

RTN-Vic

Regional Trials Network - Victoria

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RTN-Vic

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Reflecting on 2023, looking forward to 2024

As we reach the mid-point of the project ReViTALISE the RTN-Vic is seeing increased cross institutional and cross initiative approaches creating additional benefit for RTN-Vic Members

As we start 2024 it's important to take stock of the amazing accomplishments for 2023 across the network as we strive to create equitable access and outcomes for rural and regional oncology patients.

Registry and Immunotherapy have combined to work on the OPTION registry trial, with a database developed by Grampians Health & Bendigo Health, OPTION is currently in Ethics with help from RTN member Cancer Trials Australia.

The Geriatric Oncology Initiative has completed three roadshows across Victoria and are gearing up to complete more in 2024. The roadshows demonstrate how geriatric assessment has been put into practice at a busy regional cancer centre, and why it is important to the care of older adults. Keep an eye out for the next round of roadshows in 2024.

The Palliative team have completed a baseline site census to understand capability across the network, and have created a trial management group with regular meetings. Palliative and supportive care trials are underway at regional sites, with the first Palliative study being opened at Warrnambool.

2024 will see an initiative evaluation of the ReViTALISE project stands as a whole and a potential readjustment of outcomes to ensure future sustainability and impact, but clearly finding a way to preserve these inter relationships is key to the long term success of the broader network.



Co-Design underway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples Initiative

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's initiative has ended 2023 with 2 new staff members on board.

Leah Lindreah-Morrison is a proud Yorta-Yorta woman and joins us as the Aboriginal Research Assistant, and has hit the ground running, creating literature to help explain and invite involvement in the initiative across Victoria.

Monica Green joins us as Research Co-Investigator, starting at the end of 2023. We welcome them both.

The initiative is currently conducting an environmental scan of current cancer clinical trial engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and compiling a database of health organisations that regularly engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This work will then be used as the basis for an on-the-ground pilot study this year focussed on listening to and learning from community to build bridges and overcome barriers to cancer clinical trial access.

WHAT IS A CANCER CLINICAL TRIAL?

Cancer Clinical Trials are research studies that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can participate in if they want to. It is looking at new ways (interventions) to diagnose, treat and manage cancer.

WHY IS RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

It helps researchers learn more about cancer and ways to treat it. We want our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer diagnosis, to have the best opportunity to live longer and enjoy life for generations to come.

WHY GET INVOLVED IN RESEARCH?

To improve cancer outcomes and experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a cancer diagnosis, carers and survivors living in regional, rural and remote areas.

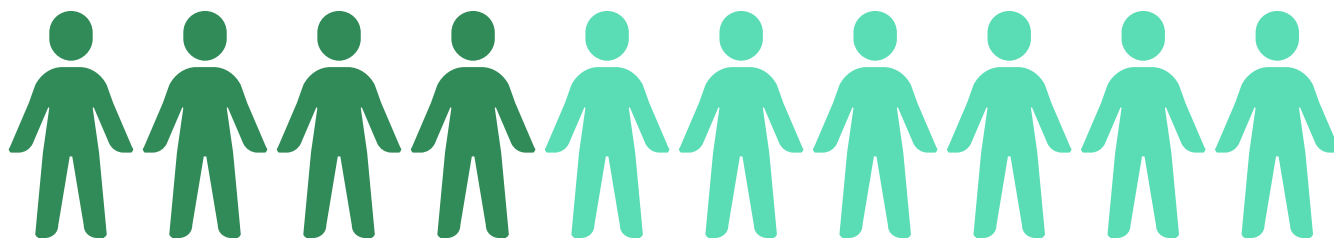
WHAT IS NEEDED?

To hear voices from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are patients with cancer, survivors, families and carers to find out what limits them in participating in clinical trials in regional, rural and remote Victoria and to find solutions to stop roadblocks. We want to have a yarning circle with you!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- 1 ATTEND A YARNING SESSION AND/OR INDIVIDUALLY AND SHARE YOUR STORIES WITH THE ABORIGINAL RESEARCHER
- 2 YOU CAN LET US KNOW IF YOU KNOW ABOUT CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS
- 3 YARN ABOUT YOUR THOUGHTS ON CLINICAL TRIALS
- 4 YARN ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH CLINICAL TRIALS
- 5 SHARE YOUR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT THE HEALTH SERVICES





RTN has demonstrated increased patient access in new Geographic areas

At both ends of the state of Victoria, initiatives led by the RTN-Vic have resulted in patients being able to participate in research without leaving home.

2023 has seen a huge improvement in regional patient access with both Latrobe Regional hospital in Gippland in the state's South East, and Mildura Base Hospitals in the state's North West both reaching major research milestones, with help from RTN-Vic and Alfred TrialHub.

Latrobe, under the leadership of Dr Trisha Wright, and Jhodie Duncan, have achieved the milestone of First Patient Visit in Australia on an international Advanced Melanoma trial.

Achieving first patient demonstrate that the systems and processes Latrobe's team have implemented are not only able to run trials, but have developed the systems and processes they need to start-up trials efficiently.

The real result is that patients are able to receive cutting edge treatment options without leaving their area health service.

Mildura Base Hospital has reached the historic milestone of recruiting their first Oncology Patient to a research trial, ahead of both RTN and ReViTALISE targets.

Mildura Base Hospital services a rural population of approximately 80,000 Victorians and is a referral centre for smaller regional services in the North West of Victoria, providing research access to these Victorians represents a major strategic step in outcomes across the state.

Dr Krishna Rachakonda and the team are excited to welcome Gemma Madigan to the team as research nurse.

Regional Research Teaching Hub ready to soft launch

The Regional Research Teaching Hub (RRTH) has made considerable gains in the past few months

Highlights include:

- a rebrand, courtesy of a talented design company, from RRTH to @research
- collation and development of a website, working in partnership with a brilliant web designer
- three academic manuscripts, currently in draft form, aiming for publication in 2024
- engagement with stakeholders, and particularly with consumer group, Every Voice; and collaboration with the Nurse-led Research Hub (VCCC Alliance) to co-deliver two online practice change workshops (June/August 2023)

Our most exciting news is the upcoming launch of @research!

Many of you will have participated in interviews in 2021-23 with Tennille Lewin where you were asked for your insights into the needs of regional researchers. We are thrilled to announce that we are making steady progress towards the launch of a website in response to feedback, and our extensive scoping reviews.

In late February we look forward to welcoming you to @research, your virtual regional research training network.

Look out for our logo in the coming months. Contact Tennille Lewin and Heather Cameron at
E: research@regionaltrialsnetwork.org



Tennille Lewin leading August 2023 practice change workshop

@research will deliver research training resources for Victorian healthcare professionals working across regional, rural and remote communities.

@research aims to:

- access to research education and training opportunities
- Build research skills to transform care
- Enable development of regional research networks and collaborations
- Increase and strengthen consumer involvement in research



RTN-Vic members

[Grampians Health](#)

[Barwon Health](#)

[Bendigo Health](#)

[Border Medical Oncology
Research Unit](#)

[Cancer Trials Australia](#)

[Latrobe Regional Hospital](#)

[Goulburn Valley Health](#)

[Mildura Base Public Hospital](#)

[South West Healthcare](#)

RESOURCES

National Clinical Trial Governance Framework

VCCC Teletrials information & resources

Thank you to our Sponsors

Commonwealth Governments Medical Research Future Fund – National Critical Infrastructure Initiative, 2019 Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Infrastructure grant for the ReViTALISE Project of \$18.6 million



The Victorian Government through the Victorian Cancer Agency grant for the Improving Rural Health Outcomes Initiative of \$2.4 million



Thank you to our partners



Success is not final;
Failure is not fatal: It is the
courage to continue that
counts

Winston S. Churchill



Bridging the metropolitan regional trials gap by 2025