

What's News



breast cancer
research centre-wa
Incorporating Perth Breast Cancer Institute

WELCOME TO THE 2024 SPRING EDITION

Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of *What's News*, where we bring you the latest updates, stories, and achievements from Breast Cancer Research Centre – WA.

We are delighted to welcome two new members to our BCRC-WA family: Brenley Vargas, our new Genetic Counsellor, and Madison Fitzpatrick, our new Fundraising Coordinator. Brenley is providing crucial support to those navigating the complexities of hereditary cancer risks. Madison joins us with a passion for community engagement and a commitment to elevating our fundraising efforts, enabling us to continue our vital work. You can learn more about Brenley and Madison on [page 2](#).

On [page 3](#), our CEO, Sarah, shares a heartfelt message, offering insights into our ongoing initiatives and emphasising the importance of community support in achieving our goals.

Among the most powerful stories in this edition is Jane's journey, a courageous woman who has faced the battle against triple-negative breast cancer with unwavering faith and determination. Her Story of Hope on [pages 4-5](#) is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the impact of a strong support system during challenging times.

The power of community and generosity shines on [page 7](#), where we share the story of a bequest that enabled BCRC-WA to acquire two new scalp cooling machines. These machines are

essential in helping to reduce hair loss during chemotherapy, providing comfort and confidence to those undergoing treatment. Also on [page 7](#), our PYNKS group hosted a successful Paint and Sip event, bringing our community together in a creative and supportive environment.

We're also excited to announce a new fundraising event, Paddle for a Purpose, in partnership with Club Shakas Communities. This October, participants will be paddling out at Trigg Beach to raise funds for BCRC-WA. Whether you're an experienced paddler or just looking for a fun way to support a great cause, we invite you to join us. More details about this event can be found on [page 8](#).

Finally, we celebrate the remarkable efforts of our generous fundraisers. [Pages 9-11](#) are dedicated to highlighting the creative and impactful ways our supporters have contributed to our cause. Their dedication and enthusiasm are truly inspiring, and we are deeply grateful for their ongoing commitment to BCRC-WA.

Here's to a season of growth, hope, and progress. We hope you enjoy this edition of *What's News*.



Introducing

BRENELY VARGAS MURILLO

Associate Genetic Counsellor
BSc (Hons), MGenCouns, MHGSA

Brenely is a dedicated and experienced genetic counsellor, with many years of practice in familial cancer. She earned a Master of Genetic Counselling from the University of Sydney, having previously attained a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in genetics from the Australian National University, graduating with first class honours.

Her practice is characterised by a strong commitment to patient-centred and empathic care. She strives to empower and support clients and their families to make informed decisions about their genetic healthcare in a personalised manner that enables clear understanding of the implications of genetic testing and risk information.

She appreciates the varied and unique background and experiences that shape values and perspectives, having lived in multiple countries during her youth prior to making Australia her home for the past ten years. Brenely's diverse background enhances her ability to create a safe and welcoming space for clients to openly express their individual views.

Outside of work, Brenely enjoys spending time with loved ones, traveling, and time outdoors.



SARAH'S

Note



As we step into spring, I'm excited to introduce two new members of our team who will be making a big difference in our work. Brenley, our new Genetic Counsellor, is here to support those navigating their genetic risks, offering guidance and understanding. Madison, our new Fundraising Coordinator, has already started bringing fresh ideas to help us continue our vital work.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is just around the corner and it's the perfect time to think about your health and the health of those around you. Being breast aware—whether it's scheduling that overdue check-up or simply talking to a friend about the importance of early detection—can truly save lives.

This time of year also offers a chance to get involved. If you've been thinking about how you can make an impact, why not consider joining one of our fundraising events or even starting your own? Every little bit helps, and together, we can continue to support research and provide the services our community relies on.

As always, we're grateful for your ongoing support. Whether you're participating in an event, sharing important health information, or simply staying connected with us, you're playing a crucial role in our mission. Let's make this spring a season of hope, action, and positive change.

Warmest regards,
Sarah

Introducing

MADISON FITZPATRICK

Fundraising Coordinator

A Warm Welcome to Madison,
Our New Fundraising Coordinator!

We are delighted to introduce Madison Fitzpatrick, or as we like to call her, Maddy, as the new Fundraising Coordinator at BCRC - WA! Maddy comes to us with a big heart and a genuine passion for bringing people together.

Since joining us, Maddy has been truly touched by the strength and courage of the patients she's met. She's determined to make a real difference here, and her enthusiasm is contagious. Her positivity has already brightened up our team.

Maddy is especially pumped for our upcoming **Paddle for a Purpose** event. She's excited to rally the community and get everyone involved in supporting breast cancer research and patient care. With her fresh ideas and warm personality, we know she's going to do amazing things.

Maddy has started leading a weekly yoga session for the staff, which has quickly become a favourite. When she's not in the office, you'll likely find her out for a run or spending time with her adorable puppy, Koda.

We're so happy to have you on board, Maddy!



Maddy and Koda

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- linkedin.com/company/breast-cancer-research-centre-wa/
- Search for "BCRC-WA"

Faith Through the Storm: My Journey Battling Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

My name is Jane Njoroge, and as I reflect on my journey, I am filled with profound gratitude and humility. The path I have walked has been anything but easy. Battling triple-negative breast cancer has profoundly tested my faith, my strength, and the very essence of who I am. Yet, through every challenge and tear, God has been my steadfast anchor, guiding me through the darkest moments, renewing my hope each day, and surrounding me with an incredible network of support.

This journey is not merely about the trials I've endured; it is about the unwavering faith that has carried me through the storm. It is about finding strength in the most trying times and believing wholeheartedly that God has a purpose for every step we take. My hope in sharing this story is to inspire anyone who is facing a similar struggle or supporting someone who is. May my story serve as a testament to the power of faith, the resilience of the human spirit, and the remarkable grace that can be found even in life's most daunting challenges.

On March 14, 2023, my life took an unexpected and dramatic turn. Just after celebrating my 40th birthday and completing my Nursing Degree, I was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer. What was supposed to be the beginning of a new and promising chapter in my life quickly became a battle for survival. The news was overwhelming, and I was engulfed by a storm of fear, anger, and confusion. I struggled to comprehend why this was happening to me, especially at a time when I had so much to look forward to. For two agonising weeks, I wrestled with these emotions and questioned my faith, trying to make sense of the situation. It was through God's grace and the unwavering support of my family and friends that I began to find a sense of peace and acceptance.



One of the most profound sources of strength during this challenging time was my 5-year-old son, Chege. When he noticed that something was wrong with me, he innocently asked, "Mummy, are you sick?" When I said yes, his immediate response was to pray, "God bless mummy, God heal mummy." Chege's simple yet powerful prayer reminded me of the profound impact of faith, even in its most innocent form. His words became a source of comfort and a beacon of hope, renewing my determination to fight this battle—not just for myself but for him and for the future that I still believe God has planned for us.

My treatment journey has been an intense and demanding experience. It has involved 16 rounds of chemotherapy, a double mastectomy, and 30 weeks of radiotherapy. I am also preparing for upcoming surgeries, including a salpingo-oophorectomy (removal of fallopian tubes and ovaries) and breast reconstruction at the end of the year. Each phase of my treatment has taken a significant toll on my body and my spirit. Despite the physical and emotional challenges, I am deeply grateful for the support I have received from my treatment team, my family, and my friends both in Australia and around the world.

Throughout this experience, I have learned the importance of caring for both our bodies and our minds. Maintaining a healthy diet, resting adequately, and nurturing our spirits are crucial in this journey. This battle has been as much about mental and emotional resilience as it has been about physical endurance. I am committed to continuing this fight with unwavering faith, trusting in God's plan, and seeking to inspire others who may be facing their own battles.

The spirit of Harambee, which means "All pull together," has been a cornerstone of my journey. The support from the Kenyan community in Western Australia and people around the world has been both humbling and heartwarming. The collective efforts of this community have provided not only financial assistance but also emotional and spiritual support throughout my journey. This unity and solidarity have been a source of great strength and encouragement to me and my family. I hope to give back and make a positive impact with my story, reflecting the support and strength I have received.

In conclusion, I want to encourage everyone reading this to prioritise your own well-being. You are the most important person in your life, and taking care of your health and well-being is the greatest gift you can give yourself. Life is incredibly short, yet we often waste so much time on trivial things—worrying, complaining, gossiping, comparing ourselves to others, or always wanting something bigger and better. We overlook the simple blessings that surround us each day. Life is so fragile, and it only takes a moment for everything we take for granted to change. It's important to focus on what truly matters and be grateful for what you have. You are blessed—believe it, embrace it, and live your life without regrets.

Although I cannot predict what the future holds, I am confident that with God by my side, I can face whatever comes my way. To all who have walked this journey with me, I extend my heartfelt thanks. Your love and support have been a guiding light in the darkness, and I pray that God blesses each of you abundantly and meets your needs immensely.

Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."



New Hope

FOR WOMEN WITH EARLY BREAST CANCER

In a groundbreaking development, women with an invasive form of early breast cancer that poses a high risk of recurrence after initial treatment will now have access to an additional medicine. This advancement comes as the Government expands the listing of abemaciclib (Verzenio®) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the first time in 15 years.

As of 1 May 2024, Verzenio has been available on the PBS for patients with hormone receptor-positive (HR+), human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 negative (HER2-), lymph node-positive, invasive, resected early breast cancer at high risk of disease recurrence. This inclusion marks a significant step forward in breast cancer treatment!

Addressing a Critical Need

Women diagnosed with this type of early breast cancer face a daunting one-in-three chance of their cancer returning despite undergoing surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and ongoing hormone therapy. The statistics highlight the urgency of this development, as breast cancer remains the most common cancer among women, with approximately 57 Australians diagnosed daily.

Early breast cancer is characterized as invasive cancer confined to the breast, which may or may not have spread to lymph nodes in the breast or armpit. HR+, HER2- breast cancer is the most prevalent form, accounting for about 70% of all cases.

How Verzenio Works

Verzenio operates by inhibiting the activity of specific overactive proteins that signal cancer cells to grow, thereby helping to slow or halt the progression of cancer cells. This mechanism of action is particularly crucial for patients with early breast cancer at high risk of recurrence.

The expanded PBS listing of Verzenio is expected to benefit around 2,400 patients annually. Without this subsidy, patients could face costs of up to \$97,000 per course of treatment. The PBS listing ensures that eligible patients will only pay a maximum of \$31.60 per script, or just \$7.70 with a concession card, making this life-changing medicine accessible to many.

Advocacy and Impact

The Breast Cancer Research Centre - WA acknowledges the vital advocacy efforts of organizations such as Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) in achieving this outcome. Vicki Durston, BCNA Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Support Services, highlighted the broader implications of this listing, stating, "Listing of these drugs on the PBS will also help address other significant impacts of a breast cancer diagnosis, including fear of recurrence and financial toxicity relating to private funding of treatments that are not yet subsidised."

The Breast Cancer Research Centre - WA recognizes the profound impact this initiative will have on the lives of many women and their families. This expansion reflects a commitment to advancing breast cancer treatment and ensuring that patients have access to essential, life-saving medicines.

BEQUEST HELPS FUND

Cold Cap Machines

BCRC-WA recently received a significant bequest that will positively impact many women undergoing chemotherapy. This generous donation was used to purchase two cold cap machines, enhancing our ability to support patients during treatment.

Cold cap therapy, or scalp cooling, is an innovative technique that significantly reduces the risk of chemotherapy-induced alopecia (hair loss). Hair loss can be one of the most distressing side effects of chemotherapy, often serving as a constant reminder of cancer. The cold cap works by cooling the scalp, which constricts blood vessels and limits the amount of chemotherapy drugs reaching the hair follicles, reducing the likelihood of hair loss.

Cold caps have been transformative, helping patients maintain a positive self-image and a sense of normalcy during a challenging time. However, because of the high cost of this equipment, it isn't always accessible - making this bequest particularly impactful.

This bequest is a lasting legacy that will continue to benefit patients for years to come. Donations like this are vital. The new cold cap machines are a tangible reminder of how dedicated support can truly transform the lives of those undergoing treatment.

For more information about scalp cooling treatments and our Chemotherapy-Induced Alopecia (CIA) Study, please visit our website. We also encourage you to speak with your medical team to learn more about scalp cooling.

If you would like to make a lasting impact through a bequest, we invite you to contact our CEO.



THE PYNKS

Paint and Sip



The PYNKS Paint and Sip event on August 27th was a wonderful day of creativity and connection for our support group. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we were able to offer this special outing that gave everyone a much-needed break to enjoy some art, laughter, and time together.

The event wasn't just about painting—it was about creating a space where our PYNKS could express themselves and feel understood by others on a similar journey. The joy of being surrounded by supportive friends made the experience even more meaningful.

A huge shoutout to Pinot and Picasso in Fremantle for making the day extra special. Your creative touch and warm atmosphere turned this into a truly memorable event for everyone involved.

We're so grateful to everyone who helped make this day happen. It was a beautiful reminder of how important community and creativity are in bringing us all closer together. We can't wait to plan more experiences like this in the future!



PADDLE FOR A Purpose

Event Details

Date: October 5th, 2024
Location: Trigg Beach, Western Australia
Registration Fee: \$50 (Includes a certificate and a participation bag filled with 'Thank You' items)
Age Requirement: Minimum 15 years old
Registration Options: Individual, team, or organisation

This October, Club Shakas Communities, in partnership with the Breast Cancer Research Centre WA, invites you to be part of something truly extraordinary. We're setting out to break the world record for the largest paddle out at Trigg Beach, Western Australia, on October 5th, 2024. But this event isn't just about making history; it's about paddling with purpose. We are coming together to raise funds, boost awareness, and stand in solidarity with those affected by breast cancer.

The Origins of the Paddle Out

The paddle-out is deeply rooted in surf culture and serves as a spiritual symbol of community and respect. Originating from Hawaiian traditions, it is a tribute used to honour those who have passed. In this moving ritual, surfers paddle out into the ocean, form a circle, and join hands.

By incorporating this tradition into our event, we aim to honour not only those who have been lost to breast cancer but also the resilience of those still fighting and the families standing by their side. Our paddle-out will be a tribute to the strength of the human spirit and a demonstration of our collective commitment to making a difference.

Why Paddle for a Purpose?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, and its impact is felt deeply by patients, survivors, and their loved ones.

This event is about more than just breaking records. It's about making a statement that we stand together in the fight against breast cancer. Through our collective efforts, we aim to inspire others to join the cause, raise awareness about this disease, and contribute to the vital research that is essential for finding better treatments and ultimately, a cure.

Why Your Participation Matters

By joining Paddle for a Purpose, you're not just taking part in an event—you're becoming a part of a community dedicated to making a difference. The funds raised will go directly to BCRC-WA, where they will be used to support cutting-edge research and life-saving treatments. Your participation will help improve the lives of those affected by breast cancer and bring us closer to a future where this disease no longer poses such a significant threat.

Creating Waves of Change

This event is a powerful demonstration of what we can achieve when we come together for a cause. As we paddle out on October 5th, we'll be creating waves—not just in the ocean, but in the lives of those affected by breast cancer. Our collective effort will raise awareness, inspire others to get involved, and, most importantly, provide hope to those who need it most.

Join us at Trigg Beach for Paddle for a Purpose. Let's break records, raise awareness, and make a meaningful impact in the fight against breast cancer.

Don't forget to tell your friends and family, gather your sporting team, or bring your community group along to get involved. The more people we have paddling with us, the bigger the difference we can make!

How to Participate

Getting involved in Paddle for a Purpose is easy and rewarding. Here's how you can be part of this historic event:

- 1. Visit the Fundraising Page:** Go to bcrc-wa.com.au/paddle-for-a-purpose to register as an individual, team, or organisation. The registration fee is \$50, which includes a certificate and a special participation bag filled with tokens of appreciation.
- 2. Start Fundraising:** Once registered, start sharing your involvement with friends, family, and colleagues. Encourage them to support you in your fundraising efforts. As you raise more funds, you'll unlock exciting prizes and badges.
- 3. Get Your Bib Number:** After registering, you'll receive an email confirming your participation. This email will include your Bib number and all the event details you'll need.
- 4. Paddle Out:** On October 5th, join us at Trigg Beach and be part of the world's largest paddle out. Together, we'll make history and show our unwavering support for breast cancer research.

FUNDRAISING

News

SAVE THE DATE: HIGH TEA WITH HEART

We are excited to announce the third annual High Tea with Heart on Sunday, 27 October 2024 at 1pm, at Pan Pacific Perth's Mas Vino Wine Bar. This event, hosted in partnership with Pan Pacific Perth, is aimed at raising awareness and support for those affected by breast cancer.

Join us for an elegant high tea experience featuring a selection of delicious treats. Throughout the afternoon, you will hear from a guest speaker and listen to inspiring stories from survivors, highlighting the impact of breast cancer and the importance of continued research and support.

A charity raffle will be held on the day, with all proceeds going directly to the Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA. This is an opportunity not only to enjoy a memorable afternoon but also to contribute to a cause that touches the lives of so many in our community.

Tickets are now available, and we encourage you to secure yours early for this meaningful event. Your participation will help us continue our vital work in breast cancer research and support services.

We look forward to sharing this special day with you!



KICK FOR A CURE



On 25th August, the Carlisle and Victoria Park AFLW Masters hosted their first-ever Kick for a Cure Carnival at Curtin University South Oval—and it was an absolute blast! The event featured several thrilling matches, including a special Legends and Survivors Match that celebrated

the strength and resilience of female AFLW pioneers and cancer survivors. The day was filled with excitement, from the lively raffle prizes and sponsor tents to the Carlton Dry Bar and delicious offerings from various food trucks.

Breast Cancer Research Centre - WA was thrilled to take part in the day with our own tent area, where we connected with the community and shared our mission. All proceeds raised from this incredible event will be donated to Breast Cancer Research Centre - WA and Breast Cancer Care WA, supporting vital research and care for those affected by breast cancer.

A huge thank you to everyone who came out to support this amazing cause!



**PILATES & COFFEE WITH THE UWA
STUDENT GUILD WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT**

Raised: \$240

We are excited to share that the UWA Student Guild Women's Department, in collaboration with the Wellbeing Department, hosted a fantastic Pilates and Coffee event on August 29th.

Held at Bayside Kitchen, participants enjoyed a rejuvenating morning Pilates session and a complimentary coffee, thanks to the generous support of Bayside Kitchen. Attendees also had a chance to win a Lululemon yoga mat and water bottle through a special raffle. All ticket sales from this wonderful event were donated directly to Breast Cancer Research Centre - WA.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved for making this event a success and supporting our cause!

pilates & coffee

8:00 - 9:30 AM
MATILDA BAY

29 AUG
\$5 ENTRY*

TICKET LINK IN BIO.

LEARN MORE

**RAVENSTHORPE FOOTBALL AND SPORTING
CLUB'S MEMORIAL ROUND FUNDRAISER**

Raised: \$2,911

HOCKEY & FOOTBALL
PINK SOCKS
BUY AT TIGERS
CANTEEN

\$15

On 8th June, the Ravensthorpe Football and Sporting Club hosted a Memorial Round fundraiser in honour of their dear friend, Theresa Francis. The day was filled with heartfelt support as the community came together, selling pink socks, raffle tickets, and encouraging donations, all in aid of breast cancer research.

Their efforts raised an incredible \$2,911, which has been generously donated to the Breast Cancer Research Centre - WA.

We are deeply grateful for their dedication and the meaningful tribute to Theresa.



BLUE GUM PARK MID-WEEK TENNIS GROUP

Raised: \$150

We're thrilled to highlight the generous support of the Blue Gum Park Mid-Week tennis group, who recently donated \$150 to BCRC-WA. This vibrant group of tennis enthusiasts, ranging from their 50s to 80s, demonstrates that staying active and giving back to the community go hand in hand.

The group, led by Captain Tricia MacWilliam, plays tennis two to three times a week and maintains an active social calendar. While they have a history of fundraising through Daffodil Morning teas, in the past two years they've directed their efforts towards supporting breast cancer research, showing particular support for their member, Pam, a BCRC-WA patient.

Thank you to Tricia, Pam and the group for your contribution and generosity.



Leave a Gift in your will



"My decision to leave a gift in my will to the Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA was a purposeful choice. My gift was in memory of my late wife, Janine who received the best treatment and care available from the BCRC-WA team. It gives me great satisfaction that my bequest will have a long-term impact."

- David Park

Your gift can achieve so many things

Your gift can assist our general programs allowing BCRC-WA to apply these funds to research or where it is needed the most.

▶ Contact our Fundraising Coordinator Sarina Menzies on **08 6500 5515** or sarina.menzies@bcrc-wa.com.au and learn more about how you can make a difference.

DONATE

Today

There are many ways you can donate to BCRC-WA



Online at bcrc-wa.com.au



By direct deposit (NAB BSB: 086-006 Acct No: 73798 6097)



Phone us on (08) 6500 5501



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.

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