



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

# GOOD NEWS

Gynaecological Oncology News

Autumn 2025

## Message from the Director

**I hope everyone has had a fantastic start to the year!**

I've just returned from a super successful trip to Colombia where I caught up with surgical colleagues from around the world. It was an incredible opportunity to explore new research ideas, strengthen existing projects and connections; and, on a lighter note, learn everything about harvesting coffee beans!

It's an exciting time for QCGC Research as we actively recruit two new clinical trial positions, with more staffing opportunities coming later in the year. If you know someone who might be interested in joining our team, visit our website for more information on employment opportunities.

Another adventure awaits in 2025!

I invite you to join me on the Cherish Challenge to Bhutan (22-31 Oct 2025), where we will hike through Bhutan's spectacular landscapes, taking in snow-capped peaks and serene lakes, all while raising vital funds for kinder treatments and better outcomes for women with gynaecological cancer. To register or find out more, visit the Cherish website.

Thank you all for your continuing support.



**Professor  
Andreas Obermair**  
Director of Research



[gyncan.org](https://gyncan.org)



[Cherish](https://cherishchallenge.org)

## Personalising endometrial cancer treatment

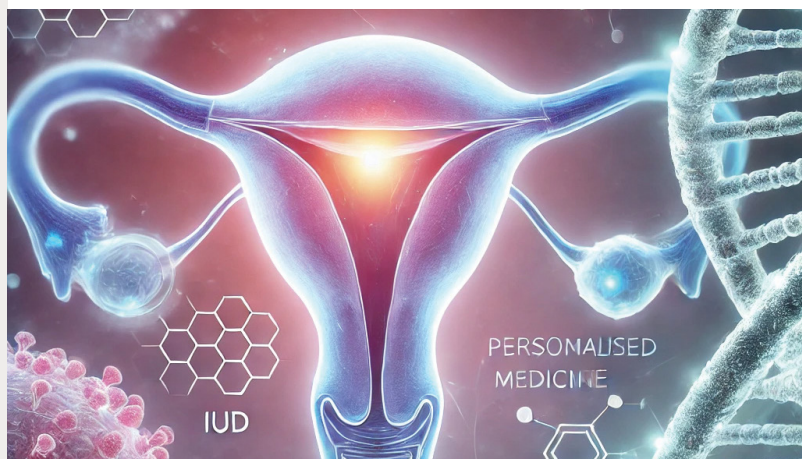
The feMMe Molecular project is advancing non-surgical treatment for endometrial cancer by identifying patients who respond to hormonal therapy with an intrauterine device. Building on the feMMe trial, which showed up to 61% of early-stage patients could avoid hysterectomy, this research analyses blood and tissue samples to find biomarkers predicting treatment success.

Early findings revealed that women with Mismatch Repair Deficiency (MMRd) – a condition where cells struggle to repair DNA damage – do not benefit from this approach. In response, the team launched the SATELLITE trial (featured later) to explore immunotherapy as an alternative.

The goal? A future where a simple blood test or biopsy helps doctors offer personalised, evidence-based treatment options – empowering patients to make informed choices.



feMMe



**QCGC**  
research



## Ongoing recognition for the LACE trial

Seven years after the results of QCGC's first international trial, LACE, were published in *JAMA*, one of the world's most widely read medical journals, the impact of this groundbreaking research continues to be recognised.

The *International Journal of Gynecological Cancer* (IJGC) recently named LACE as one of the most significant trials in the past decade. The 2024 IJGC review identified trials around the world that have changed the standard of care in cervix, uterine, and ovarian cancer and led to significantly improved outcomes for patients.

The LACE trial started in 2005 to compare two surgical options for early-stage endometrial cancer: traditional open surgery and minimally invasive laparoscopic (keyhole) hysterectomy. Over 5 years and with 760 women participating, the results were clear – laparoscopic surgery is the preferred choice. It offers the same survival rates and recurrence risk but with fewer complications, less pain, shorter hospital stays, and faster recovery.

A heartfelt thank you to all the LACE trial patients from 21 cancer centres across Australia and New Zealand. Your participation helped shape a kinder, gentler treatment for endometrial cancer – improving lives for countless women around the world.



## Gynaecological Cancer Patient Symposiums

2024, 2025

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended our 2024 Gynaecological Cancer Patient Symposium. The event was a resounding success, made possible by engaging and informative presentations from our generous guest speakers, valuable insights from our consumer engagement groups, and the participation of guests both in person and via livestream.

This event wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of Cherish Women's Cancer Foundation and GSK Australia, we are deeply grateful for their continuing commitment to advancing gynaecological cancer research and patient care.

“The QCGC Research Patient Symposium was such a supportive and informative experience. I learned so much, met others who understood my journey, and felt reassured knowing patient voices truly matter. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect, learn, and feel inspired.”



Symposium

**Karlie**  
QCGC Research 2024 Symposium attendee

## Welcome baby Cecilia Maria!

Congratulations to our ENDO-3 trial coordinator, Joyce Alvarenga and her husband Mitch, on the arrival of their beautiful daughter, Cecilia Maria in December 2024.

Baby Ceci is already a cherished part of the QCGC Research family. Wishing Joyce, Mitch, older brother Lorenzo and their little bundle of joy much happiness as they begin this new chapter together.



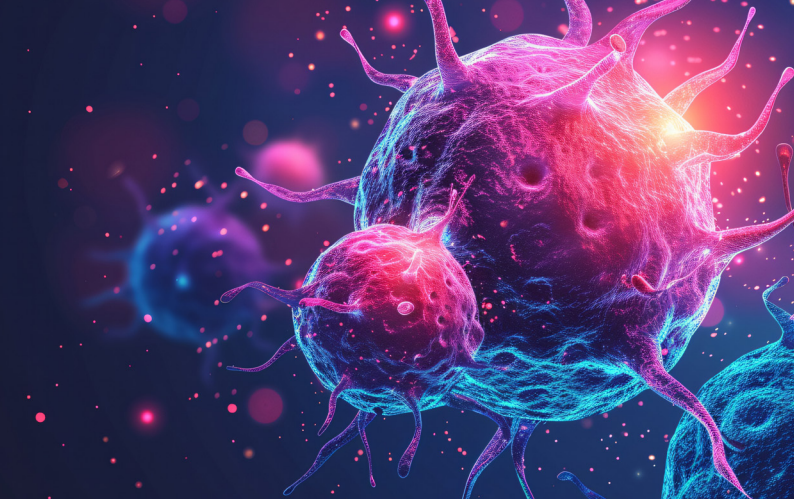
**Cecilia and Lorenzo**

Save the date for our next symposium!

9:30am – 1:30pm  
Sat 30 August 2025

Garden Marquee Room  
Victoria Park





## Our growing team

We are delighted to welcome several new faces to the QCGC Research team! Each of them brings valuable experience and enthusiasm to their roles and we are excited to see the impact they will have on our work.

### Lauren Angel

Program Manager  
ALIVE WELL  
NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence

### Sadrushi Dissanayake

Research Assistant and PhD Scholar

### Grace Ngiam

Clinical Trial Coordinator

### Jobina Lopez

Clinical Trial Coordinator

### Mali Morrison

Summer Research Student

### Annika Mueller

Senior Research Assistant

Congratulations to Brianna Armstrong on her well-earned promotion from Trial Coordinator to Trial Manager.

These new additions strengthen our commitment to advancing gynaecological cancer research and supporting our community. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our newest team members!



## Introducing the SATELLITE Study

QCGC Research has launched an exciting new study investigating the potential of immune checkpoint inhibitors as a treatment for women with early-stage endometrial cancer. This small study involves ten women who will receive Dostarlimab for six months to assess its safety and effectiveness.

“Immune checkpoint inhibitors activate the immune system to locate and attack cancer cells rather than targeting the whole body,” said Professor Obermair.

“The potential benefit of this new treatment is that it may eliminate the need for surgery, such as a hysterectomy, for some women with early-stage endometrial cancer.”

The SATELLITE study is being conducted at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Brisbane, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, and Westmead Hospital in Sydney, with results expected in two years.



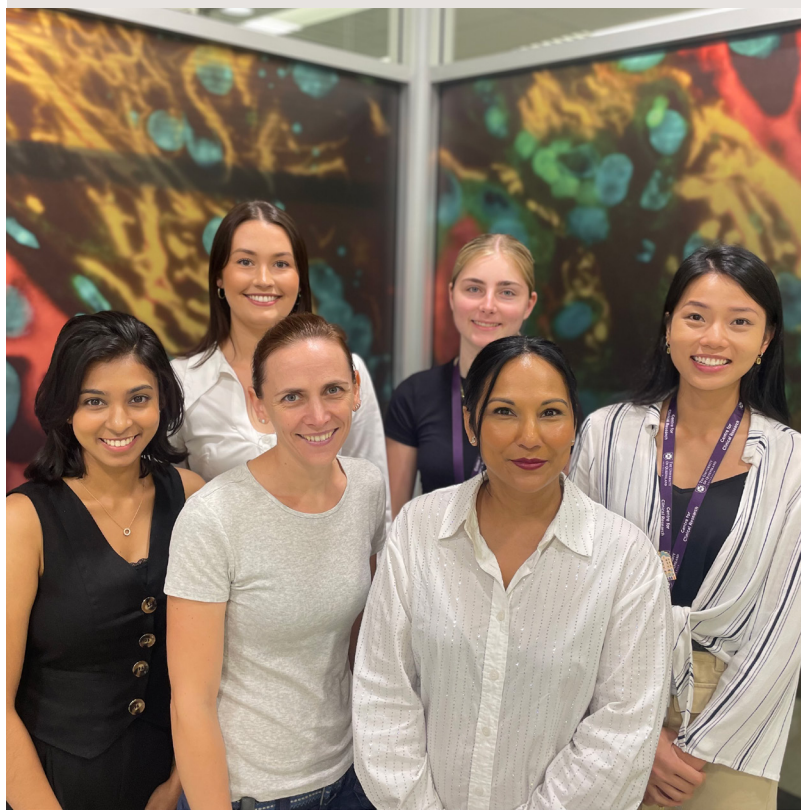
SATELLITE

## Congratulations, Professor Andreas Obermair!

We are thrilled to share that Professor Andreas Obermair has been elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences (AAHMS). This prestigious recognition, announced late last year, is a testament to his decades of dedication to patient care and research, improving outcomes for women with gynaecological cancer. Congratulations, Professor Obermair!



Australian  
Academy of  
Health & Medical  
Sciences





## \$3 million CRE grant success

### Exciting news for QCGC Research!

In 2024, we were awarded a \$3 million Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). CRE ALIVE WELL will focus on improving the quality of life for gynaecological cancer patients by modernising treatment and follow-up care.



**Lauren Angel**

The CRE aims to move away from the outdated, rigid models currently offered as standard of care for gynaecological cancers, toward more contemporary, women-centred approaches.

The three priority areas of research will focus on:

- Enabling fertility after endometrial cancer
- Reducing lymphoedema, a common side effect of cancer treatments
- Optimising recovery from cancer, allowing women to regain their health and function

Building on our ongoing trials, we will also be launching three new trials to explore more personalised treatment approaches.

In a truly collaborative manner, the CRE will be working alongside partners and community to achieve our research priorities.

To find out more, visit the CRE website using the QR Code below, or email the CRE Research Program Manager, Dr Lauren Angel, at the following email [CRE-alivewell.centre@uq.edu.au](mailto:CRE-alivewell.centre@uq.edu.au).



ALIVEWELL

**ALIVE WELL**  
NHMRC Centre of  
Research Excellence



## ENDO-3 gains momentum

Earlier this year, QCGC Research farewelled Vanessa Behan after 17.5 years in gynaecological cancer research. As the ENDO-3 trial manager, Vanessa played a key role in its success, and we thank her for her contributions. We wish her all the best in her next chapter.



**Vanessa Behan**

Brianna Armstrong will take over as ENDO-3 trial manager until the position is filled later in the year.

Since its launch in 2021, ENDO-3 has enrolled 268 patients and 16 surgeons across 10 sites in Australia, Singapore, and the United States, with more sites expected to join in the coming years.

ENDO-3 is the first randomized clinical trial to compare the benefits and risks of sentinel node dissection versus no lymph node dissection during surgery for early-stage endometrial cancer. Although sentinel node dissection is routinely performed, there is no clear evidence that it benefits patients.

Over 5 years, the ENDO-3 team will randomise 760 patients to generate evidence that could potentially change surgical practice worldwide.



ENDO-3

Thank you for your ongoing support of QCGC Research. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of women with gynaecological cancer. Stay connected with us for updates on our research, events, and ways to get involved.

