

Office Bearers

Patron: Her Excellency, The Governor of Tasmania
Professor The Honourable Kate Warner AC

President Deirdre Tuck OAM

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President's Message

Over the past several months, the Executive and Committee of DCLFT have spent considerable time reviewing the Foundation's day to day operations in regard to our business practices and services to support patients with leukaemia and associated diseases in Tasmania.

Our first area of review was our patient accommodation facility at David Collins House, in Lutana – a suburb of Hobart. After due diligence and consideration, it has been decided by the Executive and Committee that David Collins House will close and be sold.

This decision was not taken lightly as it has been part of DCLFT's mission to support leukaemia patients' accommodation needs for the past 32 years (1985-2017).

In making this decision we considered the steady decline in the use of the facility over recent years as well as the increasing costs of municipal rates, water and electricity. Another factor is the cost incurred of cleaning the unit to comply with current infection control guidelines.

We are also mindful that the current government and Minister for Health are considering utilising hotel accommodation nearby to hospitals for non-critical patients requiring overnight stays. Treatments for leukaemia patients tend to support this concept which is used internationally and in other states of Australia.

Following our assessment, it was clear that the on-costs out-weighed the income for David Collins House. Our intention is to invest the monies from the sale of David Collins House and to continue to support our other areas of interest such as professional development awards, patient financial assistance and research.

The Foundation is proud of its record of providing the facility in Hobart. Our records indicate that we have provided this service to over 600 patients and carers over the last 32 years. It is the end of an era.

The climate in health care has changed over the past decades and the Foundation needs to respond to those changes. We will continue to review our future plans and communicate these to our supporters via newsletters and our web page.

Our long serving ex-President Norm Deane OAM, has been unwell of late and did not nominate for re-election to the Committee for 2017. Norm was elected inaugural President of DCLFT in 1980. Since that time Norm has given unswerving service to the Committee and to the people who have been supported by the Foundation. Thank you is an inadequate but sincere sentiment to acknowledge Norm's contribution. We wish both Norm and Jean well for the future.

Finally, thank you for all your continued support without which, we could not continue the vital work of the Foundation.

Deirdre Tuck OAM

David Collins Leukaemia Foundation of Tasmania 2017 Subscriptions are now due.

Pensioner \$5.00

Family \$10.00



The Secretary David Collins Leukaemia Foundation of Tasmania GPO Box 372 Hobart 7001

Name _____

Address _____

Please find enclosed Subscription for 2017. Please tick - **Pensioner** \$5.00 **Family** \$10.00 **Donation** _____

Professional Development Awards 2017 have been recently announced.

The successful applicants were:

- Anita Oakley - Social Worker, Calvary St John's Hospital - \$1,500.00 to attend Post Graduate Course Unit – Counselling Skills 1 that is offered through the Faculty of Medicine (Psychology) at UTAS.
- Cath Youl and Deborah Foster - Nursing Staff, Gibson Unit Calvary St John's Hospital - \$1,500.00 Study Day titled "Advanced Communication Skills" presented by Dr Robyn Thomas and assisted by a local actor for 25 participants.
- Nic Hobbs - Social Worker, Royal Hobart Hospital - \$2,190.00 Study Day for 25 state wide members of the Tasmanian Oncology & Palliative Care Social Workers.

Congratulations to everyone involved.

Haematology Cancer Care Coordinators (HCCC)

The position of Haematology Cancer Care Coordinators in hospitals is a relatively new concept.

In 2013 the DCLFT provided financial assistance to introduce the position at the Royal Hobart Hospital and has continued to financially support the position ever since. The position has enormous potential to improve the journey of patients with blood cancers. The diagnosis of haematological cancer entails an intensive diagnostic workup and increasingly complex treatment regimes. Treatment of the cancer is often multimodal with multiple, often complex treatments over an extended period. These experiences and any failures of co-ordination increase the risk of patients experiencing fragmented care, heighten levels of anxiety and reduction in quality of life and may result in suboptimal management.

The benefits of the HCCC for patients (and their families) are multiple. They include:

- having a single and easily accessible point of contact
- co-ordinating patient appointments for investigations and treatments which ensures a seamless transition during different phases of treatment including inpatient and outpatient settings
- ensuring consistency and quality of care
- identifying areas for improvement in care coordination and implementing these changes
- providing ongoing support and education.

The position of HCCC at the RHH has been accepted as highly beneficial to patients, their families and the hospital. RHH is now going to provide the finance to make the position permanent. We are very pleased to have been part of this very important project and thank the staff at the RHH for their efforts and dedication in supporting the position to a positive conclusion.

In March 2016, the DCLFT entered into a similar agreement with the Gibson Unit at Calvary St John's Hospital to support a HCCC for three years. It is a shared appointment which is having remarkable results for patient outcomes and hospital efficiency and indications are that St John's will continue with the position.

The Foundation is also funding the position of a Data Manager for Haematological Cancer Registries to perform data management activities one day per week within the clinical trial unit of the Department of Haematology and Medical Oncology at the RHH for a period of three years. The information collected is passed on to the National Haematological Cancer Registries to assist with healthcare planning, enables tissue banking for current and future research, facilitates translational research and plan future studies. The ultimate aim is to improve patient outcomes. It is expected that the RHH will accept the responsibility to finance this position at the conclusion of the three years.

DCLFT Elite Research Scholarship

Ms Alexandra Woolworth a PhD student and the recipient of the above scholarship which was donated by a generous anonymous benefactor in 2015 is continuing her studies of blood related illnesses at the University of Tasmania Medical Science Precinct. The Project is titled "Epigenetic and transcriptional regulation of leukaemia." The Foundation has received a progress report from Alexandra which indicates the project is progressing well. A second report is due at the end of 2017 and the final report is expected at the end of 2018.

Professor Greg Woods PhD, FFSc (RCPA)

Greg has officially retired from the University of Tasmania and the Menzies Research Institute. To celebrate his achievements in teaching, and his tireless contribution to research in Tasmania, he addressed a Special Head of School Seminar titled "A lifelong journey via T cells and dendritic cells to a devil of a destination" on Friday 28th July. Several members of the DCLFT were able to attend the seminar.

Greg came to Hobart in 1978 after studying science at Monash University in Melbourne to take up a role as a graduate assistant at the University of Tasmania in the Department of Medicine under the guidance of Professor Ray Lowenthal AO. In 1981. Greg was awarded the DCLFT's inaugural research grant titled "The effect of drugs on T-lymphocyte colonies". Although he has retired from full time duties he intends to continue his research work with the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease project.

In 1992, he was elected to our committee and in 2012 he became Vice President - a position he continues to hold today. Greg has been our representative on the Cancer Council of Tasmania Research Committee for several years and has been a great asset to the Foundation. We value his presence amongst us and wish him and his wife Rhonda all the best in their retirement.