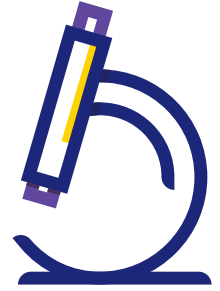


Cancer Trials Management Scheme Competitive Grants

Fostering innovation in cancer to save lives and ensure equitable access to clinical trials for all Victorians.



Clinical trial projects we fund

Project: Equity of access to “state-of-the-art” clinical trials for every patient.

Aim: To improve patient access to high-quality cancer radiation therapy clinical trials in regional and suburban areas

Grant recipient: Professor Michael MacManus, University of Melbourne

Funded by: Cancer Council Victoria and the Department of Health through the Victorian Cancer Agency

Years funded: 2017 - 2019

The project

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre is the largest single-institution provider of radiotherapy treatment in Australia. It has a large central campus in Parkville, three suburban campuses (Moorabbin, Box Hill and Sunshine) and one regional campus (Bendigo).

Due to its size, available resources and distance from universities and laboratories, the suburban and regional campuses have less capacity to develop research without external assistance. However, despite being smaller and having differences in radiotherapy technology, these campuses provide essential cancer treatment close to patients' homes.

The project aimed to increase the opportunities for cancer patients at regional and suburban campuses to gain access to state-of-the-art clinical trials involving radiotherapy, ensuring that they would have similar opportunities compared to patients at Peter Mac's central campus.

“This is an exciting time in radiotherapy research with new technologically advanced techniques and novel combinations of immunotherapies and radiation that show great promise for the future”.

– Prof Michael MacManus.

The need

It is well known that hospitals that have an active research culture and recruit patients to clinical trials have, on average, better treatment and patient outcomes compared to non-research centres. This is in part due to the attention to detail and close management of patients that are consistent with participating in a clinical trial.

The portfolio of clinical trials that are accessible to patients varies widely across the different radiotherapy campuses at Peter Mac, depending on the availability of trial coordinator support.

The overwhelming need with this project was to capitalise on having multiple campuses for patients to access radiotherapy trials and shared infrastructure, including trial coordinators, across these facilities.

The impact

This grant has increased the research activity at the campuses, thereby improving equity of access to clinical trials for suburban and regional patients. As a result, the numbers of patients enrolled in clinical trials has also increased, especially in the early years of this grant.

It's provided a degree of certainty to the employment for our trial coordinators and thus ensured that trials could be sustained during the funding period. It's fostered a research culture in our campuses, which will be supported from our central hub at Parkville going forward.

“Clinical trials in radiation oncology are predominantly funded through competitive grants from government or charities and are typically for single projects. What is unique and special about the Cancer Trials Management Scheme grant funding is that it supports the infrastructure needed for multiple clinical trials and thus builds capacity, helping to level the playing field for radiotherapy patients.” – Prof Michael MacManus.