

## Charity Variety Concert

Gynaecological cancer survivor Vicki Williams recently turned 70. Instead of throwing a birthday party, Vicki held a charity variety concert in aid of ovarian and uterine cancer research. The concert was held on Saturday 2 June at the Mitchelton & District Senior Citizens Centre.

Singers, bands, dancers, pianists and even an Elvis impersonator helped to make it a spectacular celebration enjoyed by all.

The event raised over \$5,000 which was kindly donated to QCGC Research. Special thanks to Vicki, the Mitchelton & District Senior Citizens Club, Zonta Club of Pine Rivers and the Golden Valley Keperra Lionesses for helping to make this possible.

Planning and running an event like this is no small feat and Vicki's dedication and creativity are truly inspirational. Please join us in thanking Vicki and wishing her a very happy 70<sup>th</sup> birthday!



Vicki Williams (left) and Trish Keissler (right)

## Wonder Lust

Ovarian cancer does not discriminate - it affects girls and women of all ages. Chase Becker knows more about the disease than she should at the young age of 13. Chase has ovarian cancer.

Chase's story has personally touched so many in the Sunshine Coast community, particularly the wonderful people at Sunshine Coast hair salon Elenbi Design. They are hosting "Wonder Lust" - a Hair Fashion Charity Spectacular on Friday 24 August. We invite you to this night of hair and fashion to show your support for not only Chase, but all girls and women battling the disease.

There will be a presentation on ovarian cancer awareness which will deliver vital information for women and their families. Kelsie Rimmer from Channel 9's "The Voice" will also be performing.

Elenbi's models will showcase the very latest trends in hair styling in a unique choreographed spectacular - you won't want to miss this! There will also be raffles and loads of great prizes up for grabs.

Proceeds from the night will be donated to QCGC Research to help fund vital research in ovarian cancer treatment, prevention and ultimately a cure.

### Event Details

Date: Friday 24 August 2012  
Time: 6:00pm  
Venue: One Up Bar Bistro, Mooloolaba  
Cost: \$40

Tickets can be purchased from Elenbi Hair Design, Sunshine Plaza, Mooloolaba. Contact them on 07-5479 3488.

## Up Close with Dr Andrea Garrett



**Where is your favourite holiday destination?** Truly too many to name!! Anywhere with good food and great culture. In Australia I'd say Noosa for a relaxing break at the beach.

**What is your favourite book?** I like most genres (except sci-fi) and again there are too many to name. My current favourite is "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" by John Boyne. It is about a friendship between two boys in exceptional (and horrendous) circumstances.

**What is your favourite movie?** I prefer art house movies and in particular French ones - always a little quirky. I am going to change this to "favourite musical" and say Les Miserables.

**If you could spend one hour with anyone in the world who would it be and why?** Probably a chef as I love food! Heston Blumenthal intrigues me and I

hope to get to The Fat Duck next time I am in the UK, so I hope he has an hour to spare.

**What's one thing about you few people know?** I was awarded a College Blue and University Half Blue in Hockey. I still play but age has overtaken speed and skill!

**Why did you become a Gynaecological surgeon?** During my General Obstetrics and Gynaecology training, I was mentored by a great team and decided to pursue the field of Gynaecologic Oncology. I enjoy the continuity of care when dealing with cancer patients and developing a relationship with my patients and their families over a period of time. I also enjoy the challenging surgery we perform.



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## Gynaecological Oncology

# GOOD NEWS

GOOD NEWS Edition 4 - July 2012

## We're growing!

QCGC Research is gaining momentum! Headed up by Director Professor Obermair, we are now a team of 14, all dedicated to making a difference for women experiencing gynaecological cancer.

Clinical trials started in 2005 and it was at this time the clinical trial team began. Fiona is our A/Clinical Research Manager, Trial Manager for the LEGS study and is overseeing the LACE trial while Trudi is on maternity leave. Vanessa is the Trial Manager for the LACC study and Dana is the Nutrition Trial Manager.

Kerry, Anne and Georgina are our Trial Coordinators.

Danielle is our Operations Manager and Lisa is our Business Development Manager.

Merran coordinates our volunteer program.

More recently, Emma joined our team as our Administration Officer and Jackie as our Communications Officer.

We also have two PhD students, Yen and Leonie.

As we are a not-for-profit organisation, this is all possible thanks to kind donations, bequests and fundraising efforts.



## Message from the Director of Research

It's been a busy and productive year here at QCGC Research. We have made great progress towards our goal of developing the best standard of care for women experiencing gynaecological cancer.

We held our very first *Battle Against Ovarian Cancer* beach volleyball event in January and managed to raise more than \$85,000 to support ovarian and gynaecological cancer research activities.

We had just over 200 competitors and in excess of 50 volunteers from nine Lions community clubs around South East Queensland.

The St. George Queensland Reds and the Mission Queensland Firebirds went head to head in a nail biting exhibition match, with the Reds claiming victory. The Battle was held at Olympic champion Natalie Cook's Sandstorm arena.

Natalie participated on the day by warming the players up, jumping on court with many of the teams, posing for photos and refereeing the exhibition match (with hilarious commentary!)



The dedicated people who helped us achieve such an outstanding result have made a difference that will directly support women experiencing ovarian and gynaecological cancer. My heartfelt thanks goes out to each of you.

The Battle was such a success that planning is already underway for our next event in early 2013, set to be even bigger and better. Details will appear in our next newsletter. We hope to see you there!

We held our second Gynaecological Cancer Information Session in February at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Our guest speaker was Tony Ryan, an Australian learning consultant, writer and husband of a cancer survivor. Tony spoke from the heart about his experience with gynaecological cancer from a husband's point of view.

Information about our next session, planned for early next year, will feature in our next newsletter.

### Prof Andreas Obermair

Director of Research  
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QCGC Research 6th Level Ned Hanlon Building, Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital, Herston Qld 4029



## Helping the Professor

By June Cavanaugh

For the second year in a row, I have been fortunate to present Professor Obermair with a cheque to help QCGC Research.

Once again the wonderful ladies of Zonta, Hervey Bay, supported February's Ovarian Cancer Month by hosting a "Flicks for Chicks" night at our local cinema. 137 ladies attended and had a wonderful evening.

Money was raised through raffles (organised by Zonta), ribbon sales and donations (even Derek, the owner of the movie theatre chipped in \$300 to the cause.)

All in all, this year's cheque was \$1000.

It is always special to see what ladies can achieve when they support other women, and if we think of the work QCGC Research does, it is of great benefit to ALL of us ladies.

Please lend your support by hosting an event, having fun and sending those much needed dollars to help 'MY Professor' and his team find ways to save other women from the journey we never wanted to take, but are soldiering on nonetheless.

Hugs to you all.

## SUNSHINE STATE SISTERS

*For Inspiration and Support*

We are friendship groups for gynaecological cancer patients and survivors. We connect patients, families and friends for support and inspiration.

We have groups meeting monthly in Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, and Hervey Bay. Women come to our coffee meetings from as far as Mullimbimby, Redcliffe, Yandina and the Atherton Tablelands to join us for a coffee and a chat.

QCGC Research takes a great interest in our activities, and helps us to link women who are travelling on the same journey.

The **Brisbane** group meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

Phone Merran on mobile 0437 088 366 or email [merran.williams@uq.edu.au](mailto:merran.williams@uq.edu.au) for more information.

Our **Sunshine Coast** group, the Sunny Coast Sisters, meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 2.00 pm. Please call Merran on 0437 088 366 or Sharlene on 0417 664 135 for more details.

The **Gold Coast** Sunshine Sisters meet on the second Thursday of the month at 10.00am at Kirra. Please call Carolyn for more details on mobile 0419 663 188.

The **Hervey Bay** "Hugs" group meet monthly in different venues. Please call June on (07) 4124 6190 to find out more.

## Educating the World

Professor Obermair travelled to the Covidien Clinical Institute in Shanghai, China to attend the first International Gynaecologic Cancer Society (IGCS) Covidien Surgical Workshop on 3 and 4 July.

Covidien, a leading international surgical device manufacturer, partnered with IGCS to deliver this world first event. IGCS is committed to the prevention, treatment, and study of gynaecological cancer, as well as improving the quality of life among women with gynaecological cancer, throughout the world.

Professor Obermair organised and ran a series of workshops to share his knowledge about recent developments in gynaecological cancer surgery as well as the management of surgical complications. Surgeons from Asia were offered an exclusive opportunity to expand their technical skills in a state-of-the art facility.

The workshop was a success and those surgeons are now able to provide better care to women experiencing gynaecological cancer in Asia. This is yet another example of Professor Obermair's unwavering dedication to finding and providing the best standard of care for women with gynaecological cancer.

## Patient Profile—Jennifer McDuff

I am an artist and art teacher. In April 2007, I was diagnosed with stage two Grade B endometrial cancer. It came as quite a shock. I had been walking 10km a day and kept very good health. These things just don't happen to you.

My world is normally coloured by observations of art, teaching others to really see their surroundings and all the while discovering it for myself.

In May 2007, I was faced with travelling to Brisbane. Finding somewhere for my husband to stay at short notice, meeting Prof Obermair and the thought of surgery was daunting to say the least. I hadn't drawn breath let alone consider what lay ahead.

Everything blurred like one of the Impressionist paintings. When walking into the rooms at Greenslopes Hospital I spied a small print by Gustav Klimt, "The Kiss." It is an abstracted art work of a couple embracing. They are clothed by a cloak made up of geometric shapes and the liberal use of gold, which gives it a beacon-like appearance. I was drawn to it and somewhat soothed. It is at this point that I tell you I became less scared.

I had agreed to be part of the LACE (Laparoscopic Approach to Carcinoma of the Endometrium) research program.

After the operation, I didn't require radiation or chemotherapy and found the support from all the staff exceptional. Over the five years since the cancer diagnosis, I have seen women who are not so fortunate. Each day we draw breath, someone, somewhere, doesn't. The statistics don't lie.

Five years is a long time and in a small conclusion to this part of my life, last year I went to Vienna to see "The Kiss" for myself; it is a truly beautiful painting in the "flesh." I am reminded of a quote by Edgar Degas who said, "art is not what you see; but what makes others see."

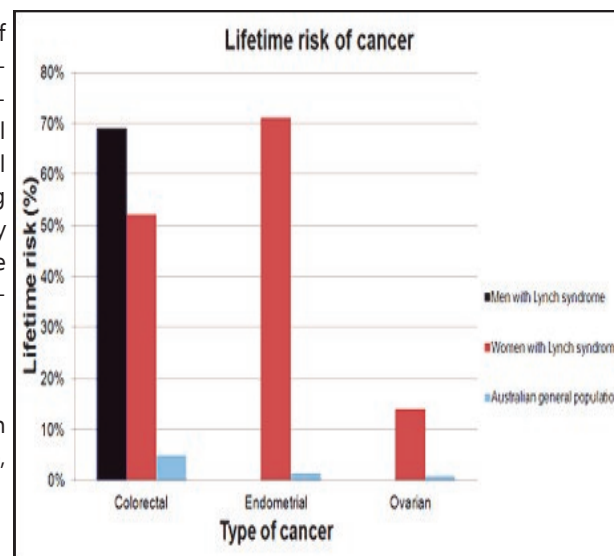
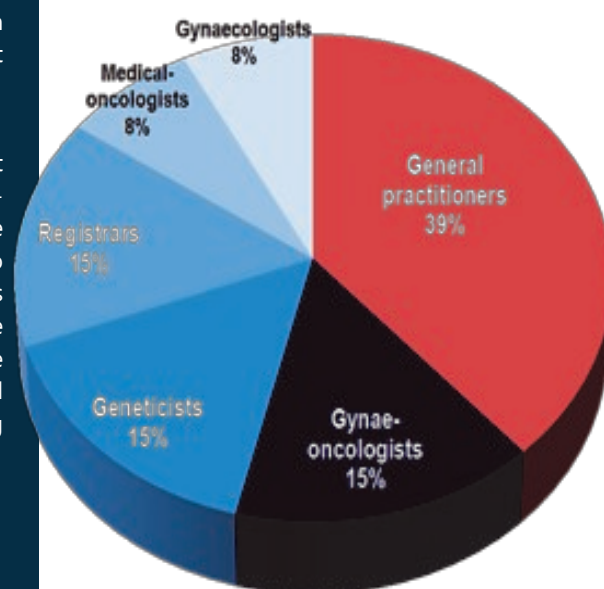
I would like to think that I have taken something from this experience and can apply it in the same manner as I do my art work, with an honesty and integrity, a curiosity for further learning and an understanding that every individual will approach it differently.



## eMBRACE & LYNCH SYNDROME

Lynch syndrome accounts for approximately 5% of all endometrial cancers. Whilst both men and women with Lynch syndrome have a high risk of developing colorectal cancer, women face the additional lifetime risk of up to 71% of developing endometrial cancer and another 14% lifetime risk of developing ovarian cancer. Despite the increased risk, many women who either have, or are suspected to have Lynch syndrome and are eligible for genetic assessment, are not being referred by their treating clinician.

Results from the eMBRACE study conducted by Yen Tan, a PhD student from our research centre,



showed that only 3% of women were referred for genetic assessment, and most were referred by general practitioners and gynaecological oncologists.

Young age and a positive family history were complementary selection criteria for the identification of Lynch syndrome. This suggests a need for improved identification and facilitation of referral. Further research is now being conducted to investigate the barriers of referral. Clinicians in several specialties have been interviewed regarding their attitudes toward genetic services and their reasons for referral. Through understanding the barriers clinicians face in their daily practice, we hope to improve management and reduction in morbidity for women and their families in the future..