



March
2017

Our supporters and followers are an integral part of the journey towards an Alzheimer's free world.

Whether you have been with us since our inception in 2001, or have only joined us recently, we are all striving for the essential significant medical breakthrough.

We are grateful for the generous funding that you, our most valued supporters and advocates provide, to help us carry on with our shared vision.

Thank you for your continued support as together we fight for memories.

Exciting changes

You may have noticed a slight difference with this newsletter edition. We've had an exciting name change and we're now the Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation. For more information, and to hear supporter Malcolm McCusker talk about the change, visit www.alzheimers.com.au/foundation-new-name

\$1.125 million for Alzheimer's research

Alzheimer's isn't a normal part of the aging process. Although the disease is commonly known to affect older people in our community, this isn't always the case. Early onset Alzheimer's can affect people as young as 30 years old. This rare group often inherits a gene mutation which means they develop Alzheimer's at a young age.

Some families who carry this gene mutation are part of the Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer's Network (DIAN) study. This international effort gives a unique opportunity to compare individuals who develop Alzheimer's disease as a result of this mutation, with family members who are not carriers.

Because it is believed that an extended period of time exists between the brain beginning to develop Alzheimer's and the cognitive decline that leads to diagnosis, the participation of these high risk families is vital to view how the disease develops in a shorter time frame.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recently awarded a \$1.125 million grant to Professor Martins through Edith Cowan University. This contribution is an exciting step towards understanding this form of Alzheimer's.

The grant will be used to investigate blood biomarkers for the diagnosis of pre-clinical Alzheimer's disease within the Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer Network study group.

The vital knowledge gained will provide information for other types of dementia, leading to better tests to detect Alzheimer's and providing the next step towards developing dementia treatments.

Although there are differences between dominantly inherited Alzheimer's disease and the more common age-associated disease, the results of this study will have far reaching implications for future studies and treatments in all Alzheimer's diseases.



Professor Ralph Martins continues the vital work into Alzheimer's disease



Tonya McCusker AM and Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC

Recognising big hearts

As one of our generous supporters you are well aware of the vital role medical research will play in discovering a cure and treatments for Alzheimer's disease. We've always known our supporters are remarkable, but now one of our longest-term family of supporters has been recognised nationally.

The Research Australia Health and Medical Research Awards honour some of the country's top minds and big hearts for their incredible contributions to research. At the 2016 award ceremony the McCusker Charitable Foundation were awarded the Great Australian Philanthropy Award.

The trustees of the Foundation, Malcolm McCusker, Carolyn McCusker, Tonya McCusker and Justice James Edelman, have dedicated three decades to a diverse range of health and medical research.

Inspired by Sir James McCusker's (Malcolm and Carolyn's late father) own generosity, family members have dedicated much of their lives to philanthropy with the view to sharing their family's wealth with the broader community. This continued philanthropic legacy has supported a wide range of worthy causes including significant support to Alzheimer's care and research.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of the McCusker family.

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Macquarie University partnership

In line with our new strategic plan adopted in early 2016, the Foundation is fostering relationships with research institutions in other parts of Australia. One emerging relationship is with Macquarie University, Sydney.

This young, forward thinking university is committed to medical research and has identified dementia as a particular research priority. In line with this it has appointed our Director of Research ECU Professor Ralph Martins to a significant part time position.

The Foundation is currently negotiating a shared research fellowship to benefit one of our early career researchers. We hope to announce these details soon.

In an environment where competition is fierce and money tight Australia wide, collaboration with like-minded research entities is fundamental to ensure the best possible research outcomes.



Will training for the 2017 Rottneest Channel Swim

Our Heroes

Will's swim to Rotto

The Rottneest Channel Swim is an iconic event in Western Australia taking place in February each year, with many generous swimmers also raising funds for their favourite charity.

Will is one of our Everyday Heroes. This year, not only did he decide to swim 19.7km to Rottneest Island, but he raised funds for Alzheimer's disease research while he did it.

As a nursing student, Will recently went on an aged care prac. He saw first-hand the effects Alzheimer's disease has on people's lives, both the devastating impact on individuals and their surrounding family and friends. The fact that there is no cure or better treatments hit Will hard. So he decided to do something about it and help the researchers at the Foundation find a cure.

To kick off his fundraising he promised his supporters an added incentive - to shave his strawberry blond locks down to a number 1 when he reached \$500! Of course his family and friends rallied to help Will start fundraising for his goal of \$3,000, and to see his dramatic new look. The "luscious locks" he took such pride in were shaved. Then for a bit more fun the little hair remaining was dyed blond.

People like Will are instrumental in our journey to reach our goal - a cure, better treatments, and easier diagnosis.

By all accounts the swim was a tough one this year with strong currents and choppy water. After the race Will shared, "It was smooth sailing until the halfway point, then it got a little hairy. The currents really picked up and made it a bit tougher. But despite that I was really happy with how the day went!"

Will impressively finished second in the solo division with a time of 05:01:17:26.

Thank you to Will and to all our amazing heroes for their support.

"Unfortunately people like you and me can be diagnosed with this disease even as young as the ripe age of 30. There is no cure at the moment, but I believe the cool cats at the Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation are working double time to ensure a cure is found."

WILL, MARCH 2017

Will training for the 2017 Rottneest Channel Swim



Fundraise to save memories

Unfortunately too many people have suffered from Alzheimer's or seen the effects of the disease in a loved one. But with numbers comes strength, and many people who have seen their family members or friends affected by Alzheimer's generously join the fight for memories.

There are many ways you can promote and fundraise for the Foundation. You can run your own event, take part in an activity such as a fun run, or use your contacts to promote our research. We would be very grateful if you too choose to join the fight to save memories.

You can set up your own online fundraising page to help raise funds for Alzheimer's disease research through Everyday Hero, or download a Friends of the Foundation pack to see how your fundraising idea can become a reality. Visit us at www.alzheimers.com.au/support/fundraise.

Generous Business

We are very fortunate to have a number of respected organisations providing long term support of Alzheimer's research through the Foundation.

Thank you to **Lotterywest, Radio 6IX, Wesfarmers, The West Australian,** and **Lions Clubs.**

Can you take part in a Clinical Trial?

The Foundation is currently seeking participants for a number of clinical trials. These trials are for participants diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or mild cognitive impairment.

Please visit:
www.alzheimers.com.au/our-work/current-clinical-trials for more information. Or call Paula, clinical study coordinator, on 08 9389 6433 for a confidential discussion.



The big move gets closer

The date for our exciting move into the Ralph and Patricia Sarich Neuroscience Research Institute (NRI) is moving closer.

If you have visited one of our four current sites in the past, you will be well aware that the new facility will be a more modern and comfortable work environment. But this new environment means so much more than a new place for our researchers to work.

We are at the leading edge in our fight against Alzheimer's. To maintain our edge and meet the challenge we are faced with, we need to grow and seize every advantage. We need to become the world class research facility that we have the potential to be.

The NRI is our opportunity to consolidate our research team into a world class facility designed to house five of the state's premier neurological research organisations. This will foster interaction, collaboration and innovation, while reducing duplication across a diverse group of neuroscience specialists.

Our team will be able to build on their fledgling work with Ear Science Institute Australia examining the very important link between hearing loss and dementia. They will be able to expand on current work sharing methodologies with similar neurodegenerative disease research groups, opening new opportunities for the research we support.

We will be able to collaborate with Parkinson's disease researchers at the Perron Institute (formerly WANRI), recognising that frequently, features of both diseases are found together in the one person. We will be able to further investigate the relationship between Alzheimer's disease and diseases like diabetes with partners at Curtin University.

This interaction, collaboration and innovation is vital across this diverse group of neuroscience specialists.

Your support has got us this far. But we still have a way to go. Your ongoing support will help to preserve the memories, intellect, reasoning, social skills and physical functioning of those that might develop Alzheimer's disease in the future.

Your support will help us meet our goal to move into the NRI, but more importantly it will help us ensure Alzheimer's never destroys another identity. It will not steal memories, independence or dignity. There will be effective treatments. There will be a cure. Ultimately it will never be fatal.

You can ensure the golden years of one million Australians will be spent exactly how they want.

Will you be part of the future significant medical breakthrough that makes Alzheimer's a distant memory?





Leave a gift in your Will

Has a family member or friend been affected by Alzheimer's disease? We wish that our vision for an Alzheimer's disease free world was a reality in time to make a difference to them now. But just because it isn't a reality right now, doesn't mean we won't keep trying. Our researchers will keep going until we have earlier diagnosis tools, better treatments and ultimately, a cure.

But to do that, we are asking for help.

You can play a vital role in reaching an Alzheimer's free world. Will you consider including a gift to the Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation in your Will?

If you are considering leaving a gift to support Alzheimer's research in your Will, or just have a few questions about how to go about it, please contact the Development Manager on phone **08 9347 4200** for a confidential discussion, or return the form below with the appropriate box ticked.

Do we have your email?

With your generous support we will stop this insidious disease in its tracks. You are part of the future significant medical breakthrough that makes Alzheimer's a distant memory.

We take pride in making sure we are utilising your gifts wisely.

To ensure we continue to strive for efficiency and financial accountability we are moving towards more electronic communication for those that prefer to receive information this way. As we collect more email addresses we get closer to being able to produce an email version of the newsletter - if that's your preference.

If you prefer receiving mail from us in your mailbox not your email folder, we'll continue to reach out using the postal service.

Please let us know if we can add your email address to our mailing list. Email us on admin@alzheimers.com.au with your updated contact details.

Contact us

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THANK YOU

Thank you for your support and interest in Alzheimer's disease research. Together we will continue to work towards an Alzheimer's free world.

Yes, I will join the fight for memories!

Make a donation by:

- Calling **08 9347 4200**
- Visiting our website: alzheimers.com.au
- Mailing the completed form in the envelope provided to:
**Suite 22, Hollywood Medical Centre
85 Monash Ave, Nedlands WA 6009**

Title _____ First Name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Suburb _____ Post Code _____

Phone _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

I would like to make a donation of:

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 **OR** \$ _____

OR I would like to make an ongoing credit card donation of:

\$ _____ every _____ month/s

Credit Card (Visa/Mastercard) Cheque

Cheque made payable to Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation

Card Number: _____

Card Holder's Name: _____

Expiry: Signature: _____

Please send me more information on leaving a gift to Australian Alzheimer's Research Foundation in my Will.

Please unsubscribe me from your mailing list.

Thank you! A receipt will be sent to you. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.