

## Loomberah open garden



Loomberah Open Garden —Tamworth,

Dr Elizabeth Varughese and her personal assistant Chris Cox hosted the 'Loomberah

open garden' in Tamworth in October 2012.

Elizabeth is a gynaecologist and former colleague of Andreas'.

Chris kindly opened up her beautiful garden for the day to raise money for QCGC Research—can you believe this amazingly picturesque garden is her own?

We were so pleased to hear that 500 people attended. The open garden raised over \$3000 - a fantastic result.

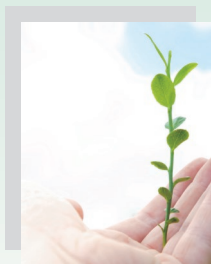


Pretty as a picture... Chris Cox's tranquil para-

We are sure you will agree with us

## Centre's first bequest a lasting legacy

*"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give" ~ Winston Churchill*



The passing of a loved one is a deeply personal journey. There is nothing anyone can say, or do, to take away feelings of loss or grief.

In times such as these, a person's legacy can mean so much to

those left behind - a last reminder of their generosity and kindness to cherish along with their memory.

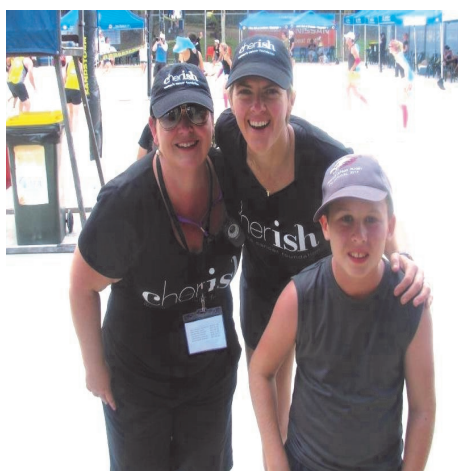
In late 2012, we received the sad news of the passing of Bob Douglas, a long-time friend and supporter of QCGC Research.

We came to know Bob when his wife Dell was diagnosed with gynaecological cancer. Sadly, Dell lost her battle with gynaecological cancer five years before Bob passed away.

At the time we heard of his passing, we also learnt of Bob's lasting legacy - a bequest to the centre. This gesture was significant not only in its generosity but also as a milestone for the centre; this was our very first bequest.

We are sincerely grateful to Bob and our thoughts are with the Douglas family.

## Up Close with Danielle Mills



Danielle (left) pictured with beach volleyball Olympic superstar Natalie Cook and her oldest son Christian at the Battle

**Danielle, tell us a little bit about yourself.**

I've been married 17 years and have two boys, Christian and Elliott - aged ten and six. And how could I forget the family dog named Ruby!

**How did you become Operations Manager for QCGC Research?** I'd known Andreas for a few years and had worked with him in my role of Finance Manager at School of Medicine. When the part-time position came up I jumped at the chance—with two kids, part-time allows me to strike the perfect work/life balance!

**What is it about the role that inspires you?** Working with and meeting some of

the patients that have endured gynaecological cancer and seeing their positive, inspirational attitudes to life.

**What's the standout moment for you in your time at QCGC?** Creating the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer beach volleyball tournaments from a simple idea and seeing them both grow and turn into the successful events they are today.

**Favourite holiday destination?** Having both of my sisters living overseas, I get to do a bit of travelling! I'd have to say the White Christmas we spent in America and the UK top the list—how can you beat that?



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## Gynaecological Oncology

# GOOD NEWS

GOOD NEWS Edition 5 - March 2013

## Lions Clubs International shine bright

*"Whenever a Lions club gets together, problems get smaller. And communities get better." \**

Lions Clubs International reminded us of this recently at the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer 2013. Nine Lions Clubs from across Brisbane joined forces to help deliver the Battle.

The Lions Clubs were heavily involved from the outset, from planning and gathering resources to setting up the venue and feeding the masses of hungry troops on the day.

There was widespread consensus that the Lions did a stellar job and were so generous in donating their time to help make the Battle the success it was.

We wanted to share with you the selfless, community spirit shown by this amazing organisation, as no good deed should go unnoticed!

Please join us in thanking the Lions Clubs of Ekibin, Griffith, Hel-lenic, Apple-MAQ, Kuraby, Macgregor, Pine-lands, Greater Mt Gravatt and Moorooka, as well as Nicole Phillips, who coordinated the Lions' effort in the event.



## Message from the Director of Research

Firstly, I'd like to wish all of you a happy new year.

As 2013 gathers momentum, so does the outstanding work here at QCGC Research. It's been over six months since our last newsletter and we've made some great progress since then.

My staff and I are still reveling in the feelings from the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer 2013. The event was held on Sunday 3 February at Olympic superstar Natalie Cook's Sandstorm Arena. It was a phenomenal success!

We were blessed with perfect weather this year which saw over 1000 people come through the gates - many of these were from the 74 teams that registered to play.

The Mission Queensland Firebirds were crowned winners in the exhibition match against a team of Former Origin Greats. Nat

This year, the Battle was presented in partnership with the newly established Cherish Women's Cancer Foundation. As I write this, the total amount raised is \$126,043.01. A wonderful result!

Would you believe we are already in the midst of planning the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer 2014?

In research news, I am excited to be commencing the 'FeMME' trial this year. FeMME involves the study of an intra-uterine, hormone-releasing device that will allow minimally invasive treatment for uterine cancer.

Success of this trial will mean that young women still wishing to have a family can avoid radical treatments such as a full hysterectomy, thereby retaining their fertility. Further information about this trial is detailed in the FeMME article on the next page.

Finally, I would like to thank those who continually take an interest in the work we do here at QCGC Research. Simply put, your support is invaluable to us and is what keeps us on the path to creating better future for all women.

**Prof Andreas Obermair**  
Director of Research



The first exhibition match in the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer 2013 included celebrities from the Mission Queensland Firebirds, Former Origin Greats and Brisbane Lions players, the Brisbane

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## Santa Claus delivers the best gift of all

Christmas has been and gone but our lasting appreciation for one very special Santa Claus has not!

We were delighted to receive a donation of \$1050 from Mr Adrian Smith of Promoworks—in lieu of Santa Claus' December 2012 wages.

Promoworks are the company that created the magic for Santa to be at more than one shopping centre at once. They also draw up his roster!

We hear that Santa worked extra hard making his list (& checking it twice), wrapping and delivering presents all over the world to support our research program here at QCGC.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to this very special man in red. There are many girls and women and their families who will benefit greatly from his generosity.

Now that's the Christmas spirit, Santa!



## CHRISTMAS WITH THE SUNSHINE STATE SISTERS

The Sunshine State Sisters are a Sunshine Coast support group. They welcome women touched by gynaecological cancer (past and present), and encourage them to come together, share their stories and create new friendships.

In December, they held their Sunshine State Sisters Christmas lunch. 14 ladies came together to celebrate this special day, coordinated by Merran Williams.

An enjoyable and fun day was had by all and everyone agreed it was a wonderful way to kick off the festive season!

The Sunshine State Sisters have groups in the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Brisbane and Hervey Bay. If you are interested in attending one of these



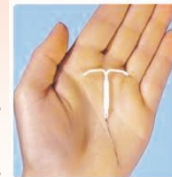
Deck the halls... Sunshine Coast Sisters (Left to Right)

Denise Lieven, Merran Williams, Robyn Fairlie,

## FeMME (Mirena) Trial

Imagine being told in your late teens, early 20s or even your 30s that you had endometrial (uterine) cancer and needed a complete hysterectomy. Aside from the daunting prospect of undergoing major surgery, it could also mean losing the dream of one day having a family of your own. Thankfully, medical professionals like our very own Professor Obermair refuse to accept this as a sustainable treatment option.

QCGC Research will soon be kicking off a new trial, the FeMME (Mirena) trial. FeMME aims to revolutionise the landscape of treatment options for women with endometrial cancer. This is particularly relevant to younger women who wish to retain their fertility as well as women with existing medical conditions, for whom surgery is deemed unsafe.



The Mirena IUD

The Mirena is an IUD (or intra-uterine device) that is implanted into the uterus. This is the same IUD that is commonly used for contraception among women. However, this IUD releases the hormone progesterin into the patient - a far less invasive treatment than any kind of surgery.

The FeMME trial will survey 110 patients. It is predicted that at least 45% of patients will have a complete pathological response (the absence of any cancer) within a period of six months. The trial, set to commence in 2013, could:

- eliminate the need for radical and invasive surgery, and thereby reduce post-operative recovery times

## OPEN Trial

The OPEN Trial looks at early post-operative enteral feeding (tube feeding after surgery) in patients with advanced epithelial ovarian cancer.

OPEN will compare standard post-operative diet and care versus standard post-operative diet and care together with early feeding via a tube.

The trial focuses on women who experience nutritional problems pre-operatively. It is thought that tube feeding can assist with a better quality of life and a shorter hospital stay with less complications.

To date, 108 women have been part of the trial. Half

of these women have been randomly allocated to receive

standard post-operative diet and care, and half have been randomly allocated to receive standard diet and care together with early tube feeding.

Having finished recruitment in March 2013, the data will now be analysed.

Hopefully, we will soon have a better understanding of the best post-operative diet for women with ovarian cancer.

## LEGS Study

Swelling of the lower limbs (lymphoedema) is a common consequence of treatment for gynaecological cancer. It is a serious and debilitating complication which impacts women physically, emotionally and financially.

The causes are largely unknown, but specific aspects of cancer treatment including removal of lymph nodes, radiotherapy and delays in wound-healing are thought to contribute.

Clinical data is scarce regarding its onset time and incidence after gynaecological cancer treatment.

The LEGS study will provide the first prospective evaluation of the incidence of lower-limb lymphoedema after treatment for gynae-

colological cancer and the risk factors associated with this condition. It will also examine the impact of lymphoedema on patient's well-being.

The LEGS study finalised recruitment in February 2011 with a total of 671 patients. The last of the study data is currently being entered so that it can be analysed by statisticians.

We hope this will provide important questions about lymphoedema following treatment for gynaecological cancers.



Lymphoedema (swelling of the lower limbs)

provide answers to the questions about lymphoedema following treatment for gynaecological cancers.

## VOLUNTEERS... WE NEED YOU!

Are you a community-minded person with a few hours to spare? Do you have a passion for caring for women touched by gynaecological cancer, past and present? If so, we need you!

We are looking for volunteers who can perform basic office duties, such as answering the telephone and carrying out basic ad-

ministrative tasks.

Hours are flexible, and we require each volunteer for just a few hours at a time, short-term. Ideally, volunteers would work out of our offices at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

## Patient Profile: Linda McLelland



Ovarian Cancer survivor and trial patient Linda

Linda McLelland is a 61-year-old Brisbane resident. Linda has had ovarian cancer twice and is tested every three months to see if the illness has returned.

Linda knows better than most the importance of finding a cure for ovarian cancer. Her mother died from the disease after first surviving breast cancer. Alarming, breast cancer patients have a greater than 150% increased risk of subsequently developing uterine cancer and greater than 40% risk of developing ovarian cancer compared to the general population.

With her family history, Linda took a pro-active approach and opted for regular ultrasound and tumour marker studies in a bid

to diagnose the disease if it ever occurred. "But it didn't work. I was completely clear in May 2008 and had advanced cancer in March 2009," she said.

After undergoing treatment, Linda was given the all-clear and had a one year remission. However, Linda found that the cancer had recurred when it was spotted during a CT scan. After chemotherapy and major surgery that finished in February 2011, Linda was recruited onto a trial and has been in good health ever since. "I still have a lot of monitoring but no recurrence as yet, which is an absolute miracle. I'm very lucky," she said.

Linda recently participated in the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer. "Our team was called the Green Machine and we won the competition," she laughed. Her daughter



Linda's team "The Green Machine" with Queensland Minister for Health Lawrence Springborg

court while Linda barracked from the sidelines. Linda also made a touching speech during the closing ceremony to help raise awareness of ovarian cancer.