SKIN GRAFTS AND LUNG TRANSPLANT REJECTION – Dr Nicole Mifsud, Monash University

Detecting lung transplant rejection early remains a major challenge. Current monitoring relies on invasive lung biopsies, which may not identify rejection until damage has already occurred. This project is investigating a promising new approach using a small donor skin graft, known as a "sentinel" transplant, placed on the recipient's forearm. Because the skin graft is visible and easy to examine, it may provide an early warning sign that the immune system is attacking the transplanted lung.

Researchers will investigate whether the same immune targets are involved in both the skin graft and the lung. By understanding this link, the project aims to improve early detection of lung transplant rejection and ultimately protect transplanted lungs from damage.

LUNGITUDE FOUNDATION RESEARCH GRANT

ENZYMATIC A-ANTIGEN REMOVAL OF ABO-A+ DONOR LUNGS USING EVLP: A FAST-TRACK PROTOCOL FOR UNIVERSAL DONOR ORGANS – Professor Ulrich Stock, Fiona Stanley Hospital WA

Currently, lung transplant candidates with Type O blood face significantly longer wait times and higher mortality rates because they can only receive Type O organs. This project aims to solve this "blood-type mismatch" by using a specialised enzyme combination to strip the A-antigens from donor lungs, effectively turning them into "Universal" Type O lungs.

By using Ex Vivo Lung Perfusion (EVLP) - a technology that keeps lungs perfused and breathing outside the body – researchers can treat the organs safely before they are transplanted. This research project focuses on a novel "fast-track" protocol to make this process quicker and more reliable, ensuring more life-saving organs are available for the patients who need them most.

JUDY ALLEN MARGARET PRATT RESEARCH GRANT

DECODING THE LUNG IMMUNOPEPTIDOME TO REVEAL PEPTIDE TARGETS FOR MONITORING TRANSPLANT REJECTION – Dr Nicole Mifsud, Monash University

Current monitoring for lung transplant rejection relies on lung biopsies and lung function tests, which can miss early signs of immune injury and require invasive procedures. This project is developing a minimally invasive blood test to monitor immune cells responsible for transplant rejection in real time.

Researchers will identify the specific HLA-peptide combinations recognised by these immune cells and track how their activity changes over time. By comparing these findings with lung function and biopsy results, the team aims to detect immune injury earlier, before irreversible damage occurs. Earlier detection could enable more timely treatment, improve clinical decision-making, reduce reliance on invasive biopsies and ultimately help protect transplanted lungs and improve long-term outcomes for lung transplant recipients.

Established in honour of Judy Allen and Margaret Pratt, this new research grant represents a significant investment in lung transplant research and a lasting commitment to improving outcomes for transplant recipients and their families.

LUNGITUDE.COM.AU/RESEARCH

ZOE BROOKES PAEDIATRIC RESEARCH GRANT

GROWING UP WITH A LUNG TRANSPLANT: TWENTY YEARS OF PAEDIATRIC LUNG TRANSPLANTATION IN AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL PROGRAM – Dr Miranda Paraskeva, Alfred Paediatric Lung Transplant Service

This project will provide the first comprehensive evaluation of 20 years of paediatric lung transplantation in Australia. Researchers will examine long-term survival, transplant complications, quality of life and outcomes for children who received a lung transplant through the national program at The Alfred Hospital. The study will also investigate factors that may influence outcomes, including underlying disease, location of care and models of follow-up. Importantly, it will explore outcomes for patients requiring a second lung transplant after receiving their first transplant in childhood, an area with little existing evidence.

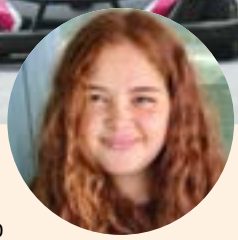
By improving understanding of long-term outcomes and access to care, this research aims to help ensure children not only survive transplantation but enjoy healthier, longer and more fulfilling lives.

DANIEL BAU RESEARCH GRANT

HYPERAMMONEMIA SYNDROME FROM DONOR-DERIVED MOLLICUTE INFECTION: ADDRESSING AN UNMET NEED TO IMPROVE EARLY OUTCOMES FOR LUNG TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS – Dr Jack Skeggs, Alfred Infectious Diseases

Hyperammonaemia syndrome (HS) is a rare but life-threatening complication that can occur after lung transplantation. Caused by bacteria carried in donor lungs, it can progress rapidly, leading to death or permanent neurological injury. Although overseas studies have shown that routine screening and early treatment can prevent HS, there is currently no Australian evidence to guide the most effective prevention strategy.

This project will be the first comprehensive Australian study of HS in lung transplantation. Researchers will examine past cases and analyse stored donor and recipient samples to determine how often the bacteria are present and identify risk factors. The findings will help develop an effective screening and prevention program to improve patient outcomes and protect precious donor lungs.



The Zo Kart Cup Returns

The Brookes Family's second Zo Kart Cup continued to build momentum, with even more teams coming together at Le Mans Entertainment for a fantastic day of racing, fundraising and community spirit. Generous raffle prize donations and the enthusiasm of everyone involved made the event another fitting tribute to the beautiful Zoe. **Save the date for the next Zo Kart Cup on Sunday 15 November 2026.**

Teeing Off for Research

The inaugural Daniel Bau Masters brought family, friends and supporters to Keysborough Golf Club for a day of golf and an evening of celebration in honour of Daniel Bau, a three-time lung transplant recipient. A sold-out event, it featured generous donations of raffle prizes, auction items and door prizes, helping to raise funds for lung transplant research.

Daniel's family, friends and former colleagues worked tirelessly behind the scenes to create an outstanding event, laying the foundations for what promises to become a much-loved annual fundraiser. **The next Daniel Bau Masters will be held on Friday 20 November 2026.**

Lungitude Annual Research Presentation

Behind every research breakthrough are years of dedication, collaboration and discovery. Our Annual Lung Transplant Research Presentation provides a rare opportunity to hear directly from the researchers driving that work. Held each October, these events showcase updates from Lungitude-funded projects and gave attendees the chance to explore the science through an interactive Q&A session.

These presentations remain free, open to all, and accessible online, making it easier for more people to participate from wherever they are.

Long Lunch – By the Bay

Bathed in sunshine and overlooking Port Phillip Bay, our 2026 Long Lunch at the Port Melbourne Yacht Club provided a spectacular setting for an afternoon of connection, generosity and celebration in support of lung transplant research.

Guests enjoyed exceptional food and beverages while being entertained by the talented Royal Australian Navy Rock Band, with MC Des Dowling keeping the room laughing throughout the afternoon.

The event was proudly supported by principal sponsor The Atlantic Group, alongside Apt Wealth Partners and Sunlover. We also thank the many individuals and organisations who generously donated auction items, and our dedicated Fundraising Committee, whose creativity and commitment helped make the day such a success. **Our next Long Lunch will be held in 2028.**

SELF-ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

This year we launched the Navigating Transplant: A Self-Advocacy Series, expanding our online support resources. Together with our mental health guides, these resources support informed decision-making, self-advocacy and wellbeing.
Visit our website to learn more.

LUNGITUDE.COM.AU

CONNECTED THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Support Network provides a welcoming space for transplant recipients and their primary supporters to connect, share experiences and learn from one another. This year, members also heard from guest speakers including occupational therapist Inez Osland and lung transplant clinical nurse consultant Yvonne Cristiano, whose expertise added valuable insights to the discussions. New members are always welcome.

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The Ripple Effect of Giving

Our annual Giving Day once again brought the Lungitude community together in support of lung transplant research. We reached our fundraising target with minutes to spare!

At the heart of this year's campaign were Jane, her husband Peter and their much-loved dog Gus, who generously shared their story. Their openness helped our supporters connect with the real people behind every donation and the importance of continuing to invest in lung transplant research.

A very special thank you to our Giving Day matchers, highlighted opposite, whose commitment to matching donations created a ripple effect across our community, encouraging others to give and amplifying the impact of every donation.

This year's campaign also encouraged people to take on a personal health challenge while fundraising. Thank you to Apt Wealth Partners, Willis Partners and Innate Wealth for getting behind the campaign and encouraging your teams and networks to participate.

Finally, thank you to everyone who donated, fundraised or helped spread the word. Every contribution played a part in making Giving Day a success and will help fund innovative lung transplant research.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 MATCHERS FOR THEIR GENEROSITY AND GOODWILL TO OTHERS:

The Gittus Family

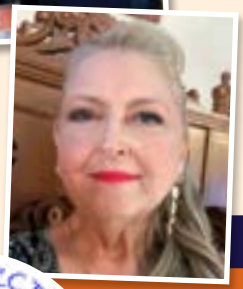
Gordon Legal

Private Estate

If this year's Giving Day inspired you, we invite you to consider becoming a Giving Day matcher in 2027.

SUPPORT IN ACTION

There are many ways to support Lungitude. Pictured are Jess and Ollie (top right) taking on Run the Rock in support of lung transplant patient Clare. We also thank lung transplant patient Chrys (right), who once again chose to celebrate her birthday by fundraising online, and Swan Hill Primary School (below) for continuing its annual gold coin Orange Day fundraiser in memory of beloved teacher Laura.



LOOKING TO MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE?

A Living Legacy is an opportunity to make a meaningful impact during your lifetime. By providing support today, you can see the difference your generosity makes to lung transplant research and to the lives of patients and their families.

To learn more about Living Legacies or hosting your own fundraiser, please contact Wendy Jenkins at wendy@lungitude.com.au.

GRASSROOTZ EVENT PARTNER

Did you know? Lungitude is a Grassrootz event partner, making it easy to fundraise through community events. Simply create your own fundraising page and share it with family and friends. Visit grassrootz.com/events to explore upcoming events and get started.

Lungitude Key Supporters

We extend our thanks for your generosity

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REGISTERED CHARITY · acnc.gov.au/charityregister

SAVE THE DATES

10 JUNE 2027
Lungitude Giving Day
ONLINE FUNDRAISER

Double your impact with your donation matched on the day OR Raise funds by participating in our Virtual Challenge.

MID OCTOBER 2027
Annual Research
ONLINE PRESENTATION

World-class researchers showcasing their latest project outcomse.

EARLY 2028
Lungitude Long Lunch
MELBOURNE FUNDRAISER

Stunning location with fabulous entertainment, food and wine.

THROUGHOUT YEAR
Community Events

Organise your own fundraising event or donation page.

YOU CAN MAKE A VITAL DIFFERENCE

- Make a donation
- Donate goods or services
- Donate via workplace giving
- Sponsor or attend an event
- Include Lungitude in your will
- Fundraise in your community
- Fundraise via Grassrootz events
- Join our online community
- Spread the word on socials

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

Lungitude FOUNDATION

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