

# What's News

WELCOME TO THE WINTER EDITION OF

What's News

FOR 2021.



Prof. Arlene Chan AM Medical  
Oncologist MB BS, FRACP, MMed  
(Palliative Care)

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the appointment of Mr. Jose Cid Fernandez as the new Chairperson, Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA. Jose is a Specialist Breast Surgeon and a valued member of the PBCI and we look forward to working alongside Jose as the new Chairperson of Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA (Page 3).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Peter Willsher, who has served as our Chairman for the last twelve years. His dedication and freely giving of his time has led to significant changes in our organisation's growth from humble beginnings to the current comprehensive breast cancer centre, which I am proud to say is now a reality benefiting the women and men impacted by breast cancer.

In 2021, we have set our sights and focus on education. The growth of our organisation, now encompassing a greater number of specialities, allows us greater

capacity to provide world-class education on breast cancer to the broader community and health professionals.

As part of our commitment to education, we welcome our new resources developed by the PBCI team, with four pamphlets published so far. The growing library of breast-related information includes 'Breast Pain', 'Breast Cysts', 'Breast Lumps' and 'Family History and Breast Cancer', a topic which is also discussed in our medical article on [page 5](#). If you would like more information about our pamphlets, they are available in our rooms and online.

Furthermore, in August we appointed an Education and Liaison Manager to facilitate collaborations between our team and other professional organisations such as Perth Radiological Clinic, Genesis Care, the Australian Medical Association of WA, and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. With these partnerships, we can announce that our GP Breast Disease Education Forum will be held on the 2nd October 2021 and the planning of a community education event has commenced.

With a continued commitment to education, this June I will be holding my yearly talk on metastatic breast cancer available to the community. I am pleased to say that we are at full capacity for this event. However, we look forward to sharing the recording that will be available on our newly developed education web page on our website.

Our PYNKS group (for women and men living with metastatic breast cancer) will also be meeting on the second Tuesday of every month for a new 'Topic and Chat' session. Continuing our focus on education, these sessions will serve to

assist and educate on topics relating to metastatic breast cancer, which have been identified as of interest by the PYNKS group. These educational sessions will be held at the PBCI Boardroom and will be available to all our PYNKS members. If you are a patient under the care of the PBCI living with metastatic disease and would like to become a PYNKS member, please call us on 08 6500 5501 .

In research news, this year we are also very pleased to have developed the Resilience in Adolescents and Young Adults Study (RAYS) with our two qualified and experienced clinical psychologists. This study will assess the benefits of an offspring-centred approach following assessment by one of our clinical psychologists. RAYS follows our Breast Cancer Offspring Study (BCOS) published at the end of 2019 that found that more than a third of adolescent and young adult children of a parent diagnosed with breast cancer suffered from high levels of emotional distress. The study

identified areas of need for offspring of a parent with breast cancer that included wanting more information about the parent's breast cancer and avenues for support within the family.

In this edition of What's News, we have the privilege to share the patient story of Julie Abbott. Julie has remained positive throughout her treatment and participated in the City to Surf to fundraise for BCRC-WA. You can read Julie's story on [page 4](#).

Lastly, I would like to thank you all again for your valued support and I look forward to sharing our news in the next edition, which will mark our first anniversary since we opened Perth Breast Cancer Institute.



Julie Abbott



Dr Claire Beecroft

## THE JOURNEY TO BECOME

*a specialist....*

I did not always know I wanted to be a Medical Oncologist. I am now excited however, to be completing my final year of advanced training to become a fully qualified Oncologist in 2022. My journey began in 2012 when I was a fresh intern at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. I loved being a doctor, but I struggled initially to know where I wanted to focus my passion. Radiology was a no, there was not enough patient interaction for me. Emergency department work was unsatisfying because you never got to follow up on any patients, and other specialties came and went similarly. In 2016 I was placed as a registrar on the Medical Oncology team at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. The patients were the most inspiring people I have ever worked with, their strength and determination was amazing to witness. Along with the

wonderful team who all work together to provide exceptional evidence-based care, helped to shape my understanding that this was what I wanted to do. Following my Fellowship exams and two core years of Medical Oncology training, I have been lucky enough to be accepted as a Fellow at the Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA for 2021. The focus here at BCRC-WA is providing world-leading care to patients with breast cancer through local and international clinical trials, which aim to find new treatments to improve patient's outcomes. My role here is to be part of the multi-disciplinary team, overseeing the care of patients on trials, and to have the opportunity to gain more experience in this area, which will help build and shape my career as an Oncologist. I look forward to the rest of this year working with this great team of hard-working people.



## LOOK GOOD FEEL BETTER

*Workshop*

Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA has partnered with Look Good Feel Better to offer their much loved free workshops exclusively to patients under the care of the PBCI.

Fellow not-for-profit, Look Good Feel Better is a free national community service program dedicated to teaching cancer patients how to manage the appearance-related side-effects caused by treatment.

Held in our new location at Hollywood Consulting Centre, our first session on the 18th of May quickly reached full capacity.

The session included free makeup, skin care, tips, tricks and hints.

Look Good Feel Better have held workshops previously for our patients living with Metastatic Breast Cancer, (PYNKS group), receiving rave reviews.

We are delighted to continue to bring Look Good Feel Better makeup and pamper workshops to our patients, and our next sessions will be held on 24 August and 23 November.

### MAPPING YOUR BROWS:

1. Hold the pencil straight up against the dimple of your nose, parallel to the bridge of your nose. This is where your eyebrow should begin. Draw a small dot to mark the spot.
2. To find your arch, place your pencil on the outer portion of your nose, across the centre of the iris and mark it with another small dot.

# Carmelo Arto



I am pleased to bring to you our Winter Edition of 'What's News' for 2021 featuring our June Appeal.

As I read through the pages of our new edition, I am struck by our patient Julie Abbott, who shares her breast cancer diagnosis and the treatment she received under the care of the Perth Breast Cancer Institute. Julie shares a story of hope, which speaks of the trials and tribulations of not only a breast cancer diagnosis but of the highs and lows of a life that does not stop in the meanwhile. I would like to thank Julie for allowing us to have her story as part of our June Appeal and express the great importance of the work that we do at BCRC-WA.

I am also pleased to advise that 'Our State on a Plate' event will now be held on Friday 27th August. In addition, our GP Breast Education Forum has also been postponed to October 2nd. The health and safety of our patients, guests, staff and suppliers is of paramount importance to us at BCRC-WA, and we are pleased that we will be able to hold these great fundraising and educational events soon. 'State on a Plate' will feature Channel Nine television personalities, renowned chef, live music and auction.

Perth Races recently held their Italian Day presented by BCRC-WA. I would like to thank all those involved for their support. We even named a horse race in honour of Professor Arlene Chan!

Our Breast Clinic continues to operate for the benefit of women and men who access this service. We are thrilled to offer our rapid assessment service for issues requiring urgent review, ongoing surveillance and management of benign breast conditions. Our clinic also accepts GP and self-referral. For more information on our breast clinic, visit our website.

We are delighted to continue building awareness in the community through radio and TV exposure. We would like to thank you all for your support thus far, and we look forward to sharing our progress with you in the next edition.

**Carmelo Arto**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Introducing

### THE NEW CHAIRPERSON OF BREAST CANCER RESEARCH CENTRE-WA

We would like to welcome the new Chair of Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA, Mr Jose Cid Fernandez LMS, FRCS(Eng), DM, FRCS(Gen Surg), FRACS.

Jose is a Specialist Breast Surgeon. After graduating from the University of the Basque Country in Spain, Jose underwent general surgical training in the UK before completing a Doctorate in Medicine thesis degree in breast cancer genetics with the University of Nottingham in 2006. He has presented his research at scientific meetings in Australia and Europe, and published over twenty articles and abstracts, including a book chapter in familial breast cancer.

In 2007 Jose came to Perth to undertake sub-specialty fellowship training in Oncoplastic Breast Surgery, then worked as a Consultant Surgeon at the Royal Perth Hospital until January 2020. Whilst at RPH he was Head of the Multidisciplinary Breast Service from 2009 to 2011 and Head of Department of General Surgery during the years 2013-2018.

Since February 2015 he is a staff Consultant at Fiona Stanley Hospital, and he also holds an appointment as Clinical Senior Lecturer at the Medical School, UWA.

We congratulate Jose on his new position of Chair of Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA, with his breast surgery practice located at the Perth Breast Cancer Institute based out of the Hollywood Consulting Centre.



## JULIE'S

# Story

My name is Julie Abbott and this may sound rather strange... but my cancer journey commenced with a guardian angel in December 2017.

It all started when I was woken up in the night a couple of times with my fingers on my breast and I was convinced I had heard a voice telling me to 'go and get that checked.' Following a visit to my GP before Christmas, for a totally unrelated issue, I nearly forgot to mention it. I was examined and informed that a lump was probably nothing, but it was wise to get it checked anyway. Christmas came and went and on the 5th of January 2018, my world turned upside down.

I am a nurse, and as always in healthcare, you look to your colleagues and friends for the very best people in our profession to take care of us. I was so fortunate that everyone to whom I sought advice came up with the same recommendation - Dr Willsher (Specialist Breast Surgeon) and Professor Chan (Medical Oncologist). As a nurse you think you have a good medical knowledge base, but I had to admit that oncology was not my area of expertise and I remember feeling very naive about breast cancer and oncology.

I arranged to see my breast surgeon who conducted some tests. I must admit that I hardly absorbed what he told me. Thankfully, I had taken a dear friend with me (also a nurse) and she took over asking the important questions on my behalf as I sat in a bit of a haze of shock. Following the appointment, I was referred to a specialist breast nurse, Dawn, who was wonderful. She was my shining light that gave me hope. I've never forgotten the words she said to my mum and I before the surgery to ease my anxiety, 'Tuesday you have breast cancer, Wednesday it is removed, and look at the chemo as a cleansing to get rid of anything unwanted,' she said. She has been there for me through this journey and has been amazing.

My treatment took two and a half years of my life, and throughout that time I cannot deny that it has been tough in places. My dad suffered with dementia and I would often take him to my chemo sessions in order to give mum a little break. Sadly, he passed away during my treatment and then my mum was diagnosed with cancer. However, we are a family of fighters and are not giving up yet. How strange life is that I now find myself using my knowledge and experience to help my mum as we fight her battle together and she calls me her guardian angel.

I have not at any point given up and do try to stay positive and busy. I started studying and completed a teaching qualification, bringing my books into the hospital to study whilst having my treatments. The chemo nurses could not believe what I was doing as I pushed on and completed it when I could have so often given up. My family are so proud of my achievement, as am I.

Over the last few years, I have been so pleased to watch BCRC-WA grow. I hope that I have played a small part in this by attending a focus group meeting to share ideas for the new centre. I personally got a lot from the meeting as the ladies present were going through the same experience as myself, albeit at different stages. This really helped, as although you go through this journey with supportive family, friends and colleagues who try to help in so many ways - it can still feel a lonely journey.



It has to be said that the care of my specialists has been overwhelming and to say thank you did not seem enough. I wanted to do something more - so I signed up for the City to Surf 4km walk to raise some money for the excellent work of BCRC-WA. Much to my amazement, my initial target was exceeded and quickly reached \$5000. So, whilst undergoing my treatment, I set off with family (even my sister from England travelled to join me), friends and colleagues to walk the 4km in order to hopefully help others who find themselves in the same position as I did with this dreadful disease.

The team at BCRC-WA are doing an outstanding job to enable people like me to carry on with life. Admittedly life will never be the same again, but that is okay... as I still have that life!

Please support breast cancer research at BCRC-WA, your gift will help save more lives.

Julie Abbott, patient

We're working to increase survival rates, with your support. Please donate today or call our team on +61 8 6500 5501.



Breast cancer is common and affects 1 in every 8 women during their lifetime. For most women, this is the result of chance and is related to ageing. It may also be a result of environmental and lifestyle factors.

Only 5% of breast cancers are thought to occur due to an inherited genetic fault. Genetic faults can be passed down through either the mother's or father's line. Information about a family's history may indicate the likelihood of a genetic fault.

There are three categories of risk associated with family history. Factors affecting these categories include how close the person/s with cancer are to you, how many individuals have had a cancer diagnosis, the age when cancer was diagnosed and if there were more than one diagnosis of cancer in an individual family member. "First-degree" relatives are those in your direct family; a sibling, parent or offspring. "Second-degree" relatives include grandparents, aunts/uncles and cousins.

An example of Category 1 risk would be those people with one first-degree relative aged over 50 diagnosed with breast cancer. Or two second-degree relatives over the age of 50. This category carries the same or slightly-above the average risk of breast cancer as the general population. Most people fall into this category.

Category 2 indicates a moderate increase in risk between 1.5-3 times the average. This category includes individuals with a first-degree family member diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 50, two first-degree relatives diagnosed at any age or two second-degree relatives where at least one was diagnosed before the age of 50. This group comprises fewer than 4% of individuals.

The higher risk Category 3 comprises less than 1% of the population. This category potentially carries a risk of breast cancer which is up to 3 times the average person's lifetime risk. These individuals have two first or second-degree relatives with breast or ovarian cancer (on the same side of the family) plus one of other factors including a male relative with breast cancer or breast cancer diagnosed under the age of 40.

More detailed information about the categories can be found in our Patient Information Brochure on Family History, and can be discussed with your doctor or our Genetic Counsellor.

## HOW CAN I REDUCE MY RISK?

There are several steps a woman can take to reduce her risk of breast cancer such as breastfeeding if possible, having a healthy diet and minimising alcohol intake. Regular physical activity is important, as is avoiding post-menopausal weight gain. Hormonal treatments such as the contraceptive pill and menopause hormone therapy may increase the risk of breast cancer slightly and the benefits and risks should be discussed with a woman's General Practitioner on an individual basis.

High Risk Breast Clinics provide more information on preventive and surveillance options for women who are at increased risk of breast cancer due to their family history. This may include discussions with a Genetic Counsellor, recommendations about preventative surgery or Tamoxifen. Each individual is different and the advice will be tailored to the specific family and individual.

# EXPLORING GOOD MONEY

*Habits*

Financial Advisor and Director, Lighthouse Capital, Julia Schortinghuis shares some 'Good Money Habits' in this article to help our readers better understand their finances.

## A cancer diagnosis can carry concerns relating to costs, temporary loss of income and household budgeting. Julia shares some tips on how to better understand your finances.

Julia with her husband Bernard (the swimmer), were major fundraisers at the 2020 Rottneest Channel Swim.

'What keeps me awake at night is that due to ever increasing regulation and compliance in financial planning which was well intended, the consequence is that the majority of Australians cannot afford to access financial advice – ironically those that need the most assistance. This coupled with the fact that we have one of most complex tax and super systems in the world led me to take action and try to do something about it.

During the first coronavirus lockdown in 2020, I decided to start recording a community podcast, The Good Money Habits Podcast (available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts) with a view to building a timeless vault that can be tapped in and out of by the listeners. Understanding and building knowledge around money is the first step, however in order to make meaningful change, you also need to understand how to develop good habits around money.

Where you spend your money says a lot about what you value and this podcast series is all about guiding you to align how you spend your money with your values. It is also about addressing and removing guilt you may feel around money to free you up to live the life you want to live.

It is never too late to learn and even the tiniest of changes can result in big gains long term. Just start – don't expect to be perfect straight away – be curious and perhaps redefine what "success" means to you.

The first six episodes in Series 1 form the Foundation Series where I cover how to set goals and objectives, the fundamentals of investing, budgeting, superannuation

and insurances. Thereafter I interview my peers and colleagues who are experts in specialist areas like estate planning, divorce, cashflow for small business, aged care, kids and money and understanding managed funds and the mind/money connection .....so much of the way we feel about money and "money blocks" that we all have (myself included) stems from our childhood experiences. Just take a moment right now and think about how money was in your home –

- Was it plentiful?
- Was it talked about?
- Was it scarce?
- Was it a source of anxiety and pressure?

If you have a partner, consider how money was handled in their home (if you don't know it might be useful to ask) because understanding these differences can help you as a couple start to understand why you may react differently in relation to financial decisions.

Money is a key source of anxiety and strain for many and is the leading cause of divorce in Australia. Startling statistics show that on average WA women have less than half the savings of men and a third of WA women retire with zero superannuation. A lesser-known statistic is that 8 out of 10 women who seek support for domestic and family violence have been victims of financial or economic abuse. If this is an area of concern for you or someone you know, an excellent resource for support is the Financial Toolbox website – [www.financialtoolbox.org.au](http://www.financialtoolbox.org.au) which is practical, reliable and easy to understand.

One question I am often asked, is if you are not really interested in money or finances – what are the basics that you should know?

This is my bare bones list and a good place to start:

- Bank logins and how to pay bills
- Understand what you own and how is it owned – for example is it in joint names, family trusts, company name etc
- What do you owe and to whom – do you pay the minimum required on debt repayments or are you paying extra?
- What are your ongoing living costs?
- Do you spend more than you earn or are you able to save?
- If you or your partner (where applicable) were to unexpectedly pass, suffer a total and permanent disablement event or receive a serious health diagnosis – are you protected?
- If you or your partner were to pass what would happen? Do you have a valid Will and where would your assets go?

Having a household budget is important no matter what your income / expense mix as this will enable you to get clarity on what your capacity to save is and from there – how you will deploy those savings in order to grow your wealth.

My final tip is that if you have an accountant, banker and/or financial planner, I strongly encourage you to join the meetings if you don't already do so. Remember that you are their customer, there are no stupid questions and it is their legal obligation to ensure that you understand advice they are providing. '

<https://linktr.ee/juliaschortinghuis>

# NATIONAL

# Volunteer Week

17-23 MAY 2021

This year we are proud to have celebrated our first National Volunteer Week, 17-23 May 2021.

Meet the volunteers who donate their time, skills and experience to Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA.



**MRIDULA** .....

"I volunteer to show my gratitude to Prof Arlene Chan and BCRC-WA for the incredible holistic care they continually provide my mum and to help improve treatment and quality of life outcomes for women with metastatic breast cancer."

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**JANICE** .....

"I consider myself to be one of the 'lucky' ladies to have survived and enjoying a wonderful life...all thanks to the fantastic staff and treatment I received under the guidance of Prof Arlene Chan... my contribution is to give something back to those who gave so much to me and to say, 'thank you'. I also thoroughly enjoy meeting all the gorgeous patients who are so positive whilst they are on their own personal journey."

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**MARIA** .....

"I feel so lucky to be under the care of Prof Arlene Chan and her amazing team and this is my way to give back to this wonderful organisation and show my appreciation for the care and support I have received. Hopefully, I can now make a difference to someone else's life."

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**TRACEY** .....

"I admire and appreciate the dedicated work of Prof Arlene Chan and her team, and volunteering at BCRC-WA enables me to contribute in my own small way."

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**JOYCE** .....

"As a patient of Prof Arlene Chan and her wonderful staff since 2010, I have experienced the commitment and dedication offered within this team. Volunteering for me is a way of saying thank you as well as enabling me to meet remarkable people."

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**RITA** .....

"I am truly blessed to have been cared for by Prof Arlene Chan and her amazing team. Volunteering is one way I can express my gratitude and pay it forward. It reminds me to cherish each day - it is so rewarding and gives me the opportunity to meet so many amazing and inspirational people."

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**ELISE** .....

Elise is a Master of Public Health student who assists with the Helen Sewell Tumour Bank. We say thank you to Elise and to all our greatly appreciated volunteers."

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breast cancer  
research centre-wa  
Incorporating Perth Breast Cancer Institute

PYNKS is a supportive group for patients under the care of the Perth Breast Cancer Institute living with metastatic or advanced breast cancer.

PYNKS derives its name from Positive, Young, Nurturing Kids/family focused, Strength-giving; these words sum up BCRC-WA's warm, friendly and welcoming social group.

Join our PYNKS each month to share and connect with other like-minded people who can provide understanding and support.

Please email [info@bcrc-wa.com.au](mailto:info@bcrc-wa.com.au)  
or call **08 6500 5501** to join.

## IN MEMORY OF GINNY BROOKE

Raised \$26,156

The Brooke family and friends have once again successfully fundraised generously for the Ladybird Fund V2.0.

The Ladybird Fund was created by the Brooke family in honour of 'Ginny', Virginia Margaret Brooke, who passed away from advanced breast cancer in 2015, nine years after her first diagnosis in 2006. The funds raised are used to support patients who are confronted with an unaffordable treatment that is not covered by the PBS or health insurance.

Ginny's son Michael, along with his two friends Georgia and Gus had their head shaved or haircut to raise funds for the Ladybird Fund V2.0. Georgia's hair was sectioned into six plaits and was then cut by her nan, sister, sisters' husband, mum and friend Adele.



## KEY TWILIGHT RUNWAY

Raised \$6,000

Perth designer and breast cancer survivor, Karen Elizabeth Young, recently ran a very successful fashion event raising funds for BCRC-WA.

Karen experienced an 18 month ordeal with breast cancer and knows seven family and friends who have also be affected by the disease.

"This event was not only my chance to fulfil my childhood fashion dreams, but very importantly, was the opportunity to give back to a local Perth not for profit organisation making global headway in breast cancer research," said Karen.



## EINSTEINS 2 GO

Raised \$3,000

Einsteins 2 Go café is located on the same floor as BCRC-WA. To celebrate their grand opening, the owners, Pinky and Panduka made a generous donation, by raising funds from coffee sales.

"We thank and appreciate all the effort and good work you all do at BCRC-WA to bring hope and light to the lives of many," said Pinky.



## CONSIDERING DONATING TO BCRC-WA?



*Thank you x*

Thank you to the following organisations and fundraisers for their generosity. We also thank the many individuals who have donated.

Chamberlain 9G Tractor Club WA

City of Kwinana

Dads and Lads - McCarthy Keppel Rotto Swim

Einsteins 2 Go

Entertainment Publications of Australia

Karen Elizabeth Young Designs

Ladybird Fund V2.0 - Brooke Family

Lions Club of Cowaramup

PayPal Giving Fund



### A gift in your Will is a gift of hope

Remembering BCRC-WA in your Will is a very special way you can support our world class breast cancer research and education. With your help, we can continue to improve survival rates and minimise the impact of breast cancer.

A clearly written and up-to-date Will ensures that your estate is distributed according to your wishes. Please let us know if you have already included BCRC-WA as a beneficiary in your Will. It helps us plan for the future and also allows us to thank you.

We are planning our next free Wills and Powers of Attorney Information Sessions for later this year with Perpetual. For more information and confidential enquiries, please contact Ann Chan, Fundraising & Bequests Coordinator on (08) 6500 5501 or [fundraising@bcrc-wa.com.au](mailto:fundraising@bcrc-wa.com.au)

### There are many ways to help us achieve our aims at BCRC-WA.

#### What are we trying to achieve now and in the near future?

- Establish our new Perth Breast Cancer Institute (PBCI)
- Continue our groundbreaking research via clinical trials
- Find new and better treatments for breast cancer
- Enhance patient wellbeing and increase survival rates
- Become an education/information hub for patients, GPs and the community

#### Why do we need your help?

- To help establish comprehensive services at PBCI
- To facilitate our care and support in the form of:
  - More metastatic (advanced) breast care nurses
  - More early breast care nurses
  - Establish oncology and surgical fellowships
  - Identify and implement new initiatives from patient feedback

### *What's News* distribution

If you would like to receive our electronic communications, please subscribe via our website. Paper copies are also available on request, just ask for Jess or Ann. If you prefer, we can also mail our newsletter to you. Please call our team on (08) 6500 5501.

### Donate today

You can donate online at [bcrc-wa.com.au](http://bcrc-wa.com.au), or by direct deposit (NAB BSB: 086-006 Acct No: 73798 6097) or contact us on (08) 6500 5501, or in person at BCRC-WA, Suite 407, Hollywood Consulting Centre, 91 Monash Avenue, Nedlands WA. Gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

BCRC-WA is self-funded and does not receive any government funding