

# PERKINS NEWS

OCTOBER 2021

**THANK YOU**  
**FOR YOUR INCREDIBLE SUPPORT.**  
**WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!**



HARRY PERKINS INSTITUTE  
OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

**OCTOBER IS PERKINS  
GRATITUDE MONTH AND  
WE'RE CELEBRATING YOU!**



# You're making research happen



## October is about your impact.

### Hello and welcome to the Gratitude edition of the Perkins Magazine.

I have been looking forward to this issue. For the second year, we have taken the entire month of October to celebrate those supporting the Perkins and WA medical research breakthroughs. And that would be you!

Did you know that for every ten grants submitted, only one is awarded? Even with Perkins punching above the National average, the odds of grant success are low and diminishing year on year.

### That's why your support is vital and so appreciated.

Because of the generosity and kindness of people like you, we've made several incredible breakthroughs in the past year. I say we because you have always been our collaborator in the lab.

Because of you, we have managed two highly successful events that saw many of you ride or walk for cancer research.

You enabled us to recruit and retain brilliant minds and support them in world-class facilities.

And you gave your time and energy to volunteer, participate in an event or fundraise on behalf of WA medical research.

I couldn't ask for a better lab partner or community champion. So, thank you for making the Perkins part of your world. We will never take your support for granted.

Please enjoy reading about people just like you committed to bringing the diseases that most affect our families into focus.

Once again, I am thrilled to welcome **you** to **your month** and **your Perkins**.

Thank you,

Professor Peter Leedman A0  
Director



## We're celebrating you!

We're hosting a special event especially for you, just to say thanks. We'll show you firsthand how your support helps and continues to make a difference to the people of WA through the discoveries we make.

Come and join us at our exclusive **Supporter Sundowner** on **Thursday 25th November 2021, 5:30pm-7pm** at the Perkins Nedlands building.



Scan to RSVP  
or visit  
[perkins.org.au](https://perkins.org.au)

# Nine or ninety – Your birthday can boost breakthroughs!



## Meet Hannah and Audrey.

**They don't know each other but they have one thing in common, they're both incredibly generous Perkins supporters.**

Earlier this year, nine year old Hannah pledged her upcoming double-digit birthday to the Perkins. She asked all of her friends not to buy her presents (yes, you read that right!) and donate to the Perkins instead.

Hannah is Harry Perkins' Granddaughter and unfortunately she never got the chance to meet him because he died of cancer before she was born. Even in her early years, she's seen and lost too many people she loves from disease and it's inspired her to become the youngest philanthropist we've ever seen.

Hannah hasn't been our only birthday benefactor this year. Audrey heard about the Perkins when she attended a talk from Judi, our Community Engagement Manager. She had her own lived cancer experience and wanted to give back to medical research, so she did! Audrey asked her friends and family to forego fluffy slippers or flowers, and donate to the Perkins instead.

We'd like to thank both of these extra special women for giving up their birthdays to help advance medical research. Just like years make you wiser, all donations – big or small – truly do add up and make a real difference.



## Do you want to transform your birthday into a breakthrough?

You might be somebody who loves a birthday fuss and that's okay – you deserve it! But for some of us, the well-intended gifts from our loved ones often leave us with more than we need.

If you want to pledge your next special day and make a lasting impact on the health of the future, it's a piece of cake...

- Firstly, let your friends know your wishes.
- Secondly, simply direct them to donate at [perkins.org.au](https://perkins.org.au) or 08 6151 0772.
- And last but not least, sit back and feel proud of the incredibly generous thing you've done.





## Corporate and community coming together for cancer

**When you think of many corporate companies, you don't always associate them with words like humble, giving, charity, community, passion and pride.**

However, with Geoff Baker, MACA founder and now Chair, these are the first things that come to mind.

Geoff has been a supporter of the Perkins for the past 10 years. His passion for medical research is backed by the MACA workforce.

In 2020, despite COVID-19 forcing the Ride to become a personal challenge, Geoff and his team pushed ahead and created their own MACA Cancer 200.

Geoff took to his bike and went on to host approximately 230 riders at his farm after they also rode the 100km down from MACA's head office.

In 2021, with a goal of raising \$1 million dollars, together Geoff and MACA riders raised a staggering \$2 million for cancer research at the Perkins.

MACA became the title sponsor of the Cancer 200 Ride for Research some years ago and Geoff strongly believes there is no reason you shouldn't be involved.

"If you're able bodied you owe it to yourself, your family and your community to give back. If you're healthy, why shouldn't you," Geoff said.

Thank you, Geoff and everyone at MACA for your ongoing, unwavering support of the Perkins.



## You braved the rain and foot pain for cancer research

**Because of you, the 2021 Walk for Women's Cancer, supported by Perth Radiological Clinic, was a record breaker. What started as a miserable, wet Saturday in May was instantly brightened by 790 people lining up to take on the 35km walk around Perth in support of women's cancer research here at the Perkins.**

Even those of you game enough to tackle the challenge route (completing a 42km marathon) arrived back soaking wet but nothing could diminish your commitment or your spirits.

Collectively you raised a phenomenal \$1,042,088 to continue the Perkins' quest to make breast and ovarian cancer history.

The bee became the official emblem of the event this year due to the Perkins discovery that, in the lab, honeybee venom can kill breast cancer tissue. Three projects will be funded by the Walk – support for Associate Professor Pilar Blancafort and her work in women's cancer, investment to expand the bee research and the Walk for Women's Cancer Prize, awarded to a women's cancer researcher at the Perkins.

The mighty 127 Promenade Club members – each of whom raised over \$2000 – were responsible for 50% of the final total with an average of \$4095 raised! A thank you event was held after the Walk to thank the Promenade Club. This year's event included a 10-minute 2021 Walk documentary as well as heartfelt speeches from walkers who had been touched by cancer.



# Ten tremendous years of riding for research

**Your ongoing commitment to riding for cancer research has seen the MACA Cancer 200 Ride for Research reach its 10-year anniversary! And with a record breaking 1600 riders and \$7 million in donations, this year's event was the biggest and best Ride yet.**

Not only was there a record-breaking number of riders this year, but a record-breaking number of you joined the MACA Cancer 200 Honour Roll and raised more than \$4,000 each and over \$2 million collectively. This is an astronomical effort and has raised more than one third of the Ride's total funds!

Funds raised by the Honour Roll will support Head of the Translational Cancer Research Program at the Perkins, and inaugural Honour Roll Fellow, Dr Louise Winteringham who, with her team, are currently looking at DNA mutations causing cancer and how those mutations can be treated.

Alongside the kindness and dedication of you as riders, donors and volunteers - the Ride is also made possible through the ongoing generosity of sponsors.

Title Partner, MACA, has been the Ride's principle partner for the past 8 years, contributing more than \$20 million for cancer research during this time!

Event partner Woodside, Volunteering and Wellness sponsor Austin Engineering, End of Journey sponsor WesTrac, and Saturday night Entertainment sponsor WA Mack Muster & Truck Show also gave generously to make this event a record-breaking success - raising over \$7 million!

To celebrate ten tremendous years of riding for research, meet two of the MACA Cancer 200's 10-year riders:



## MEET 10-YEAR RIDER, BEN CAVE

*"For me the ride is about both looking back to remember those we've lost, while also looking forward in hope that far fewer of us will be affected by cancer in the future."*



## MEET 10-YEAR RIDER, PETER HANS

*"Supporting Daniel in remembering his Mum, my wife, in a very special and personal way TOGETHER. It is the ONE thing that we do together each and every year."*



# YOUR SUPPORT HAS MADE BREAKTHROUGHS POSSIBLE

**Because of you and your support**, ongoing discoveries have been made possible. And those recent breakthroughs that you have been a part of have reinforced the Perkins reputation as a leader in medical research. **Thank you!**



## Buzzing breakthroughs

Some of the last year's success stories include Associate Professor Pilar Blancafort's discovery, with her PhD student Dr Ciara Duffy, that honeybee venom can kill triple-negative breast cancer cells.

This attracted world-wide attention being published in the internationally renowned Nature journal. Associate Professor Blancafort also recently published further breast cancer research after discovering a cancer-causing gene that produces the worst outcome of all breast cancers.

## Discovering treatments for rare melanoma

With your support, Perkins Professor Jonas Nilsson, his team here in WA and collaborators in Sweden, have seen promising results for a new combination of treatments for a rare eye cancer.

Eye melanoma has a very quick and high mortality rate, particularly when it spreads in approx. 50% of patients, so this is a vital finding for cancer patients.



The Casella family, with daughter Mackenzie who died of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) – a severe inherited neuromuscular condition without a cure. The couple successfully lobbied for a national carrier screening study.

## Providing answers to WA couples

As well, internationally regarded geneticist, Professor Nigel Laing AO, has been integral to the roll out of Australia's first major pre-pregnancy screening program, giving couples the opportunity to be screened for genetic mutations that cause devastating diseases.

Mackenzie's Mission aims to test over 1300 WA couples for severe recessive diseases, including many that lead to death before the age of four. WA is the first State to screen more than 50 percent of its target.

Already 835 WA couples from across the State have taken the opportunity to be screened for more than 750 severe genetic diseases.



## Beating hard to treat breast cancers

Thanks to you, Associate Professor Pilar Blancafort and her team discovered a gene and protein which creates highly aggressive hard to treat breast cancers.

The presence of the gene is associated with larger tumours, treatment resistance and cancer spread into the lymph nodes. This discovery brings us one step closer to a treatment!

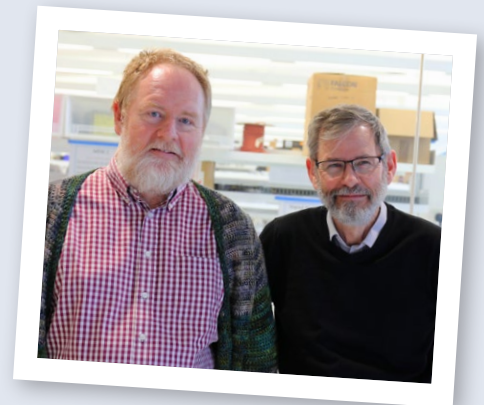
## Gene detectives solve 20-year mystery

Bridging the past to the present is an even more recent discovery in genetics. Twenty years ago Perkins researcher and internationally renowned geneticist, Professor Nigel Laing AO, jointly supervised a then-PhD student, Dr David Chandler (who now works with the Australian Genome Research Facility at Royal Perth Hospital), in his search for the hemifacial microsomia disease gene.

The study was conducted with the largest family known to have the condition, and while the technology at the time limited the search, the findings were still published in 2001.

Fast forward to 2021, Professor Andrew Timberlake from Yale University analysed the genetic code of another six families, and his findings matched the region identified by Professor Laing and Dr Chandler.

The gene was found! Families with hemifacial microsomia will now be able to know if they'll pass on the disease following the discovery of the genetic cause of the disease.



Professor Nigel Laing  
and Dr David Chandler



Dr Mark Nidorf and  
Professor Peter Thompson AM

## Getting to the heart of discoveries

Your support has helped lead to a breakthrough in cardiovascular disease research.

Professor Peter Thompson AM and Dr Mark Nidorf from GenesisCare confirmed that a low cost, safe and common medicine used to treat gout can prevent progression of coronary disease – saving lives from heart attacks.

**It's thanks to you** and your ongoing support that research continues long term, and the search for discoveries is refined in specific disease focus areas, making breakthroughs for you and your families, and loved ones.

**THANK  
YOU!**

# You provide families with a **SPARK** of hope for a better future.

Perth resident, Christine Moro, is a passionate advocate for giving back to her community and devotes her spare time to volunteering for a number of local organisations. She is also a wonderful volunteer and fundraiser for the Perkins.

Christine first became involved with the Perkins seven years ago through the Perkins Ride event which she attended with her best friend. Since the event, Christine has generously given up her time to volunteer at the Perkins and in 2020, she chose to become a member of our monthly giving club, The Spark.

Christine makes a manageable monthly gift to support medical research that will ultimately improve the outlook for those facing disease.

As a valued Spark member, Christine is kept informed of the latest medical breakthroughs and is always very excited when she learns about a new development, like the recent research on eye melanoma.

“Over the last 20 years, I have lost friends and family to cancer and seen some amazing recoveries. The survival stories that I have personally witnessed have inspired me, but I want more,” Christine said.

“I want to see cancers in all forms cured. I want to see less invasive and debilitating treatments.”

Inspired by her experiences with the Perkins, Christine participated in the Walk for Women's Cancer earlier this year in the name of one of her dearest friends who is fighting her own battle with cancer.



**“When you donate to the Perkins you become a member of a family that consists of scientists, doctors, nurses, patients and their families. All of us are working together to find cures and better treatments.”**

“I am inspired by the way the staff at the Perkins go out of their way to make all of us part of the family. It is an honour to be a member of this wonderful family,” she said.

We can't thank Christine and all our incredible Spark members enough for their loyal commitment to keeping families like yours together for longer. A monthly gift provides the greatest gift to Perkins researchers – stability. With stable and ongoing funding, they can focus on what they do best and that's tackling the diseases that most affect our community and loved ones.

**YOU CAN SPARK HOPE  
FOR THOSE WHO NEED  
IT MOST.**

To join The Spark, call Amelia on 08 6151 1220  
or email [amelia@perkins.org.au](mailto:amelia@perkins.org.au)







Jane ↗

↖ Meg

## Championing Innovation

**Thanks to a Lotterywest Grant, the Perkins will be able to implement technologies to ensure the continuation of the activities that are central to our cause, regardless of the environment.**

Lotterywest generously awarded the Perkins \$131,823 for the development of a virtual fundraising platform and to pilot a remote learning system. The Lotterywest team decided to support these projects as their outcomes would enable young people to access research learning opportunities as well as achieving enhancement of the Perkins and the broader health research sector's fundraising capacity.

Central to the Perkins' mission is the BioDiscovery Centre, housed within the Perkins, through which numerous school groups can immerse themselves in laboratory science. Earlier in the pandemic, when students were not able to visit the centre, it was necessary to find ways to deliver education services remotely.

The Lotterywest grant is enabling the centre to devise virtual classes so students can connect and learn about medical research from schools all around the state.

With Lotterywest's support, the Perkins can now create remote fundraising systems which will ensure fundraising can continue during circumstances where the large-scale in-person events are not feasible. 'To the Moon and Back' will be launched in late 2021.

Thank You, Lotterywest.

## You gave your time generously

**Meet two of the Perkins volunteers, we call them the Wednesday Wonders. Jane Carter and Megan Armitage joined the Perkins separately but have united in their support every Wednesday for over a year.**

Jane, a former hospice nurse, and Megan, an exercise physiologist, are irreplaceable additions to the Community Engagement team.

Jane has a lovely way of communicating with supporters and genuinely cares about honouring your wishes. Who knows, you may have already spoken to her on the phone as she loves talking about why you support our work.

Meg is keenly interested in supporting your future impact through legacy giving. She is helping our Gifts in Wills team to devise a new way of staying in touch and keeping you informed about how the Perkins can honour your wishes. Watch this space, more on that later in the year.

We are so grateful for the support of all our volunteers. Whether you helped at an event, assisted with an Open Day, rolled your sleeves up for some admin work or contributed in another way we just want to say a heartfelt thank you.

You have contributed more than you realise. You have provided more hands, resources and support than we could afford to offer alone. We can do more and raise more because of you. And that means more funds go back to research. For that and so much more that our volunteers contribute, thank you.



## Trust in the Family

**The Massey Charitable Trust knows how to make impactful giving.**

Six years ago David Massey decided to organise his giving, he had a passion for the organisations he was supporting and wanted to do more. Enlisting the help of a long-time friend and business partner, Sandra Burton, they established the Massey Charitable Fund.

Charitable Trusts can be a wonderful way for people to structure their giving. David and Sandra have found that formalising their giving in this way is a great way to stay true to their giving mandate. Through the Massey Charitable Fund, they are able to support several diverse community causes and their impact is far-reaching and close to their hearts.

As a father and now grandfather, it is important to David that his family are involved with the Trust. David's wife, Kelly and sons Alex, Harrison and James, are actively involved in Trust's interests. David hopes that the Trust will continue in perpetuity and be an ongoing part of his families' legacy.

Thanks to the Massey Charitable Trust, this year, the Perkins Cardio labs have been able to procure a revolutionary piece of equipment; an Endovascular Simulator. The only one of its kind in Australasia, this machine can mimic the accurate behaviour of an individual's cardiovascular system, complete from the heart to the peripheral blood vessels.

It will be integral for the Perkins researchers to develop and test cardiac medical devices which will eventually be able to treat several cardiac conditions which afflict our community.

To David, Sandra and The Massey Charitable Trust, your ongoing generosity is remarkable. We are truly grateful for your continued support.

## Key supporters inspired by life-changing research

**When Halls Head couple John and Bella Perry were both named in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours List, their Order of Australia Medals could just as easily have read "For service to the Perkins community" as much as "For service to the community of Mandurah".**

Loyal supporters of the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, John and Bella's introduction to the Institute came via close friends a number of years ago. It was at a Government House reception that they met Professor Nigel Laing AO and so a beautiful friendship began.

"When Nigel first explained his research to me, he gave me an insight into what he did and I realised that this was a whole new area of vital importance – enabling people to have a full-term baby or to predict certain genetic outcomes by doing research and investigation.

"Nigel's research has literally transformed some families' lives and I find that so exciting," said Bella.

"I was drawn to the generous nature of Nigel's work and impressed by the collaboration that takes place between researchers in this field of work – anything that is discovered benefits the whole world, including our community.

"That was what formed our view that the Perkins would be a worthy organisation to support," said John.

The Perkins remains truly grateful and appreciative of John and Bella's trust and support. Thank you John and Bella – you, like all of our Key Supporters, are responsible for making so many medical research breakthroughs a reality at the Perkins!



## Being inspired by your past can change your future



**We couldn't have a gratitude magazine without introducing you to two passionate supporters and proud members of the Perkins Silver Lining, Chris and Cecilia, who have an inspiring story to share with you.**

**Chris and Cecilia have always been active people and running 10km was a walk in the park for this duo from Perth's Northern suburbs.**

Until one day in 1996 when Chris began to struggle walking his tools from one job, 200m to the next, without a rest.

Unfortunately, Chris was informed his aortic heart valve was 80% damaged and he required lifesaving surgery to have it replaced. His incredible wife Cecilia was undergoing treatment for breast cancer and suffering from difficult complications at the same time.

The pair were both at Sir Charles Gairdner hospital and Chris recalls, "It was a horrendous time for both of us. I'd visit her from floor 7 down to floor 5 but I was hardly capable of walking."

We're so pleased to tell you that Chris and Cecilia were able to overcome both of their illnesses and have an active lifestyle, having recently visited WA's wildflowers.

"With our willpower we got everything sorted out. After a few months, we went jogging but I still cannot forget that it took me 10 minutes to get one jogging shoe on, and our 14m driveway was like a marathon event!"

The pair now have a great appreciation for medical research and have included a gift to the Perkins in their Will, making them valued members of the Perkins Silver Lining club.

Speaking of their future commitment, Chris said, "We believe the Perkins will be the institute for medical innovation and benefit future medical treatments."

Thank you Chris and Cecilia for having the foresight to invest in medical research. Discovering new treatments is often likened to running a marathon, and the support of incredible people like you gives our research teams the fuel, momentum and inspiration they need to keep going.



## How you can leave a legacy

To find out more about how you can become a Silver Lining member just like Chris and Cecilia by including a gift to the Perkins in your Will, please get in touch with Planned Giving Advisor Ann MacIver at [ann.macliver@perkins.org.au](mailto:ann.macliver@perkins.org.au) or 08 6151 0745.



# Dates for your calendar



## **Supporter Sundowner** Thursday 25 November 2021

We're hosting a special event especially for you, just to say thanks. We'll show you firsthand how your support helps and continues to make a difference to the people of WA through the discoveries we make.

Come and join us at our exclusive Supporter Sundowner on Thurs 25th November 2021, 5:30pm-7pm at the Perkins Nedlands building.

Register at [perkins.org.au/events](https://perkins.org.au/events)



## **Walk for Women's Cancer** Saturday 30 April 2022

### **Want to support WA women's cancer research right here at the Perkins?**

You can help beat women's cancers this year by walking 35km in the Walk for Women's Cancer. It will be held on Saturday 30 April 2022, with 100% of donations supporting supporting breast and ovarian cancer research at the Perkins.

Register today at [WalkForWomensCancer.org.au](https://WalkForWomensCancer.org.au)



## **MACA Cancer 200 Ride for Research** Sat 15 & Sun 16 October 2022

### **Join Australia's most loved cycling fundraiser to help beat cancer.**

You can join a 1500-strong group of dedicated riders in the MACA Cancer 200 Ride for Research in the fight against cancer.

On the weekend of 15 & 16 October 2022, you'll line up at Optus Stadium and ride 200km down to Mandurah where you'll camp overnight (tents and dinner are on us!). And then you'll ride back up to Perth the next day - finishing back up at Optus Stadium. This event is much loved and life-changing. Will you help beat cancer on your bike this year?

Register today at [cancer200.org.au](https://cancer200.org.au)



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### **Get in touch**

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