HARRY PERKINS INSTITUTE
OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Your Impact on WA Medical Research in 2025

Why I support the Perkins

When you're diagnosed with cancer, your world upends in a split second. One day you're a mum, partner, work colleague and family member, the next you're dealing with pain, nausea, scars and bone-deep exhaustion. And you quickly come to understand that the treatment meant to save you can feel harsher than the disease itself.

When I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, I was told that if I could get through three rounds of chemotherapy and reach twelve months of clear scans, I'd be considered 'cancer free'.

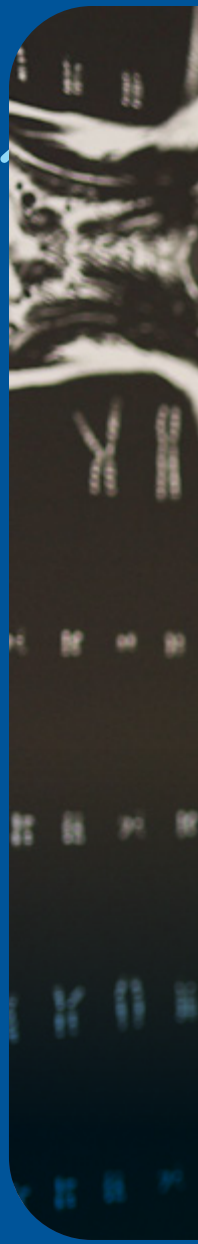
That became my goal. Each day got me closer. Each clear scan was a tiny celebration. I had eleven-months of clear scans – then everything changed. Just shy of the twelve-month mark, small shadows appeared in my breasts and I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Shockingly, doctors didn't think it was related to my ovarian cancer. Two unrelated primary cancer diagnoses in one year.

The incredible thing about cancer is that while it can break you apart, it also brings the right people to your side – exactly when you need them most. Researchers, doctors, nurses, friends and family each doing their part to keep you alive.

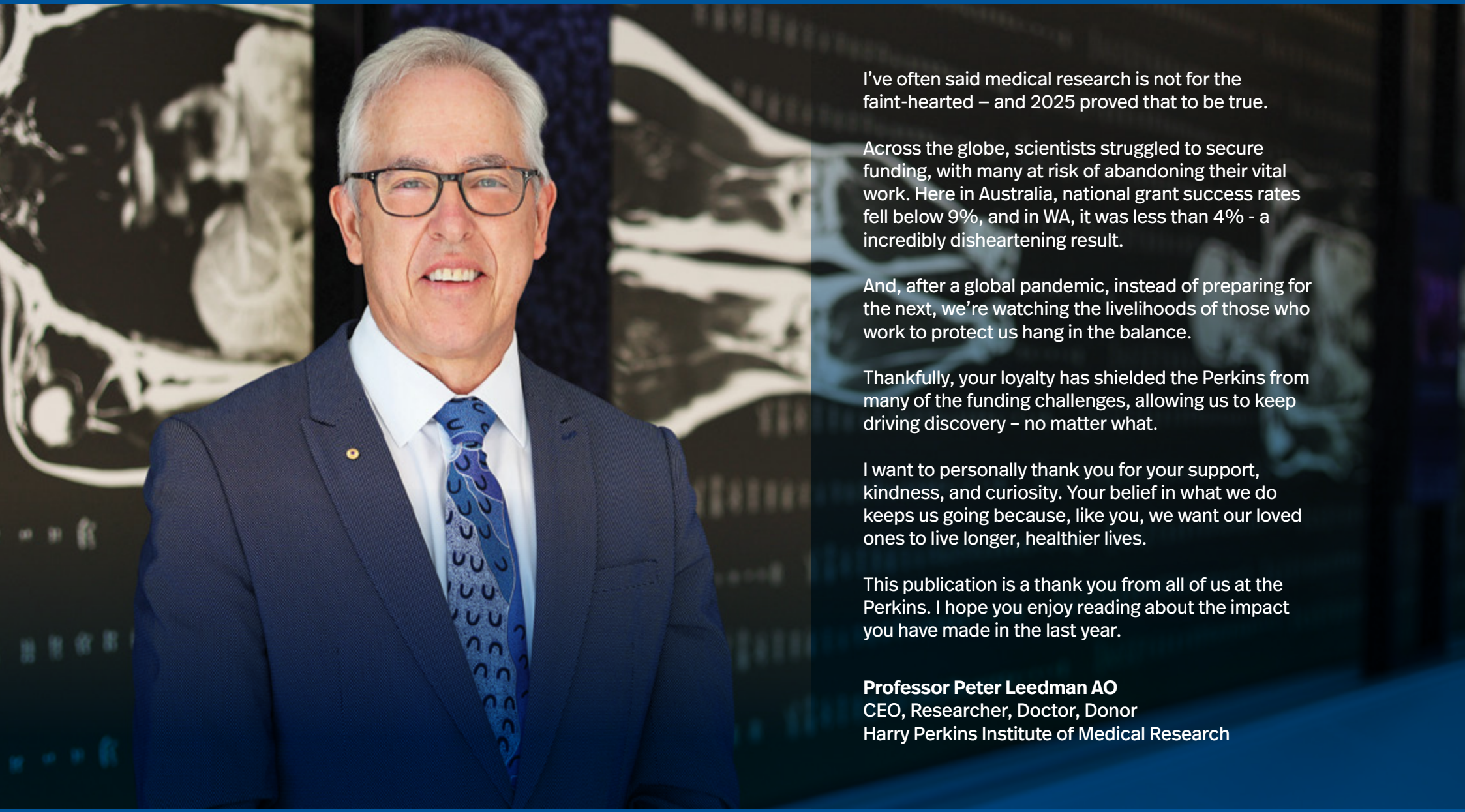
That's why I'm so committed to the Perkins. I know I'm here today because amazing researchers continue working to ensure me and my kids and you and your kids can access kinder, more effective treatments. And who knows–our support of the Perkins might one day turn this terrible disease into a pause, not a full stop.

Michele Librizzi, Walk for Women's Cancer Ambassador and Perkins supporter.

"I walk for those who can't, kinder treatments and higher survival rates."



Your support keeps WA research advancing



I've often said medical research is not for the faint-hearted – and 2025 proved that to be true.

Across the globe, scientists struggled to secure funding, with many at risk of abandoning their vital work. Here in Australia, national grant success rates fell below 9%, and in WA, it was less than 4% - a incredibly disheartening result.

And, after a global pandemic, instead of preparing for the next, we're watching the livelihoods of those who work to protect us hang in the balance.

Thankfully, your loyalty has shielded the Perkins from many of the funding challenges, allowing us to keep driving discovery – no matter what.

I want to personally thank you for your support, kindness, and curiosity. Your belief in what we do keeps us going because, like you, we want our loved ones to live longer, healthier lives.

This publication is a thank you from all of us at the Perkins. I hope you enjoy reading about the impact you have made in the last year.

Professor Peter Leedman AO
CEO, Researcher, Doctor, Donor
Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research

Discovering cures together

Your support means brilliant researchers here at the Perkins have made significant breakthroughs, bringing them closer to new treatments and better healthcare for everyone. Here are just a few.

Eye

Identified the genetic cause of a muscle disease that leads to weakness, droopy eyelids, and trouble swallowing.

Brain

Learning what affects recovery after moderate to severe traumatic brain injury. Our researchers are helping build a tool to help doctors improve treatment and outcomes.

Head and Neck

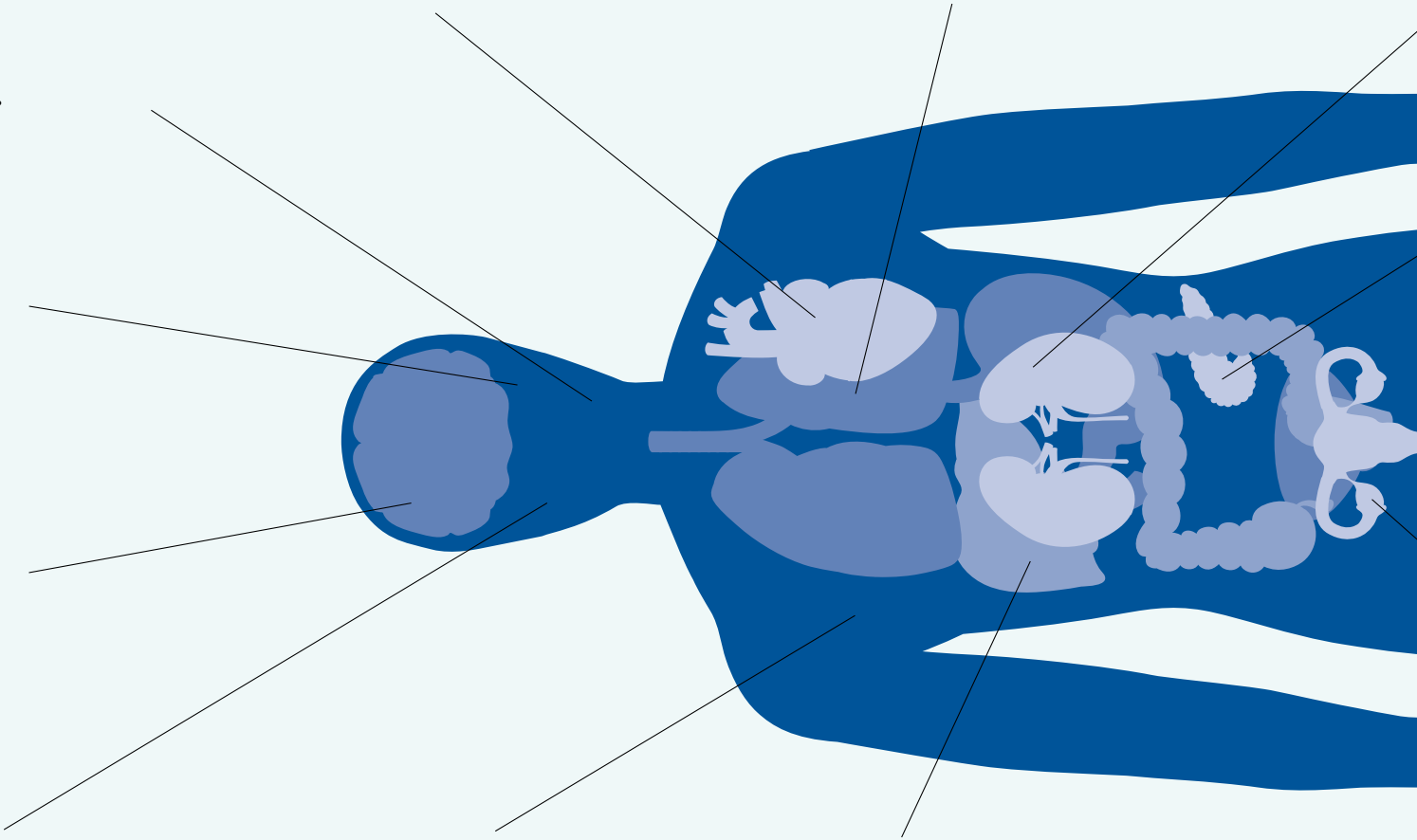
Discovered a gene mutation linked to drug resistance in aggressive head and neck cancer, paving the way for better treatments.

Heart

Helped develop a highly accurate AI system to assess artery narrowing and high-risk plaque in heart scans, helping doctors diagnose and treat patients more effectively.

Lung

Identified a gene signature that can predict survival in mesothelioma and help guide treatment decisions.



Face

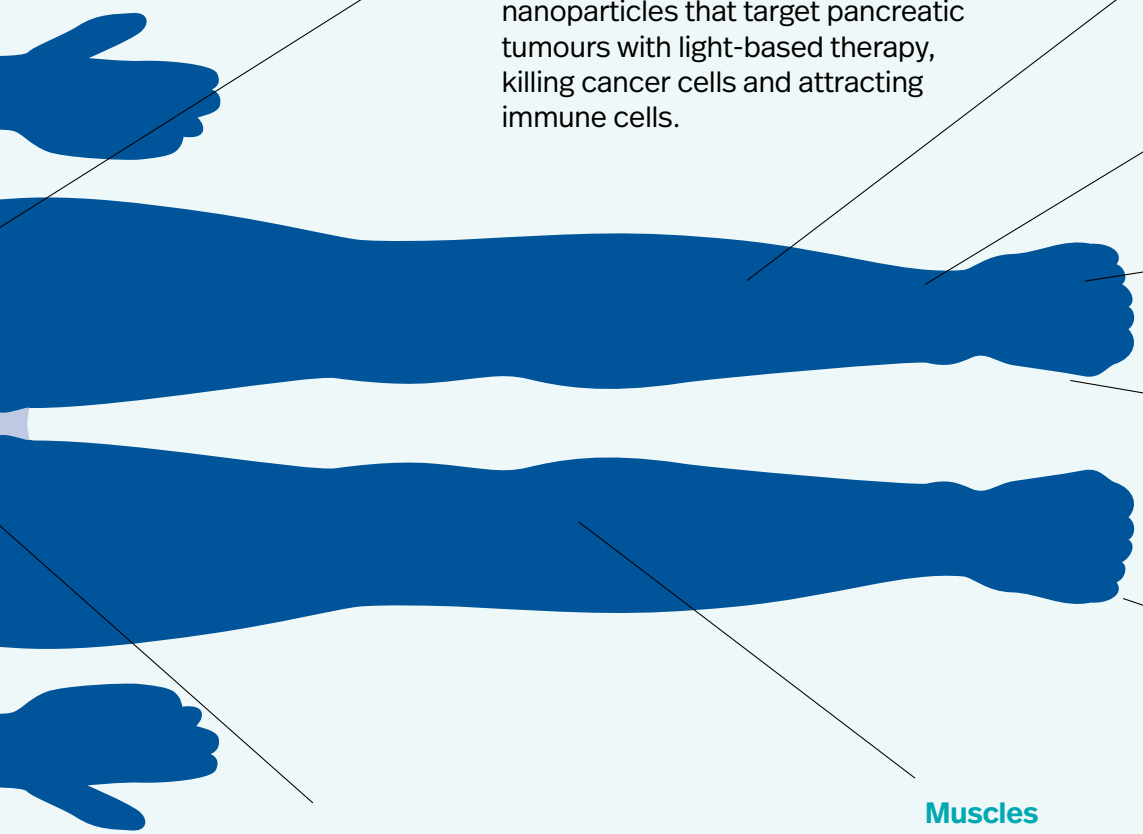
Perkins gene detectives pinpointed the mutation behind a rare but debilitating form of congenital myopathy that affects the facial muscles.

Breast

Perkins researchers are building on the discovery that a component of honeybee venom is a powerful anti-cancer agent.

Liver

Found that certain tumour patterns in liver cancer signal a higher relapse risk but also a better response to immunotherapy.



Kidney

Discovered that 1 in 4 unexplained kidney failure cases have a genetic cause and genome sequencing is more effective than a biopsy at finding it.

Pancreas

Helped develop specialised nanoparticles that target pancreatic tumours with light-based therapy, killing cancer cells and attracting immune cells.

Genes

Perkins gene hunters uncovered six new genes that cause disease.

Veins

Developed a world-first treatment for peripheral artery disease, offering hope to 230 million people living with this serious condition.

Cells

Perkins researchers developed a groundbreaking imaging technique that could measure ageing at the cellular level.

Skin

Co-led a new immunotherapy trial in Perth that offers new hope for melanoma patients who don't respond to existing treatments.

Vessels

Discovered a revolutionary treatment regime that helps immune cells and cancer drugs reach the tumour core by normalising the surrounding blood vessels.

Ovary

Revealed that ovarian cancer is made up of diverse cell types that interact differently with their surroundings, driving growth and treatment resistance.

Muscles

Perkins researchers led Mackenzie's Mission, a comprehensive feasibility study into a national program offering free genetic screening to help families avoid passing on serious inherited conditions.

You're with us from discovery to development

Have you ever wondered what inspires researchers? Associate Professor Juliana Hamzah shares with us what inspires her and how she faces failure.

What made you want to become a researcher?

I can trace my love of science back to my early childhood. I was very close to my grandmother, who was likely in her 80s or 90s. We never knew her exact age, as birth certificates weren't issued during her time. Aging had taken a toll on her body. She had lost most of her muscle mass, so all that remained was fragile, paper-thin skin. I used to sit on her lap and pull at the loose folds of her skin, holding them up to the light. I would stare for what felt like forever, fixated by the translucent veins beneath, hoping to catch a glimpse of something moving, something alive, flowing through them. Little did I know then that this curiosity would shape my future career – the study of how particles and drugs move through our tissues and cells, uncovering how the body responds to what we call medicine.

You were a cancer researcher and now you're a cardiovascular researcher focused on PAD. How did that happen?

During my postdoc, I trained in both cancer research in Australia and cardiovascular research in the U.S. I've always been drawn to the overlap between these two areas. Both cancer and cardiovascular disease involve growing, inflamed, and often highly fibrotic tissues, which makes them surprisingly similar in some ways. As someone focused on developing new therapeutics, I found cancer models are often easier to work with. One agent we developed was able to soften solid tumours by reducing fibrosis. This improved drug delivery. What caught my attention, was the fact that this same kind of tissue stiffness and poor circulation happens in blocked arteries, particularly in atherosclerotic plaques, which are made up of dense, hardened fatty tissue. Around that time, in 2014, I was introduced to Professor Shirley Jansen AM, a vascular surgeon at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Joint Program Head of the Cardiovascular research program at the Perkins. We began collaborating closely, and started looking at whether this agent could also work in blood vessels, especially in conditions like peripheral artery disease, where arteries in the lower limbs are severely blocked.

Failure is a learning experience in research.

Can you give an example of something that failed in your career and what you learnt from it?

Too many to count. For every success, there have been at least five failures, that's my track record. To keep my spirits up, my husband gifted a me mug that says, "Proceed as if success is inevitable." That's become my motto to live by.

Associate Professor Juliana Hamzah

A boy from Malaysia educated in Australia

Each year, one eminent researcher is invited to present the Wesfarmers Harry Perkins Oration. This year, friends and supporters of the Perkins were privileged to spend the evening with Emeritus Professor George Yeoh. This humble, generous man not only revealed his remarkable story of coming to Australia at 11 with only his 13-year-old brother for support, but he enthusiastically shared his passion for his favourite organ in the body, the liver.

George sat down with us to share insights and generous advice for young researchers.

What is your greatest achievement in science?
Helping uncover how liver cells contribute to serious disease so we can treat it.

What is your greatest achievement in life?
To be a good person who has raised a good family.

What have you learnt from failing?
The need to bounce back and resolve to do better the next time.

What advice would you give young researchers starting their careers?
Be passionate, totally committed and give it all you've got.

Why are donors so important to you?
You provide the resources that are needed to undertake cutting edge research. In my case, the support that enabled me to "bounce back".

George opened the Wesfarmers' oration by sharing a picture of his life, drawn by his granddaughter Penny.

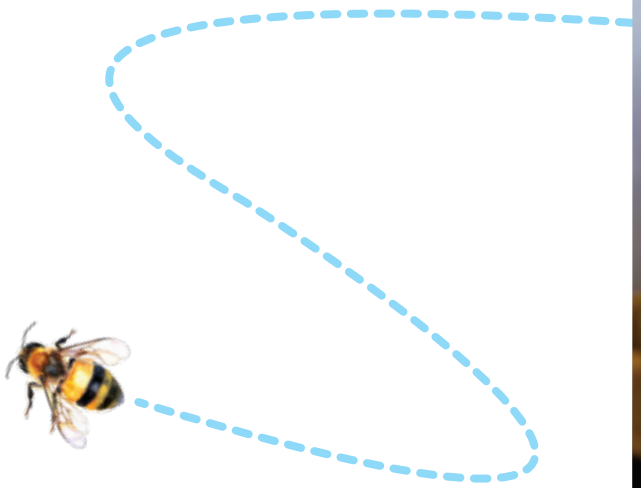
Your support is making a difference

Because of you, 2025 saw big scientific developments made here at the Perkins. Leaps and bounds were made in projects that will go on to improve the lives of millions of people. Here are just a few.

The mighty bee

Researchers at the Perkins discovered that melittin, the key compound in bee venom, can successfully combat certain breast and ovarian cancers. While it's still early-stage research, the results are promising and paving the way to new life-saving cancer treatments.

In 2025, researchers have made further progress on improving the anti-cancer compound and testing it against ovarian and hard to treat breast cancers with promising results.



Dr Edina Wang

Professor Ruth Ganss

One drug with multiple uses

Perkins Professor Ruth Ganss discovered that a tiny dose of existing, approved anti-cancer drugs can break down the protective barriers of blood vessels around tumours, allowing immunotherapy and the body's natural defences to reach and attack the cancer more effectively.

In 2025, Professor Ganss is seeking the necessary approvals for a trial of the combination therapy on brain cancer patients, a group of people particularly effected by the tangled barrier of blood vessels, as it can cause severe brain swelling and inflammation.

Hope for heart (valves)

Associate Professor Elena Juan Pardo and her team at the Perkins are developing 3D printed heart valves. These new valves, made of polymeric tissue, won't require open-heart surgery to place and will last a lifetime – unlike the current treatment options available.

In 2025 we acquired a new instrument that mimics the flow of the body and researchers have been using it to test the effectiveness and durability of the printed heart valves.

Associate Professor Elena Juan Pardo

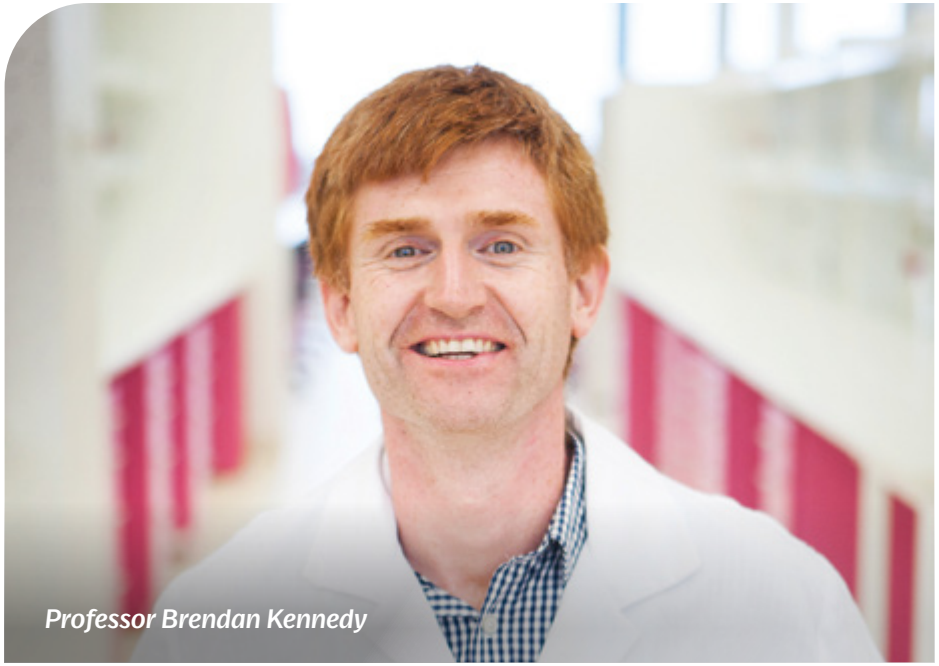
The power of cells in liver repair

Perkins researchers are studying liver progenitor cells – a type of emergency back up cell. In acute liver failure, huge numbers of liver cells suddenly die and when this happens the liver can sometimes be rescued by this special group of cells that normally stay inactive but wake up and multiply to help rebuild the liver when it's badly damaged.

In 2025, Professor George Yeoh and his team are finding new and better ways to grow these cells and activate them into functioning liver cells to help treat patients with severe live disease.

They published new research on the molecules that trigger the liver progenitor cells to stay inactive and wake up and start repairing liver tissue.

Professor George Yeoh



Professor Brendan Kennedy

Precision meets possibility

Professor Brendan Kennedy and his team at the Perkins are developing an innovative surgical tool that uses advanced imaging to pinpoint cancerous tissue during surgery with 96% accuracy. This breakthrough technology could reduce repeat surgeries, speed up recovery, and help prevent recurrence.

This year researchers have been focused on making the probe smaller and less invasive and trialling the probe with clinicians during surgery to ensure it's practical and meets their needs.

Heart health in a box

Perkins researchers and alumni have co-created a platform that combines data from three critical heart function tests to deliver AI-powered, personalised heart health monitoring. Lubdub has developed a point-of-care heart health kit that brings advanced diagnostic capabilities directly to patients who need them most.

The company is currently trialling its wearable ECG patch alongside a saliva-based diagnostic device in hospitals and clinics. These low-cost tools are designed to match the accuracy of traditional testing while enabling faster, more reliable clinical decisions - without adding complexity or increasing costs.

Professor Girish Dwivedi

Your legacy bringing hope to future generations

People are at the heart of everything Pam loves most – swimming at the beach, catching up with friends, volunteering and having a chat. It was through her volunteer work with Inner Wheel that Pam first connected with the Perkins during a community tour.

"I came to the Perkins with a group of very special ladies from Inner Wheel," she remembers.

"We met up with a lovely guide, she took us around the Perkins, shared her personal story and showed us the research labs."

"When I saw what was happening in the labs – all the research underway into genetic disorders, cancer, and heart disease – I was absolutely blown away."

"I decided then and there that I wanted to offer my own support. So, when I heard that I could leave a gift in my Will to support the research, I knew that was the way to go."

Pam joined Silver Linings, a special group of Perkins donors who have decided to include a gift in their Will to support world-changing medical research. That decision became even more meaningful when Pam was later diagnosed with cancer. Her diagnosis turned an already generous gesture into a deeply personal one.

Today, Pam has made it her mission to help improve health for future generations. She reminds us that it only takes one connection to spark meaningful change – and that might be the greatest gift of all.

Silver LINING

23
amazing supporters have remembered the Perkins in their Will.

"When I saw what was happening in the labs – all the research underway into genetic disorders, cancer, and heart disease – I was absolutely blown away."

Pam, Silver Linings supporter

Your generosity, protecting my future

In 2025, many of our long-term donors gave generous gifts driving extraordinary impact at the Perkins.

Some of you chose projects close to your heart; others trusted us to direct funds where they were most needed.

Your support funded the Safe Harbour Fellows program, specialised equipment, cardiovascular research staff, advanced TIL therapy for melanoma, and ongoing work in epigenetics – just to name a few highlights.

Thank you for your generosity, foresight and commitment to WA medical research. Your impact this year has been immeasurable.

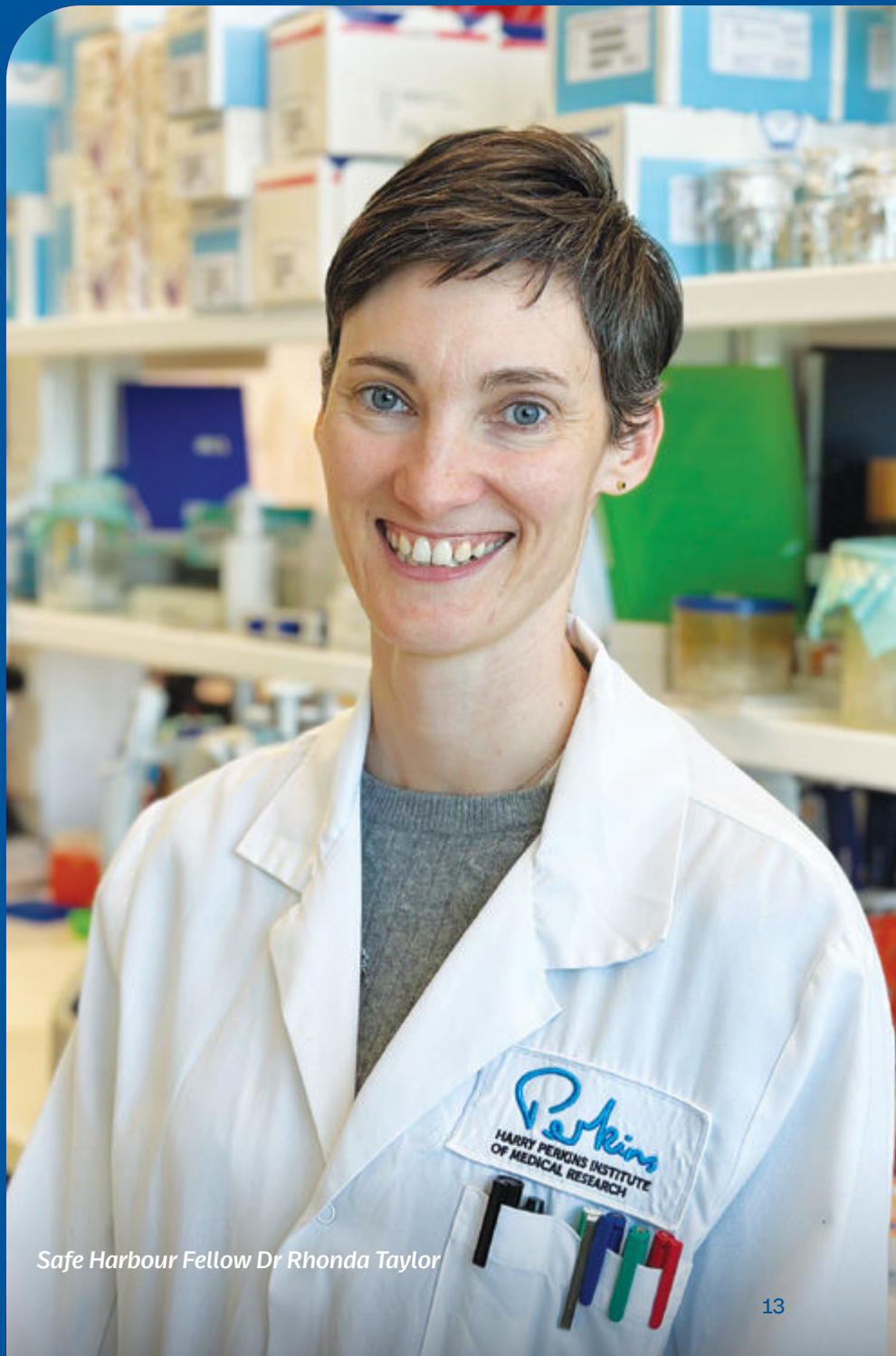
In 2022, the Perkins launched the Safe Harbour Fellows to provide talented early-mid-career researchers with three years of stable funding. Supported by generous donors like you, Safe Harbour allows scientists to focus on breakthroughs in cancer, genetic and cardiovascular diseases without the constant pressure of grant applications, helping retain talent and build sustainable research careers in Western Australia.

Thanks to you seven Safe Harbour Fellows have been awarded – with 5 of the earliest going on to secure independent grant funding.

SAFE HARBOUR

7

Safe Harbour Fellows funded by YOU!



Safe Harbour Fellow Dr Rhonda Taylor

Introducing a new way to give back to your community

The Perkins Partners program is a tax-deductible giving circle for businesses. One of its key aims is to fund Lifeboat, a new initiative to support PhD research students. Launched in 2025, the Perkins Partners program has attracted ten new partners committed to supporting the Perkins in 2026 and beyond.

You're safeguarding the future of research.

The Perkins is home to more than 45 PhD students from universities across WA.

We provide training, guidance and real-world experience. Each student receives a university stipend while writing their thesis, which can take up to four years.

That stipend barely keeps them above the poverty line. Many have rent, bills and families to support, yet they're restricted to working no more than eight hours a week outside of their lab work.

Students from equity groups often have no other safety net. We have launched a support program called Lifeboat – funded by our committed Perkins Partners program – to give peace of mind that those in need can access funding to continue their studies, no matter what.

LIFEBOAT

Why is it called Lifeboat?

We already have the incredible Safe Harbour program, where generous supporters like you are protecting Perkins Early to Mid-Career Researchers by funding their work for three years.

It only makes sense to add some smaller but equally important lifesaving "lifeboats" to that protected harbour!

timg, WA State Manager and Perkins Partner, Ivan Dennis (right) sharing coffee with Yiheng Lyu, the PhD student they are supporting

You made big things possible!

The wide-reaching Perkins family loves nothing more than coming together at an event to accomplish amazing things for medical research. Here's a snap shot of your achievements.

CANCER200
RIDE FOR THE PERKINS

This 200km ride over two days raises funds for cancer research. Over it's 15 year history, it has funded cancer collaborative grants, cancer research, equipment and the 2025 Cancer 200 Safe Harbour Fellow.

In 2025

Number of teams
331

Number of participants
1,675

Funds raised
$8,464,000

Kilometres cycled
345,207km

New Town Toyota

Walk for WOMEN'S CANCER

This 35km walk raises funds for **breast** and **ovarian** cancer research.

Number of teams
181

Number of participants
1,038

Funds raised
$1,323,103

Kilometres walked
33,711km

PERKINS PLUNGE

POWERED BY MINERAL RESOURCES

This 12-hour, overnight, relay swim raises much needed funds for **research**, **support** and **equipment**.

Number of participants
197

Funds raised
$313,620

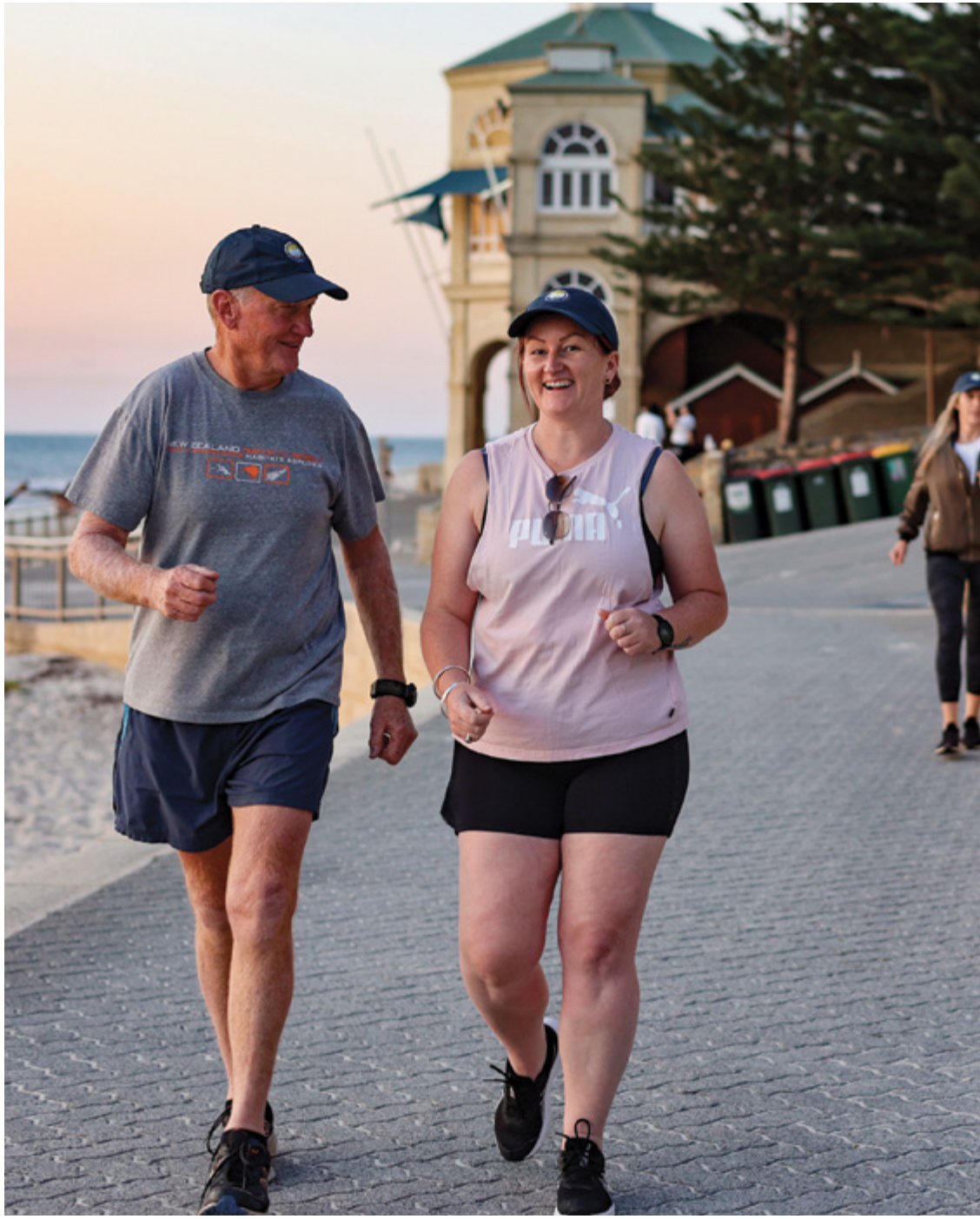
Kilometres swam
1,200km

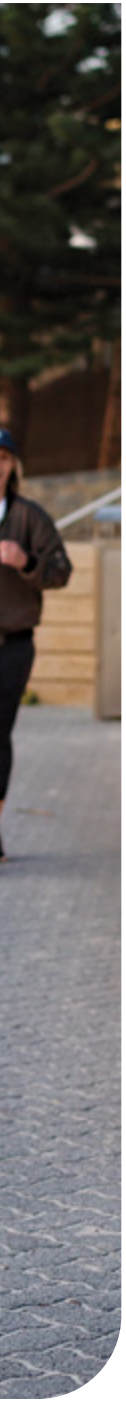
This 30 day challenge, where participants run or walk 3kms per day to raise funds for research, support and equipment.

Number of participants
2,217

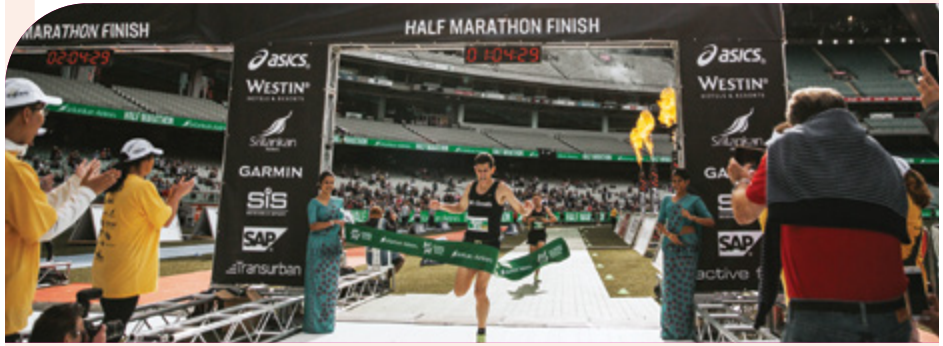
Funds raised
$186,760

Kilometres run
53,056km





MELBOURNE MARATHON FESTIVAL



This 42km run raised funds for research, support and equipment.

Number of teams
20

Number of participants
50,000

Funds raised
$31,507

Kilometres run
780km

tcs SYDNEY MARATHON
presented by asics

This 42km run raised funds for research, support and equipment.

Number of teams
58

Number of participants
35,000

Funds raised
$141,782

Kilometres run
1,772km

Giving hope, one spark at a time

Anne Irwin, a long-term supporter of the Perkins, and a dedicated member of the Spark program, shared with us why she chooses to support the Perkins and the reason medical research matters so deeply to her.

Can you please tell us about what first inspired you to support the Perkins?
The reason I first took an interest in the Perkins was because I came to the building on a Joondalup Seniors excursion. I had heard of the institute before but really didn't know very much about it and its workings. It was such a wonderful experience, so interesting and thought provoking. We then did an amazing tour, showcasing what we had been learning about earlier.

I was also impressed watching the school children working in the lab as part of the Perkin's education program. I thought, what a wonderful opportunity for them to 'get a taste' of medical research and for the Perkins to be able to offer this experience to them. My Perkins connection began from then.

Why does medical research matter to you?
I think that main reason medical research is important to me is firstly because sadly too many of my immediate family and friends have either passed away from cancer, strokes and heart attacks or, are suffering from these diseases now. Anything that can be learnt or understood that can help combat them would be wonderful.

Secondly, on a more personal level, my daughter, Elizabeth, who turns 50 this year, was diagnosed with a malignant cancer, a paraganglioma, when she was nine. She had surgery but unfortunately it reappeared, and she had a second surgery when she was 12. She is fine now, still has yearly check-ups, but if it wasn't for the excellent doctors at Princess Margaret Hospital and the wonderful treatment that medical researchers, somewhere in institutes like the Perkins had discovered, she may not be here today. I am eternally grateful to those unknown angels.

If medical research can help with the health of my children, grandchildren and future generations of my family, so be it.

Anne, you're a member of our Spark program, what do you think makes regular donations especially powerful?
I have two youngish members of my extended family who were medical researchers for quite a few years. They are now studying to be teachers as they became disillusioned with having to spend much of their time writing submissions for grants to be able to continue their research. If I can help just one researcher with my small contribution, I am very happy. Also, it must be so much easier for the Perkins to know exactly what funds they can rely on for planning into the future.

What kind of future do you hope your support helps create?
My hope is that by the Perkins receiving donations, amazing discoveries are able to be made, the required testing can be done, as many researchers as you can manage can be employed and for the team at the Perkins to continue to do the fantastic research that they are doing now.

I'll finish off by commenting on your fabulous staff. Every time I come to a function I am made to feel so welcome, valued and appreciated. This isn't why I donate but, it is lovely to know that my donation is appreciated whether it be $20 or $500.

Anne, a committed member of The Spark program

Our Sparks making everything at the Perkins brighter!

The Sparks gave more than **$300,000** in 2025, that's over **9,400** individual gifts!

Around **200** visits from Spark members - everything is brighter when our Spark members are in the building!

1,002 generous souls, who choose to give each month

THE SPARK

You're making the kilometres count!

During the month of July, Jason Fairhurst put is best foot forward and ran a half marathon every day. We spoke to him about his exceptional achievement and the reason he decided to raise funds for the Perkins.

Jason, tell us a little about yourself...

Hi I'm Jason Fairhurst. I have had the pleasure of calling Perth, WA, my home for the past 20 years. Originally hailing from the Northwest of England, my family has deep roots in Liverpool.

What personal challenge did you choose to take on?

My goal was to run 20 kilometers each working day throughout July 2025 – that's a total of 460 kilometres and 23 half marathons. I wanted to not just challenge myself physically, but also about push my limits and embrace the journey with passion and determination to complete this huge challenge.

Running has always been a significant part of my life, and I wanted to use my love for running to contribute to an excellent cause.

What was your fundraising target?

My initial target was $2,000, and I am overwhelmed by the generosity of family, friends, and colleagues who have helped me surpass that figure. Their support means the world to me, and I am deeply grateful for their kindness and encouragement. I'm really proud to say, that with the support of my community,
I raised $5,792, for the Perkins.

Why did I choose Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research?

I spoke with my work colleague Alex Smith and she recommended the Perkins Institute based on her experience of participating in the Walk for Women's Cancer.
I was inspired by her dedication and impact.

Like many families, mine has also been touched by cancer. This challenge was a small, but meaningful way for me to contribute to help others who are affected by these diseases.

What is the Perkins Cure Community?

They are a passionate group of people who are baking, swimming, cycling, hosting, playing golf, shaving their heads (or doing anything they can think of) to raise money for vital medical research.

The Perkins Cure Community are really (fund)raising the bar!

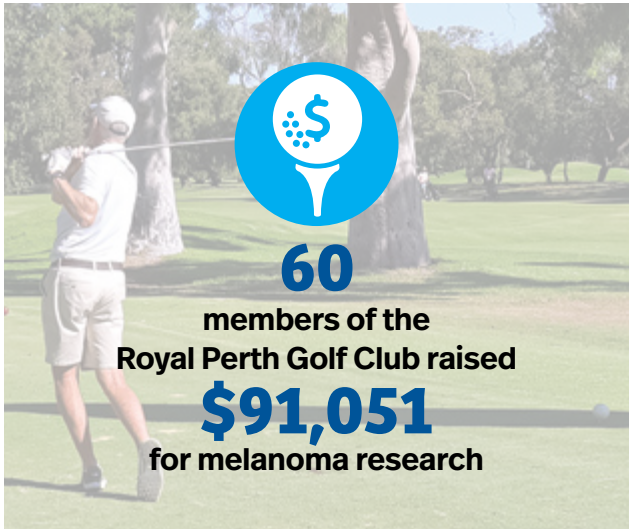
In 2025, the WA community went above and beyond to support medical research. Here are some highlights:

35
Community fundraising events in 2025

Funds raised
$529,959

20
shaved heads at Hale School! In support of brain cancer research

$8,095
donated from the Ramsbottom and East Road Christmas Fundraising



60
members of the Royal Perth Golf Club raised
$91,051
for melanoma research

$1,571
raised by the Anglican Church Quilt Show

Your support is inspiring tomorrow's researchers

Because of you, the Lotterywest BioDiscovery Centre team has been able to travel all over WA in 2025, to share the magic of science with the next generation of researchers.

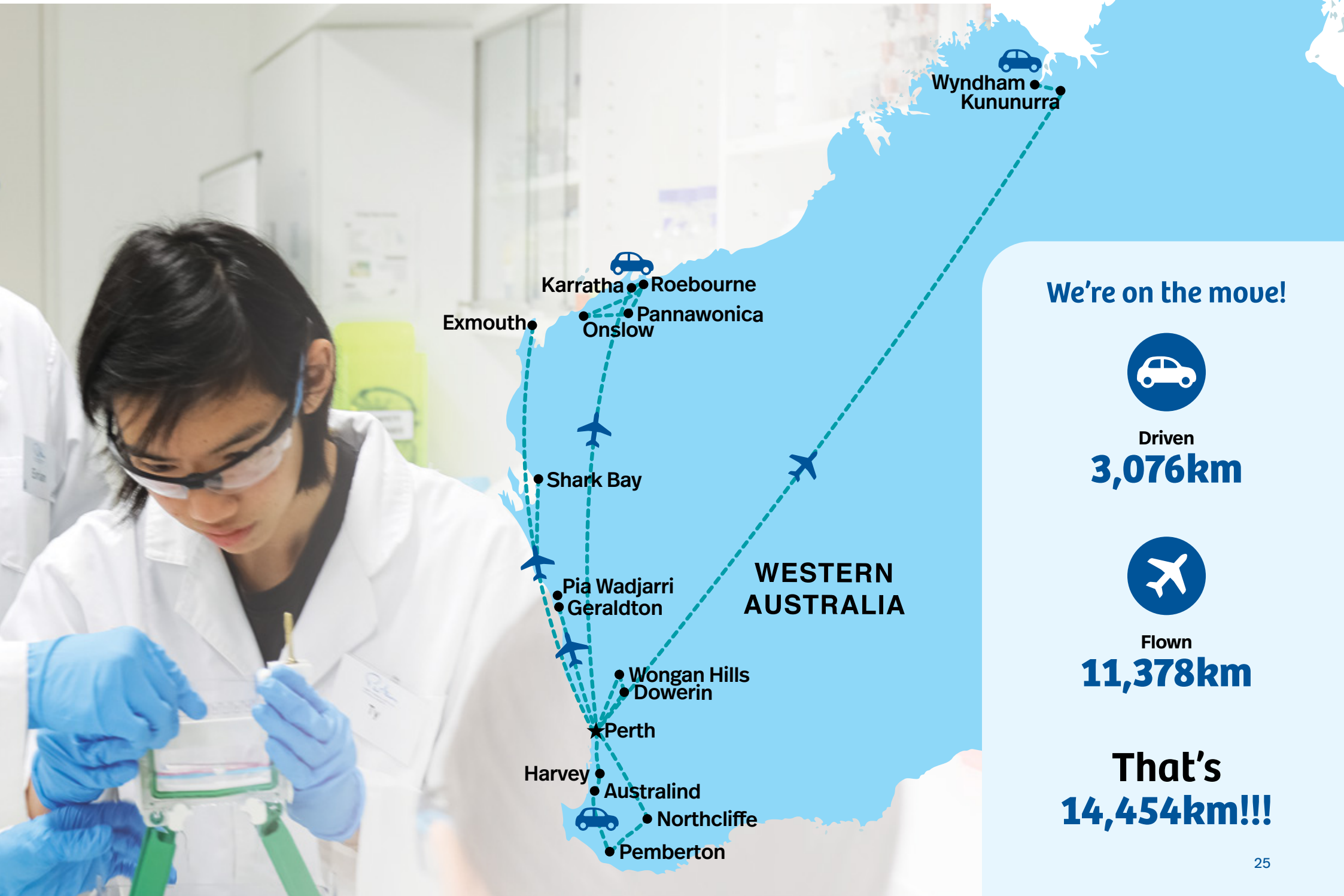
In 2025

2,665
students have had the opportunity to discover and learn in curriculum linked laboratory experiences

380+
young people have had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of scientific research through Perkins Profs, Immersion and School Holiday programs

Meet Jevin

Jevin's first contact with the Perkins was as a high school student. He came back to the Perkins as a uni student working in rare genetic disease. He has recently attained the title Dr Jevin Parmar, PhD.



We're on the move!

Driven
3,076km

Flown
11,378km

That's
14,454km!!!

Still want more?

There are so many exciting things happening here are the Perkins. Read more about the interesting developments in the publications below.

Perkins News (Spring)

Perkins News (Autumn)

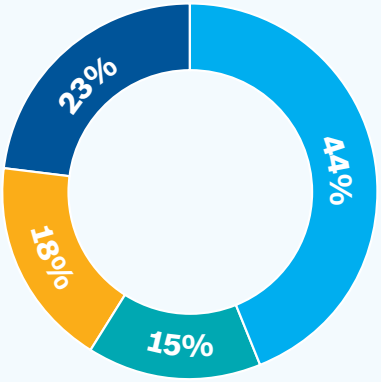
2024 Annual Report

Financials

There are no new cures without research and there is no research without you! Thank you for being an integral part of our support network.

What we earned in 2025

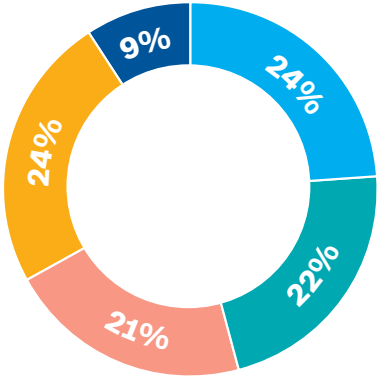
- Fundraising and events income
- Government grants
- Facilities income
- Other*



*Investments and endowment fund

What we spent in 2025

- Operations and administration expenses
- Research infrastructure and laboratory costs
- Employee expenses
- Facilities, maintenance and utilities costs
- Other



Our promise to you

Without you, the Perkins simply wouldn't exist.
We value you - your opinion, generosity and friendship.
This is our promise to you.

Be genuine

You can trust that your donation will be used to support better health outcomes for you and your family.

Be truthful

our contributions will support where there is the greatest need, unless otherwise directed by you.

Be appreciative

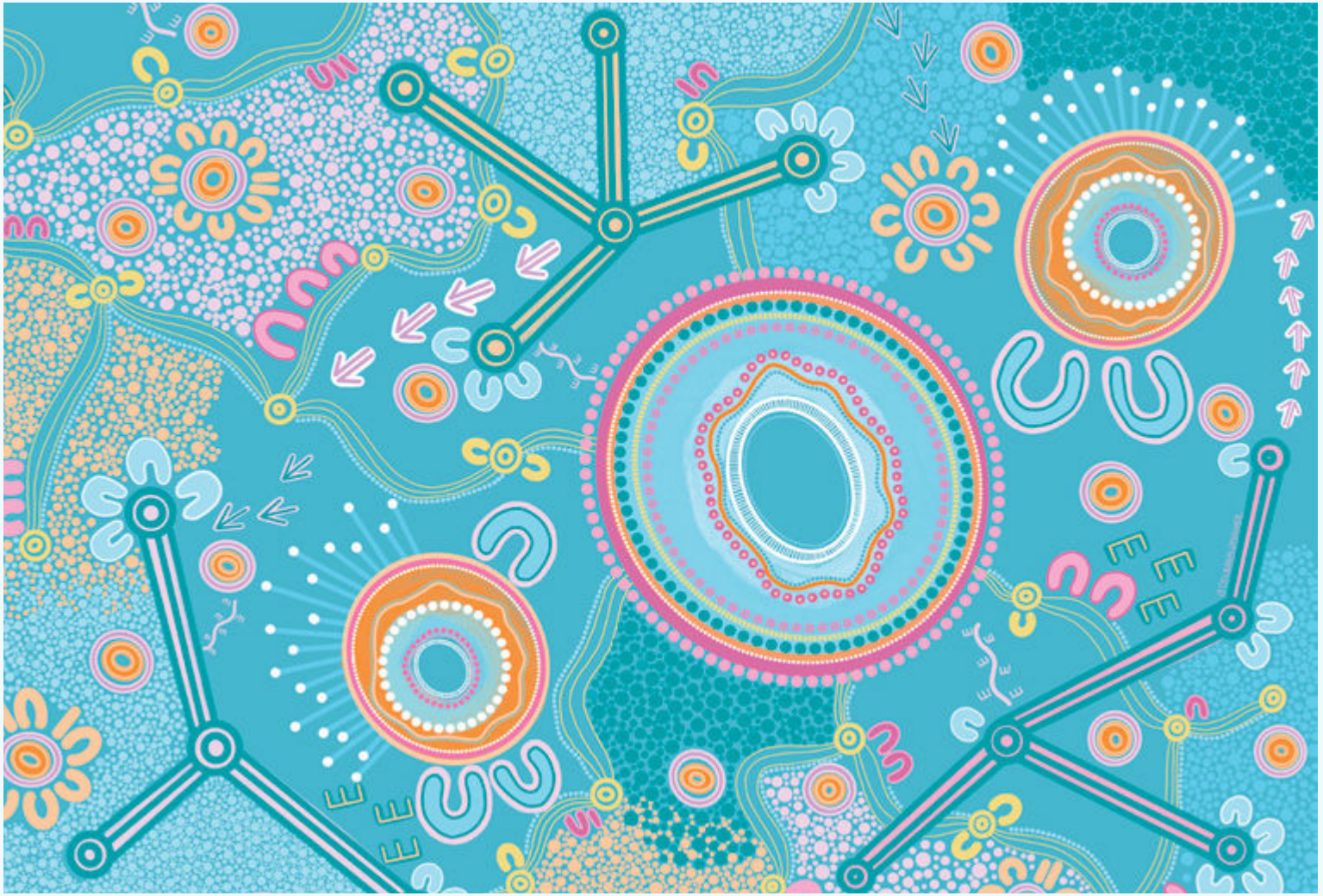
We don't take your friendship for granted.
We will listen to what you have to say and respect your wishes.

Be protective

Your personal information is private. We are proactive and take measures to keep your information safe.

Be respectful

You play a role in our achievements. We will always share the impact of your generosity.



The Perkins commissioned this artwork from Courtney Garlett, and it is licensed to use in various media with her permission.

The Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's first healers and scientists. Their collaborative wisdom, culture and traditions have nurtured this land and its people for tens of thousands of years and they inspire our mission to improve community health.

We pay our deepest respects to their Elders, past and present and remain dedicated to learning from and working with First Nations peoples to create a more inclusive and equitable future.

HARRY PERKINS INSTITUTE
OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Get in touch

6 Verdun Street, Nedlands WA 6009
T: 08 6151 0772 E: info@perkins.org.au
perkins.org.au