



**Cancer
Council**
Western Australia



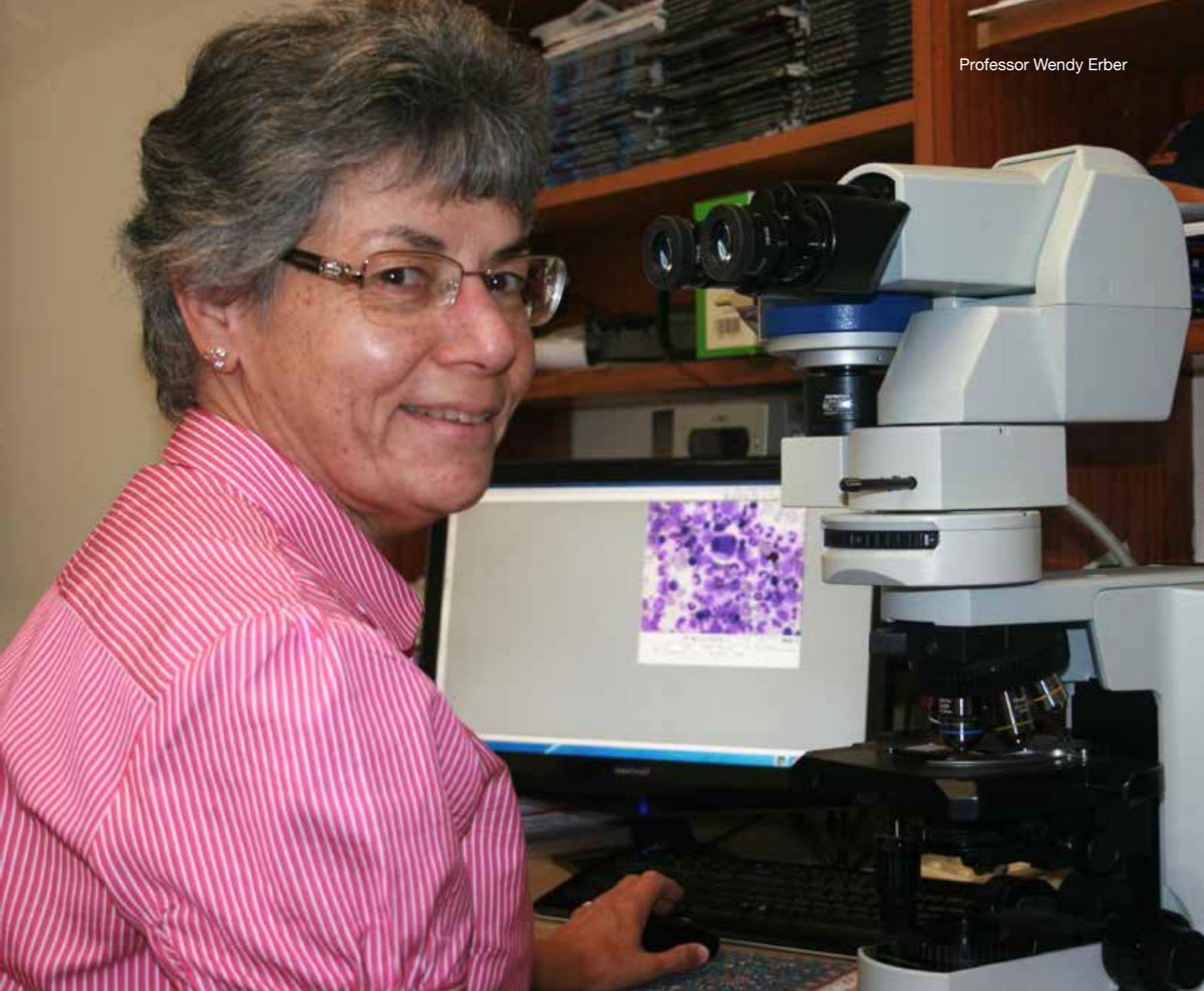
**Leading the
way towards
a cancer-free
future
2014 - 2015**



The overarching value of Cancer Council Western Australia is ‘making a real difference’ and this year we continued to do just that, working with passion and commitment across the entire spectrum of cancer control to reduce the incidence and impact of cancer.

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Professor Wendy Erber



Cancer Researcher of the Year inspires excellence in a new generation

Haematologist Wendy Erber thinks of herself as something of a Sherlock Holmes - looking at cells in the blood, determining whether they are normal or not, and using sophisticated tests to work out precisely what those abnormal cells might be.

Professor Wendy Erber is the 2015 Cancer Council Western Australia Cancer Researcher of the Year, and sees her role as trying to improve the outcomes for patients by translating scientific discoveries into better tests.

“We read about scientific discoveries and see them on the news every night and hear that within five or 10 years it may result in improved survival of patients,” Professor Erber said.

“We are trying to bridge that gap between pure scientific discovery and the patient to deliver what I call ‘next generation’ pathology for patients – this will better inform decisions about treatments and improve outcomes for patients with cancer.”

Professor Erber’s journey into blood cancer research began when her younger sister, then aged 18, was diagnosed and passed away from leukaemia 36 years ago.

“The changes I’ve seen over that period of time are quite remarkable, however day-to-day progress is really really slow.

“So for an individual patient who is diagnosed today, they will think, I wish that there would be a new treatment available. For that particular patient that magic bullet may not be available. But in two years’ time, there may well be something suitable. Translating discovery to patient care can be slow and we are trying to expedite this if we can.”

However Professor Erber says over the last 30 years, much progress has been made and she is very proud to have been recognised for her contribution.

“If you add up the time I’ve been in this profession, changes have been made that have made dramatic differences. Without the generous financial support of Cancer Council Western Australia and its donors, research in this area just doesn’t happen.

“It’s a real honour to be recognised in this way. But it’s not just one person working on their own, it’s real teamwork that delivers success,” she said.

Several of her recent papers have led to significant innovations in clinical pathology practice, including more accurate diagnosis of leukaemia and lymphoma using new diagnostic and genetic techniques.

“This award highlights the work my team does which we hope will ultimately lead to improved lives for patients with leukaemia and other cancers.

“We are now working on seeing if we can predict which patients may progress from chronic to more aggressive leukaemia. If we can identify it earlier we may be able to do something about it earlier.”

Professor Erber says that after 30 years, she is now keen to pass that enthusiasm on to the next generation of PhD students.

“I have been teaching ever since I qualified as a doctor,” she said.

“I really enjoy imparting knowledge to others. We should enthuse them about research, particularly translational or applied research.

“I still have the passion and I’m still motivated as the next generation are coming through. I enjoy teaching and training PhD students in the field. We need this work to continue and I am delighted that there are young intelligent and enthusiastic scientists willing to pursue these goals,” she said.



We committed over **\$3.75 million** of funding to support WA’s best and brightest cancer researchers

Mindfulness the key to putting cancer in perspective

Six weeks after her 2012 diagnosis with lymphoma, Elaine Burtenshaw started to have feelings of anxiety and feared the worst.

“When you are diagnosed you think it is a death sentence, especially when you have had worry and anxiety for a long period of time wondering what is wrong with you,” she said.

Eventually the feelings of anxiety and fear of dying became so overwhelming that she decided to seek help.

“Cancer unfortunately is going to be with me for the rest of my life, so I had to find a way to have that equilibrium and have my mind rested.”

Elaine found Cancer Council Western Australia’s Life Now program, which offers free mindfulness meditation sessions designed to help reduce stress and anxiety.

Mindfulness is a simple form of meditation which typically consists of the participant focusing on breathing and allowing negative thoughts and feelings to leave the mind with each breath.

“By having mindfulness and concentrating on the moment it eliminates self-doubt,” Elaine said.

The lessons Elaine learned proved particularly useful in late 2014 when she started to experience tiredness and discomfort, and was concerned her cancer had returned.

Instead of allowing herself to be consumed by negative thoughts, she implemented mindfulness and meditation strategies and

was able to achieve a sense of peace until her next specialist appointment.

“I could have spent that month waiting to see my specialist worrying or ringing him up to get into another appointment but I didn’t. I used that tool and I got myself into a really good space.”

When she saw her specialist again she was given the all clear - the discomfort and pain she was experiencing was a sign that her bones were healing.

Elaine now recognises that she can utilise her new-found skills to deal with many of the daily stresses she deals with, including regular medical appointments and blood tests.

She even managed to overcome her lifelong fear of heights and was able to enjoy a cable car ride while on holiday, all thanks to mindfulness.

“Mindfulness restores balance and allows you to get perspective in life, because we let our thoughts get away from us, we catastrophise everything, and before you know it we have got ourselves in a real state.

“I urge anyone, if they have the energy and are well enough, to take advantage of the Life Now courses offered by Cancer Council WA to help them learn how to live well with cancer.”

Life Now programs include meditation, yoga and exercise programs run at many locations across Perth and in regional areas. Sessions are free of charge to people living with cancer, their carers and family members, all thanks to generous community donations.



901

Life Now exercise, meditation, yoga and patient education sessions were provided to cancer patients and their carers

Linda Verhoeff (second from left) with fellow volunteers June Rose and Suzanne Bradbury in the Fiona Stanley Cancer Centre



Why I volunteer – Linda’s story of giving back to the community

Giving back has been a natural part of Linda Verhoeff’s life since she was very young. Growing up, her mother was consistently volunteering in various capacities here and overseas, and is still doing so in Perth at the age of 79.

In 2014, Linda came across an advertisement for a volunteer role in Cancer Council Western Australia’s Wig Service.

Knowing the effect cancer can have on a family having lost her father to the disease, she applied straight away, hoping her experience as a hairdresser could be of use.

“Within half an hour of submitting my application, Cancer Council WA had phoned to make a time for an interview.

“This gave me a real sense of the professional standards at CCWA – that the gifts I have were of value to the Wig Service and that CCWA values its volunteers. This professional standard has continued throughout my volunteering experience,” Linda said.

When Linda’s role expanded to include the recently-opened Fiona Stanley Cancer Centre, she took part in a two-day volunteering training course that empowered her with the confidence, strategies and mechanisms to handle difficult situations.

In both the Wig Service and Cancer Centre, Linda works closely with people affected by cancer, supporting them with wig selection and offering information about Cancer Council WA’s supportive care services and programs available to those in need.

“Both my volunteering roles give me the opportunity to learn so much from speaking with a variety of people,” she said.

“I’m a talker naturally, so the roles have really challenged me to consciously practise my listening skills. I get a great lift from helping where I can, be it through letting people know where information is available, being there to listen to what they’re going through, or sharing in a laugh or special moment.

“The best part is hearing the things people were able to do that week because they were feeling well.”

Linda says she has been very fortunate in life, and volunteering has given her the opportunity to connect with so many people she wouldn’t normally meet.

“Being able to draw on the strength and experiences of others has really helped me in my personal life outside of volunteering; it has enriched me as a person.

“I’d tell anyone thinking about volunteering to step out of their comfort zone and give it a go; it gives you so much,” she said.

“The best part is hearing the things people were able to do that week because they were feeling well”



2638

volunteers contributed **98,423 hours** to Cancer Council WA across the state

“It really made me realise how generous people are”



From left to right: Janine Anderson, Suzie Powell, Kerry McManus and Sarah Beasley

1135 community fundraisers raised **\$893,744**



Sarah's Ride for Hope a chance to make a big difference to others

For Sarah Beasley, it was the perfect challenge: cycling through the picturesque villages of Vietnam and Cambodia to raise money for charity.

Sarah spotted a call out for 2015 Ride for Hope for Cancer Council Western Australia participants online. Her mum passed away from cancer a few years earlier and the desire to do something to help other families experiencing the same thing was her motivation to sign up.

Three other ladies, Suzie Powell from Bunbury and sisters Kerry McManus and Janine Anderson from Perth, joined her. None were professional riders; most hadn't jumped on a bike for years. The four met for the first time over a Vietnamese meal in Perth before they left and formed a close bond over shared experiences.

Each had their own personal inspiration. Suzie signed up after losing her husband Baz to cancer just a few months before. Visiting Vietnam was something they'd talked about doing together.

Kerry and Janine lost their father Nev to brain cancer. Their aim was simple - to challenge their fundraising and fitness abilities, give a little back, and hopefully help make someone else's life a little better.

All together, the team raised over \$31,000.

For Sarah, her \$15,777 contribution was a family effort.

“My personal fundraising was mostly from a quiz night I hosted last July – it was massive. We had around 19 tables, fitting around 140 people into my old school hall generously loaned to us free of charge.

“Friends, family and friends of friends all helped out with the silent auction and running the event on the night. People brought their own food, my boyfriend MC'ed. By the end of the night, I knew almost everyone there.

We made \$6000 that night, it was huge and pretty much all profit. It was a very emotional night for me. When we got home and started counting all the donations, I was absolutely overwhelmed.” Sarah said.

“People from my own family could have easily all sat on the one table, but they made an effort to split up and get their friends involved too. It was so nice to have everyone's support. It really made me realise how generous people are.”

Having done all the hard work in raising money, Sarah said the trip felt like somewhat of a gift.

“My family were very generous in helping me get there. I signed up in March last year, and for my birthday, Christmas and other occasions in the lead up I was gifted money to help cover my trip, in lieu of presents. My Dad, my grandparents, my family - they all chipped in.”

The experience, she says, was once in a lifetime.

“The group we toured with in Vietnam and Cambodia made it so easy for us, they were fantastic. They fixed our bikes for us; each day we had morning tea and lunch organised; all we needed to do was hop on and go.

“They even helped me put my go-pro on my bike to film the journey. We rode through so many villages and heard so many hellos coming from everywhere along the way. We rode for seven days out of 11 days and I loved it so much I stayed a few days extra afterwards.

“It's an experience that will stay with me for the rest of my life, and I hope the money we've been able to raise will go a long way in making a big difference to those going through a tough time,” she said.

Honouring Yvonne's memory



From left to right: Cancer Council WA CEO Susan Rooney, Angela Piscitelli, Professor Gary Lee, Jacqui Bransby and Andrea Piscitelli

“It was just before the first anniversary of our mum passing away and the three of us wanted to do something small together,” Andrea said.

“We agreed on a breakfast and decided to invite along family. Eventually it grew to include friends and family who knew mum, which turned out to be around 140 people.”

Nine years and nine breakfasts later, the Yvonne Baker Foundation has raised over \$200,000 for Cancer Council Western Australia, both for cancer research and support services.

“It’s actually quite surreal to think we’ve raised that much money. I think once this year is over and we get a chance to look back at it all we’ll actually be able to take it in.”

Of the nine breakfasts they have held, Andrea rated the second and last as the most memorable.

“For the second breakfast we decided we wanted to double the amount raised in the first year, and if we achieved that we’d shave our heads.

“We all had a feeling before the breakfast that we’d be shaving our heads. It was a very emotional experience, with people coming up to us on stage offering to shave their own heads and add to the fundraising effort. We ended up making our fundraising target twice over. The emotion was really unexpected.

“This year’s breakfast was special because we invited mum’s nine grandchildren, aged three to 16, some of whom had never met her, to talk on stage.”

Since 2012, over \$110,000 of the funds they’ve raised has gone directly to cancer research projects in Western Australia, with the rest going to support services.

Professor Gary Lee, a recipient of a Cancer Council WA Research Project Grant, met the sisters at a morning tea in their honour.

Andrea says it was fantastic to meet a beneficiary of their hard work and to hear about how their research is going to fight cancer.

Professor Lee, from The University of Western Australia, is undertaking a compressive study of how cancer-related fluid collection in the chest makes people breathless.

Affecting 8000 Australians a year, malignant effusion causes severe breathlessness that usually requires drainage of fluid - a painful procedure that doesn’t always help the patient.

Professor Lee plans to measure the effect of effusion and find key factors causing breathlessness. This will identify who will benefit most from drainage and potentially avoid needless procedures in many patients.

Andrea says this year’s breakfast was their last but they are planning on continuing to fundraise and promote cancer awareness by coming up with a new format.

“It was with heavy hearts that we decided this would be our last breakfast, but between now and next year we’ll get together and think about how we can keep the momentum going. We want to continue to honour mum’s memory and fight cancer for others.”

“It was great to hear about where the funds are going and how the money is being used”

9 years **9** breakfasts  **\$200,000**



“They continue to ‘fight the fight’, weave the net and find a cure”

From left to right: Rebecca Ceglinski with Friends of Cancer Council WA President Pru Cowan and Cancer Council WA President Professor George Yeoh

Why Cancer Council Western Australia is so important – Rebecca’s story of hope

Rebecca and Mark Ceglinski are like so many families around Western Australia, busily managing their lives with three children, but the Ceglinskis’ lives were thrown into turmoil back in 2006 when their daughter Alex was diagnosed with cancer of the brain and spine.

Alex was just four years old and in kindergarten when doctors found a brain tumour on the base of her cerebellum; her older brother was only seven, and her younger brother just eight months old.

What followed were months of pain, surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, as well as sickness, fatigue, weakness, and baldness, but there were other challenges too.

“Cancer invaded every aspect of our lives in other ways. The shock and trauma gave way to a multitude of other emotional, physical and logistical challenges,” Rebecca said.

“We were trying to cope with an array of feelings and anxieties, trying to be mother, brother, father, brother and sister, partner as well as a nurse, carer, psychologist, counsellor and provider. It was overwhelming.”

Rebecca says there were also financial challenges.

“Mark was not able to work full time because of hospital commitments, and for us there were also costs of medications, tutoring and counselling,” she said.

“This is where the work of Cancer Council WA is so important. It provides the help that we need to fight both the seen and unseen issues that patients and their families face.

“They continue to ‘fight the fight’, weave the net and find a cure.”

Rebecca says the myriad support services Cancer Council WA offers makes a world of difference and relieves some of the enormous stress for families like hers.

“It is wonderful that through the generosity of the West Australian community, Cancer Council WA can offer a range of supports like counselling, and financial and practical support.

“It’s also reassuring to think that that same generosity is helping Cancer Council WA to fund amazing research.”

Alex Ceglinski is now 14 years old, healthy, happy and living a normal life. She is studying the normal school curriculum and studying dance, music and drama.

Rebecca says Alex is one of the lucky ones.

“I know that every case is different. Every ending is different, but every case deserves to experience hope, and we have experienced amazing support and hope,” she said.

“This is what Cancer Council WA offers. It’s not just the end of the journey that matters; it is also the journey that matters in the end.

“We hope that it’s a journey that in the future no one will have to make. Until then, thank you to Cancer Council WA and its supporters for making the journey an easier one.”



financial support payments were made to people experiencing hardship whilst undergoing cancer treatment

Cassidy and David Gangell – “We’re the lucky ones”



“We got through it; we’re two of the lucky ones.”

It’s been a whirlwind year and a half for the Gangells.

In 2014, the Albany family’s world was flipped upside down when five weeks after their 18-year-old daughter Cassidy was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s lymphoma, their 15-year-old son David was diagnosed with the same cancer.

Two hospitals, two different treatments, two lots of everything – and to make matters harder, appointments and treatment were 406km away in Perth.

Cassidy, now 19 and in remission, says it was incredibly difficult for her parents in the beginning.

“It changed everything for us as a family. We didn’t have time or energy to worry about why it had to happen to us, we just had to get on with it and try to have some normality,” she said.

Doctors and medical professionals were shocked. Hodgkin’s lymphoma has not been proven to be caused by genetics or environmental factors - and two siblings being diagnosed at the same time is, until now, unheard of in Australia.

As a minor, David underwent treatment in the children’s ward of Princess Margaret Hospital in Perth and wasn’t able to leave for a number of weeks.

Cassidy’s treatment was every ten days at Sir Charles Gairdner, and she would commute between Albany and Perth.

During that time, the Gangells were referred to Cancer Council Western Australia for assistance and accommodation at Crawford Lodge - a much-needed home away from home for WA’s regional cancer patients and their carers.

There, the family had access to complementary therapies like massage, transport to treatment, a counsellor, and the support network of others going through a similar journey.

“Cancer Council WA made a huge difference; you don’t really understand how much they mean until you’re part of them,” Cassidy said.

The logistics of needing to be in multiple places four-and-a-half hours apart was a weekly juggle for parents Murray and Viv.

“We had flights covered for one child and one parent to get to and from treatment – depending on the week, sometimes that option worked, sometimes it didn’t,” Viv recalled.

“If we had to be up there for a while, which was the case with Dave on several occasions, the parent in Albany would drive up and swap with the one in Perth so they could drive home and get back to work. The other stayed with Dave until he was ready to fly back a few days later.

“Being able to stay at the Lodge was fantastic. There were times when we were up for both kids and it covered all of us including our youngest son Isaac, so we could all be together.”

Now Dave and Cassidy have received the all clear, the Gangells hope their story can help raise awareness of the need for research and support.

Late last year, Cassidy stepped forward as an ambassador for the Relay For Life - Great Southern, a 24-hour fundraising event for Cancer Council WA in Albany.

Cassidy and David also lent their support to Daffodil Day in 2014, encouraging the community to get behind Cancer Council WA’s flagship day.

“It’s really nice for the kids to be able to touch base in some way and help others going through the same thing,” Viv said.

“The importance and benefit of raising money for services and research is incredibly obvious to us now. So much is being found out about cancer and how we can treat it every day. We experienced it first-hand - we owe the kids’ lives to that research.”



4509

country cancer patients and their carers were hosted by our **Crawford and Milroy Lodges**

Capacity and Collaboration - realising shared vision



Professor Eric Moses and Professor Peter O'Leary

Two years ago, leading West Australian Professors Eric Moses and Peter O'Leary got together and came up with an idea, to work collaboratively across different scientific disciplines and research institutions to identify cancer-causing genes, beginning with bowel cancer.

But it was thanks to a three-year Capacity and Collaboration Grant from Cancer Council Western Australia that the shared vision has become a reality.

Lead investigator Eric Moses from the Centre for Genetic Origins of Health and Disease says the idea is to find genetic disposition to risk and then identify novel ways of intervening.

"This really is a flagship program in my mind and we are strongly positioned to make a major contribution," he said.

The team from both The University of Western Australia and Curtin University is using data captured in the ground-breaking 1998 Busselton Health Study, which investigated heart and respiratory disease.

"The Busselton study is pivotal to the project. We're uniquely positioned because we're building on some unique West Australian resources through the Busselton Health Study.

"You combine that with the WA Data linkage and you have a comprehensive resource for discoveries," Professor Moses said.

Curtin University's Professor Peter O'Leary says it is hoped the research will allow screening tests to target only those who really need them.

"We're trying to present a package – from the basic science, to the health economics, and then to public policy," he said.

"We're trying to divide the population into those who don't require screening to those with intermediate risk and then those with high risk.

"This Cancer Council Western Australia grant was given by someone with the same vision. We need to thank them and acknowledge their vision."

It was a long-time generous supporter who donated \$1.2 million for the three year project.

Professor Moses says it is through donations of any amount that this kind of exciting research can happen.

"It's a capacity building grant to show we can work together. I can see that Peter and I have a shared vision. Being able to work together is the most important thing.

"This grant has already been successful because it has put us on the national stage," Professor Moses said.

Professor O'Leary agrees.

"A lot of cancer is predictable by family history but it's very hard to use family history in screening.

"The uptake of current bowel cancer screening is not great, but we figure if we can target people, it will make a difference so we're focusing on colon cancer as the seminal case.

"Once Eric proves we can identify people, we can pass the results to government to produce a public policy package," Professor O'Leary said.

"This really is a flagship program in my mind and we are strongly positioned to make a major contribution"

What we funded



52
Researchers



36
Projects

1
very substantial
piece of equipment

Jigalong Remote Community School a Crunch&Sip success story

Jigalong Remote Community School provides education to just over 100 students, ranging from kindergarten to Year 12.

Located on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert, the town of Jigalong is a self-managed community belonging to the Martu people, who strive day in and day out to maintain their traditional culture and values.

But Jigalong RCS teacher and Crunch&Sip champion, Samantha Dalton, says living 170 kilometres east of Newman means access to fresh food isn't always easy.

"Pop in' means a two hour drive from Newman and 106km of the trip is on a dirt road, so a four-wheel drive is recommended," Ms Dalton said.

She says the program, which the school has been a part of since 2008, is well worth the effort despite geographical challenges.

"We have a dedicated Crunch&Sip break every morning where students eat a piece of fresh fruit and they all really look forward to it.

"The children have an option of oranges and apples. They used to love only oranges; however, since we won an apple slinky by entering a Crunch&Sip competition run by Cancer Council WA, all the children only eat apples!" she said.

"They're also rewarded for good classroom behaviour with apricots, berries and carrots."

Ms Dalton says that by having a dedicated fruit break, the students are more alert and focused throughout the day.

"It prevents children from getting hungry during the morning and then losing attention during class activities.

"It's a chance for them to stop thinking about home and community and all the dramas that are outside of school. They know school is a place where they are safe to learn and are encouraged to make healthy choices," she said.

With daytime temperatures frequently hovering above 40°C during summer, dehydration is a constant danger to students and one that teachers monitor closely.

To help students get their required water intake throughout the day, the school was provided with water bottles that students keep on their desks during class.

"The water bottles in the classroom are of huge benefit and students are rewarded with a sticker for every bottle they drink.

"It also prevents some children using the need for a drink as an excuse to wander around the school, meaning they're more focused on their school work and not out in the desert heat," Ms Dalton said.

She says Crunch&Sip is also a great opportunity to get parents involved and help educate them on nutrition.

"We have informal information sessions with parents where we encourage healthy eating and drinking habits that the whole family can use at home."

In 2015, the Crunch&Sip program celebrates 10 years of supporting the provision of fresh fruit, vegetables and water to over 380 WA schools.





How you can help

As a not-for-profit, non-government organisation we rely on the generosity of the community to fund our programs. By supporting Cancer Council WA, you're becoming part of a movement with a common goal - to beat cancer. It's easy to get involved.

Make a donation or become a regular giver

Making a commitment to help beat cancer is easy. Your donation or monthly gift gives us the stability to support long term projects in cancer research and patient support. In return, we will keep in touch to let you know how your donation is making a difference. We will keep you up-to-date with progress reports on our activities and programs, and with information to help keep you and your family healthy.

Do your thing

Support a Cancer Council event like Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, Daffodil Day, Girls' Night In, Pink Ribbon Day or Relay For Life. Or get creative and do your own thing by organising a fun event to raise funds for Cancer Council WA.

Leave a gift in your Will

A gift in your Will has the power to touch countless lives. We have information and resources available to help you plan your gift so you can leave a legacy of hope for generations to come.

Volunteer

Our many volunteers help us in so many ways by donating their skills and time across the organisation across the state – from administration, patient support, fundraising events, expert committees, and strategic direction and governance.

Donate in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of an occasion

Making a donation to Cancer Council WA in lieu of a gift or flowers can be a beautiful way to honour an occasion, a loved one, or an event.

Become a Corporate Partner

There are many ways your business can support and benefit from a partnership with Cancer Council WA. These include cause-related marketing initiatives, workplace giving, matched giving, staff engagement, and cash and in-kind sponsorship.



We would like to thank all our amazing supporters who made our work in 2014-2015 possible. With your help we continue to work towards our vision of a cancer-free future



For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues,
call Cancer Council 13 11 20. This is a confidential
service for the cost of a local call.

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Join our community

