

IN THIS TOGETHER.

The Kids' Cancer Project FY2021 Annual Report



THE KIDS'
CANCER
PROJECT

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Science Solutions Survival

Our vision: One hundred percent survival of children with cancer while eradicating the harmful impacts treatment can bring.
Our mission: To support bold scientific research that has the greatest chance of clinical success in the improvement of treatments of childhood cancers.

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A message from our Founder



Things have changed significantly since we first started this charity in 1993. The number of studies we support has increased, the types of solutions being investigated were the stuff of science fiction back then. But most importantly the numbers of children now surviving cancer represent, as one paediatric oncologist described it to me, "an epidemic of survival".

The way we raise awareness and funds as a community has also changed remarkably. I've missed getting out to meet supporters through the pandemic, but much like many of you, I was grateful for the technology that enabled me to go to events all around the country without leaving my home.

Our virtual candlelight vigil during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month meant thousands, not just a few hundred of us, were able to gather from all parts of Australia. We held our first virtual *Write a Book in a Day* awards presentation which was shown live at school assemblies far and wide. And I got to meet many of our new Corporate Partners with CEO, Owen Finegan through Zoom meetings to thank them personally for their support.

While lots of things have changed, my driving force continues to be the families and children affected by this indiscriminate disease.

Regrettably, I can't mention them all here, but I particularly wanted to remember Alana de Kort who passed from Ewing sarcoma in 2018 a week before her fifteenth birthday. Her parents, Jacqui and Paul, along with brother Jake are gearing up for a fundraiser like no other in her memory – a jet ski trek from Long Reef in NSW to Agnes Waters, Queensland.

My thanks go to Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, Governor of New South Wales for her Vice Regal Patronage of our charity.

And thank you also to His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Hurley for their patronage.

Finally, to my fellow Board Members, our staff along with volunteers, donors, corporate partners, and supporters, I recognise that you have a lot of choice when it comes to causes to support, and I am so very grateful you chose to stand with us as we stand up for children with cancer.

Colin Reynolds.

Col Reynolds OAM
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR

A message from our CEO

With thanks to all our donors, supporters, partners and fundraisers, The Kids' Cancer Project finished the financial year in a strong position to fund bold scientific research.

The charity's first matched giving initiative, the Double Impact Appeal, launched with great success raising \$1.8 million in 61 days to support eight studies through Cancer Australia's Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme. By collaborating with the Federal Government, The Kids' Cancer Project's contribution to funding led to a total of \$4.1 million invested in childhood cancer research through the scheme.

This would not have been possible without our valued corporate partners, major donors and a community of fundraising champions who matched every dollar donated in September and October 2020.

It was the year of "keeping up the momentum" for kids' cancer research and the entire team continually innovated with our vision of 100 percent survival of all children without harmful effects of treatment firmly in mind.

Our traditional strategic development sessions pivoted to a dynamic process engaging the Board and senior staff in creative workshops to generate ideas and plans to ensure the sustainability of the charity.

This led to us taking a confident stance on the transformation of our raffle program, the development of our first peer-to-peer national fundraising campaign, and onboarding media specialists to ensure our messages cut through. I look forward to reporting on the success of those initiatives this time next year.


At this time, I want to thank our dedicated staff for their commitment and recognise our Research Advisory Committee as well as our Board of Directors who generously give their time to ensure we accomplish our mission.

And once again, thank you for your support. Like us, you believe that science is the solution and we are honoured to have you on this journey with us.



Owen Finegan
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DOUBLE IMPACT APPEAL STATS

6.5 
million

Potential cumulative reach of Community Service Announcements in print

12.5 
million

Potential cumulative reach of branded mentions in news stories

11.5 
million

Total social media impressions

74% 
increase

The Kids' Cancer Project website users

Our Why



Since The Kids' Cancer Project started in 1993, there has been a slow but steady increase in the incidence of childhood cancer at a rate of 0.4% per year on average. Our mission is not only vital, but urgent too.



THREE KIDS are diagnosed with cancer in Australia each day



CANCER KILLS MORE KIDS than any other disease in Australia



THREE KIDS die from cancer in Australia every week



THE OVERALL SURVIVAL RATE for childhood cancer has now risen to over 80% thanks to medical research

The Board

The Kids' Cancer Project's Board of Directors is responsible for overall performance and compliance, providing strategic direction, effective governance and leadership.



DOUG CUNNINGHAM
BCom, MBA (Chair)

Doug is Managing Director at Kimberley-Clark ANZ where he joined early 2019. Prior to this he enjoyed almost three decades at Johnson & Johnson in various roles across Asia Pacific, North America and Africa. He has extensive experience managing sophisticated global retailers and building capability with large multi-cultural organisations. After losing his five-and-a-half-year-old son Murray to brain cancer, Doug became determined to donate his time and business experience to finding cures for the devastating disease through scientific based research.



NIGEL EVERARD
CPA, BCom, Grad Cert (Mgmt), MBA (Deputy Chair)

Nigel is Managing Director Oceania at one of the largest inflight global catering companies. Prior to this he was the Director of Operations Oceania. He has been CFO of a leading Australian quick service restaurant business. Throughout his 20-year career, he has held senior positions in operations, general management, finance, strategy and business improvement. Nigel has been deployed in Asia and Europe working in various industries including automotive, aviation, quick service restaurants and the not-for-profit sector.



COL REYNOLDS
OAM, Founder

Cols' contribution to the lives of children with cancer was officially recognised with an Order of Australia in 2000. Before founding the charity, Col was a tourist coach driver. He dedicated 30 years of his life to his profession, during which time he looked after many high-profile clients including US Secret Service agents and members of the Papal visit of Pope John Paul II.



SIMMONE REYNOLDS
BCom

Simmone is a founding member of The Kids' Cancer Project Board and is currently employed with the Australian Defence Force as a Communications Officer. Earlier in her career, Simmone spent nine years working in the fast moving consumer goods sector holding positions in marketing, national account management and category development for blue chip multinational companies, Unilever Australasia and Nestlé.



RICHARD CALDOW
BCom (Finance and Accounting)

Richard was a Chartered Accountant with Ernst & Young before moving into stockbroking. Richard's son Archie was diagnosed with high-risk neuroblastoma at just three years of age. Archie is now twelve and in middle school.



SUE ANDERSON
BBus, EBMA

Sue is Founder and Director of Management Consulting Firm Co Squared. Her specialty lies in applied innovation to support government, property and broad business sectors as they evolve and transform. Sue discovered the importance of research into childhood cancer when her daughter Audrey was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour at age five. Audrey is now finding her way in high school and life with a positive outlook.



DEBRA SINGH

Debra was the Group CEO Household Goods for Greenlit Brands overseeing Fantastic Furniture, Plush, OMF and Freedom, and was also an Executive Director on the Board until March 2020 when she transitioned into semi-retirement. She has more than 30 years' experience in General Management, Retail Operations, Organisational Design, Human Resources and Change Management. Prior to this, Debra had a career with Woolworths spanning more than a decade during which she was the first female to lead a trading division. Debra is also a member of the Chief Executive Women's (CEW) organisation.



CATHRYN PROWSE

Cathryn is a law partner at Colin Biggers & Paisley practising both insurance and employment law. She is in the 2018, 2019 and 2020 editions of The Best Lawyers in Australia in the field of insurance law for her work acting on behalf of professionals and entities facing negligence claims. In the employment space, she acts for employers in unfair dismissal, general protection, discrimination, underpayment, OH&S and other workplace-related claims.

Advocacy FY21

Despite challenges brought about by the pandemic, The Kids' Cancer Project ramped up its commitment to raising awareness, building support and providing real solutions for children with cancer.

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH – SEPTEMBER 2020

To mark this annual occasion, Patrons of The Kids' Cancer Project, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Hurley, showed their support and raised awareness through video messages shared on social media.

On Friday 25 September 2020, The Kids' Cancer Project hosted a virtual candlelight vigil to honour children currently in treatment, those who have survived and precious ones who have passed away. Members of the community were invited to submit photographs paying tribute to these special kids. The images became part of an emotional presentation that took place across the charity's social channels leading to 9,500 views.

Saturday 26 September 2020 was Childhood Brain Cancer Awareness Day with a focus on ependymoma. The Morrison Government launched the now annual awareness day in 2019 with an aim to raise public awareness of the impact of childhood brain cancer and to focus on the importance of childhood brain cancer-related research.

BRAIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH – MAY 2021

The Kids' Cancer Project advocated to ensure children were represented during the month through *Kids' Brain Cancer 360 (KBC360)*. This online editorial series took a deep dive into the issues confronting children diagnosed with this, the deadliest disease faced by Australian families. On Wednesday 26 May 2021, *KBC360* came to life in the form of the first Childhood Brain Cancer Symposium collaboratively hosted by The Kids' Cancer Project and Robert Connor Dawes (RCD) Foundation with funding from Cancer Australia. The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation in Melbourne offered a base for the event and with virtual access offered via Zoom, 32 delegates attended from around Australia representing 15 children's brain cancer organisations including clinicians, researchers, PhD students, parents, and charity groups. The symposium was opened by Federal Minister for Health, The Hon Greg Hunt MP with a video message and continued with a combination of presentations and facilitated group discussions to determine barriers to success in changing the statistics of children's brain cancer. Funding, late-effects, advocacy and capacity were identified as key themes and future symposiums will work to address these.

CHILDHOOD BRAIN CANCER AWARENESS ACTION GROUP

The Kids' Cancer Project chaired a video conference on 25 September 2020 to establish the collaborative facilitation of childhood brain cancer awareness campaigns in key months of September and May. The aim of the group is to increase community awareness of all kids' brain cancers and to discuss opportunities for like-minded brain cancer groups, NGOs and charities to work cohesively to increase research funding and improve outcomes for childhood diagnosed with the disease.

FY21 MARKETING REACH



17 million

Potential cumulative reach of Community Service Announcements in print



20.5 million

Potential cumulative reach of branded mentions in news stories



62,800

Total The Kids' Cancer Project social media followers



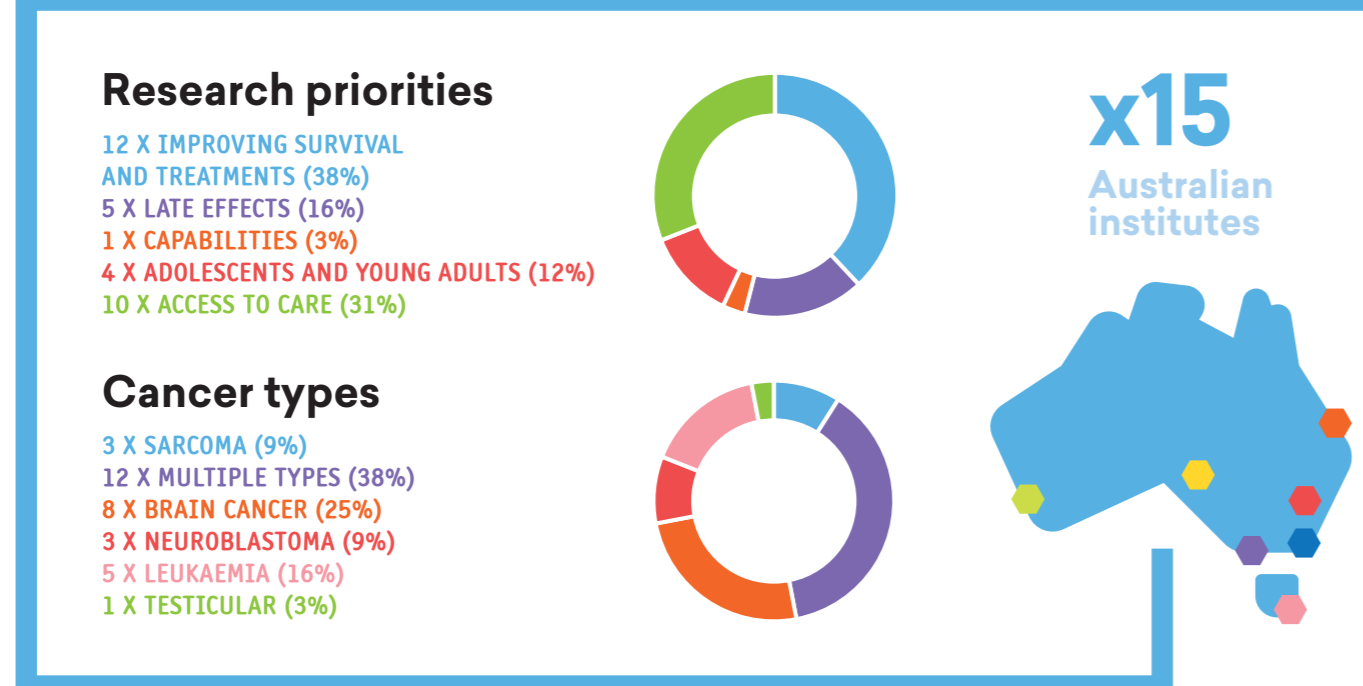
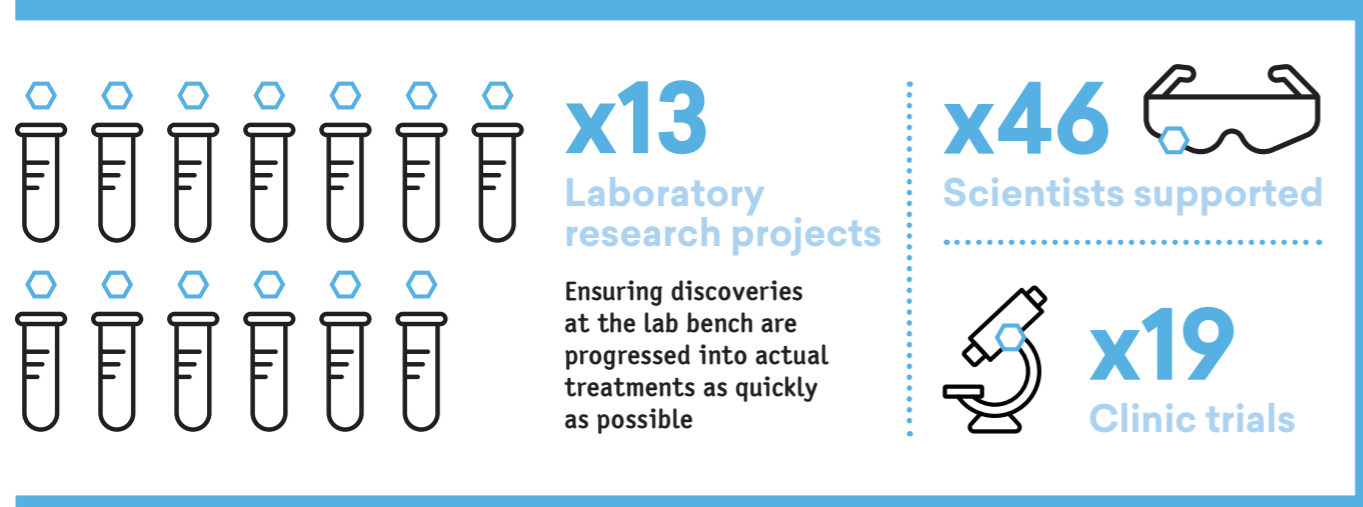
33,000

Average monthly The Kids' Cancer Project website visitors



Funding Summary

Where the money was invested in FY21:



Targeting IL-23 in bone and soft tissue sarcomas



RECIPIENT: PROFESSOR DAVID THOMAS
INSTITUTE: GARVAN INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH, NSW

This world-first clinical trial will target the immune molecule IL-23 as potential treatment for sarcoma and is a collaboration between the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Omico (the Australian Genomic Cancer Medicine Centre) and the University of Sydney's NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre.

Enhanced polyamine depletion as a novel therapy for aggressive childhood cancers



RECIPIENT: PROFESSOR MICHELLE HABER
INSTITUTE: CHILDREN'S CANCER INSTITUTE, NSW

When completed, this project will have produced considerable experimental data required for clinical trials to help kids diagnosed with high-risk neuroblastoma and the most aggressive types of brain tumours including diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), for which the survival rate is currently zero.

Personalised targeted therapy for AYA patients



RECIPIENT: DR ELIZABETH HOVEY
INSTITUTE: UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

This international collaborative clinical trial is the first of its kind for newly-diagnosed adolescent and young adult medulloblastoma patients. The goal is to define a new standard of care for treatment of this group of deserving patients by developing a treatment strategy that gives the best treatment outcomes, while reducing treatment-related toxicities.

New Research Funded:

In addition to continuing multi-year funding commitments of projects, The Kids' Cancer Project awarded grants to four new scientific studies in FY21. Three of which are the first of their kind clinical trials in the world.

CONNECT-1903



RECIPIENT: PROFESSOR NICK GOTTARDO
INSTITUTE: TELETHON KIDS INSTITUTE, WA

World first for children with newly-diagnosed high-grade glioma with a specific, yet common, gene mutation. CONNECT-1903 is an international clinical trial that will examine, for the first time, how well a novel agent is tolerated and its effectiveness to shrink these tumours.



PROFESSOR IRINA VETTER

Bold Breakthroughs in FY21

In FY21, donors to The Kids' Cancer Project funded bold scientific research that found innovative uses for an existing drug to ease chemotherapy's worst side effects, discovered an incredible new therapy for poor prognosis leukaemia, and improved aftercare for survivors.

TAKING THE PAIN AWAY

Professor Irina Vetter and Dr Hanna Starobova are focused on reducing the unpleasant symptoms of the widely used chemotherapy drug, vincristine. This is linked to debilitating nerve damage and neuropathy.

"Unfortunately, chemo's side effects are sometimes so terrible that people interrupt their treatment or end it, putting them at risk," Professor Vetter says. "Reducing chemo's unpleasant symptoms ultimately will save lives and a lot of patient suffering."

Vetter and Starobova's research, funded by the charity, has identified promising results in an existing arthritis treatment.

"The anti-inflammatory drug anakinra substantially reduced the awful nerve symptoms," Vetter says. "Importantly, it did not reduce the effectiveness of the chemo."

As a known and approved drug, their research will translate to the bedside quickly, bringing hope to kids with childhood cancers including acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, sarcoma, medulloblastoma and neuroblastoma.

NEW THERAPY SHOWS PROMISE

Childhood leukaemia is a success story of cancer research, with survival rates now around 90 percent. But acute myeloid leukaemia and subsets of acute lymphoblastic leukaemia remain characterised by poor prognosis.

"Until we're at 100 percent cure rate, I don't think we should be comfortable," says Professor Ricky Johnstone.

Johnstone is investigating genetic changes that are specific to low prognosis leukaemia patients and drive cancer progression.

Thanks to research advancements, it's now possible to target these genes to turn the cancer's strength into its weakness.

Preclinical work, partially funded by The Kids' Cancer Project, has found multiple myeloma is highly sensitive to a newly developed experimental therapy that turns off key cancer-causing genes.

"It's exciting to see these positive results in the lab and get a glimpse of the impact this new experimental therapy might have."

REBOOT-KIDS

For families going through childhood cancer, the end of treatment can seem like an impossible milestone. With everything focused on survival, food routines can go out the window. Children can struggle to return to their previous eating habits even after treatment finishes.

Dr Jennifer Cohen and Professor Claire Wakefield from the Kids Cancer Centre, discovered that poor eating habits manifest early in children who survive cancer, putting them at risk not only of cardiovascular disease but also obesity, diabetes and even second cancers.

"We hadn't previously been looking so much at what was happening off treatment," says Dr Cohen.

Reboot-Kids is a parent-led eHealth program designed to increase long-term survival by improving dietary habits in children who've finished cancer treatment.

"It's about giving parents strategies around how they can help their child

to have a healthier diet," Cohen says. "That way they dramatically reduce the risk of their child suffering a serious illness later in life."

A pilot of the program, supported by The Kids' Cancer Project, proved successful, with every parent who participated reporting becoming more confident in providing a healthy diet for their child and their family.

"Thanks to the funding from The Kids' Cancer Project, we're going to offer it to more families across a lot more hospitals," says Dr Wakefield.

STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

Associate Professor Rachel Conyers focuses on helping childhood cancer survivors have a better quality of life.

"I'm driven to find better solutions so these kids can have better outcomes," she says.

Conyers' research investigates cardiac aftereffects of treatment. In particular, a broadly used chemotherapeutic drug class, known as anthracyclines, has a devastating effect on the heart cells of around seven percent of patients. This can cause cardiomyopathy, a condition often requiring a transplant.

Conyers hopes to discover genetic precursors that make some children more likely to get heart complications to improve treatment options.

"If we can identify the children at risk, we can either not give them the drug, or give them a protective medication," she says.

In an exciting development, Conyers will lead a national network of cardio-oncology hubs to further investigate the link between cancer treatments and heart damage.

"All this would not have been possible without The Kids' Cancer Project and its donors," says Conyers.



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DAVID ZIEGLER

Hope for deadly DIPG

This leading Australian scientist and paediatric oncologist is aiming to find a cure for a cancer that currently has no treatment.

Not content with advancing science to treat children's cancers in general, Associate Professor David Ziegler decided to take on the single most aggressive cancer. Diffuse intrinsic pontine gliomas, known as 'DIPG', are tumours found at the base of the brain. Tragically, the disease is incurable, with an average survival of just nine months after diagnosis. Ziegler wants to change that.

"It's a devastating disease," says Ziegler, a paediatric oncologist and Senior Staff Specialist at the Kids' Cancer Centre in Sydney. "The typical incident occurs at around five to seven years of age, to children who are otherwise perfectly healthy."

Group Leader of the Brain Tumours Group at Children's Cancer Institute, Ziegler and his colleagues have screened thousands of drugs for their effectiveness.

"I was motivated by patients and parents in hospital," he says. "The worst conversation you can have with a parent is to tell them there's no treatment for their child. So those patients and parents motivated us to start the research program and begin to try to make a difference."

It's not a hopeless quest. "It feels as if, with DIPG, we're where leukaemia was 50 years ago," Ziegler explains.

Some of Ziegler's research projects, funded by The Kids' Cancer Project, include screening drugs by robotic

technology. This has resulted in the discovery of an anti-malarial drug that is active against DIPG. Another program is investigating the immunotherapy pathway, which harnesses the individual's immune system to attack DIPG cells.

"There's one drug we're very excited about that targets the cycle that allows cells to continually grow and reproduce," Ziegler says. "We've found a very active drug that's able to penetrate into the brain."

The team are now working towards clinical trials, something Ziegler says has only been achieved because of community donations.

"We get grants from the government, but they make up only a fraction of the funding we need. We've only got to the point we're at now because of community donations and funding from groups such as The Kids' Cancer Project."

"We will get there, just like researchers did with leukaemia. The current success with leukaemia didn't happen overnight. Scientists learnt from each child who responded well in clinical trials over the decades, and eventually built up to a 90 percent survival rate. But they had to start somewhere. That's what we're doing with DIPG."

A different approach

Continuous funding is helping a research collaboration improve survival statistics for children with high-risk leukaemia.

Exceptional research over the last few decades has resulted in incredible advances in childhood leukaemia treatment, with survival rates rising from 30 percent to almost 90 percent.

However, for certain leukaemia types, there has been less progress. It is these more difficult and deadly sub-types that researchers at Children's Cancer Institute are targeting.

Senior scientist Dr Michelle Henderson explains, "there is an urgent need for treatments suitable for kids with the worst cases of leukaemia."

Dr Henderson is a joint manager of the Molecular Diagnostics Group, which monitors children going through leukaemia treatment using sensitive DNA-based tests.

"We've reached a ceiling where the chemotherapy options that work for most kids cannot be successfully used to cure particularly aggressive cases," she says.

With more intensive versions of current therapies having harsh side effects that offset treatment benefits, Henderson's team and their collaborators have been working towards a solution that more selectively targets blood cancers. Together with colleagues in the United States, they have discovered and developed a new drug called OT-82.

OT-82 works inhibits a chemical reaction inside cells that produces a substance called NAD (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide). NAD gives cells energy and helps them repair themselves. Because cancer cells need lots of energy and are constantly repairing themselves, depriving them of NAD kills them, while sparing healthy blood cells.

The new drug has shown remarkably strong anti-leukaemia activity in animal models, even against the most aggressive subtypes.

"OT-82 is now in clinical trial, which is very exciting. It's not yet in a clinical trial for kids," says Henderson.

"That's why the grant from The Kids' Cancer Project is timely, because the next step is for us to plan a trial in children," she says.

The team is investigating which sub-types of leukaemia are most likely to respond to such treatment. In the future, the research might result in a more effective therapy for children suffering from the worst types of leukaemia. It could also lead to genetic screening to identify children most likely to fail in their treatment, so doctors can explore alternatives.

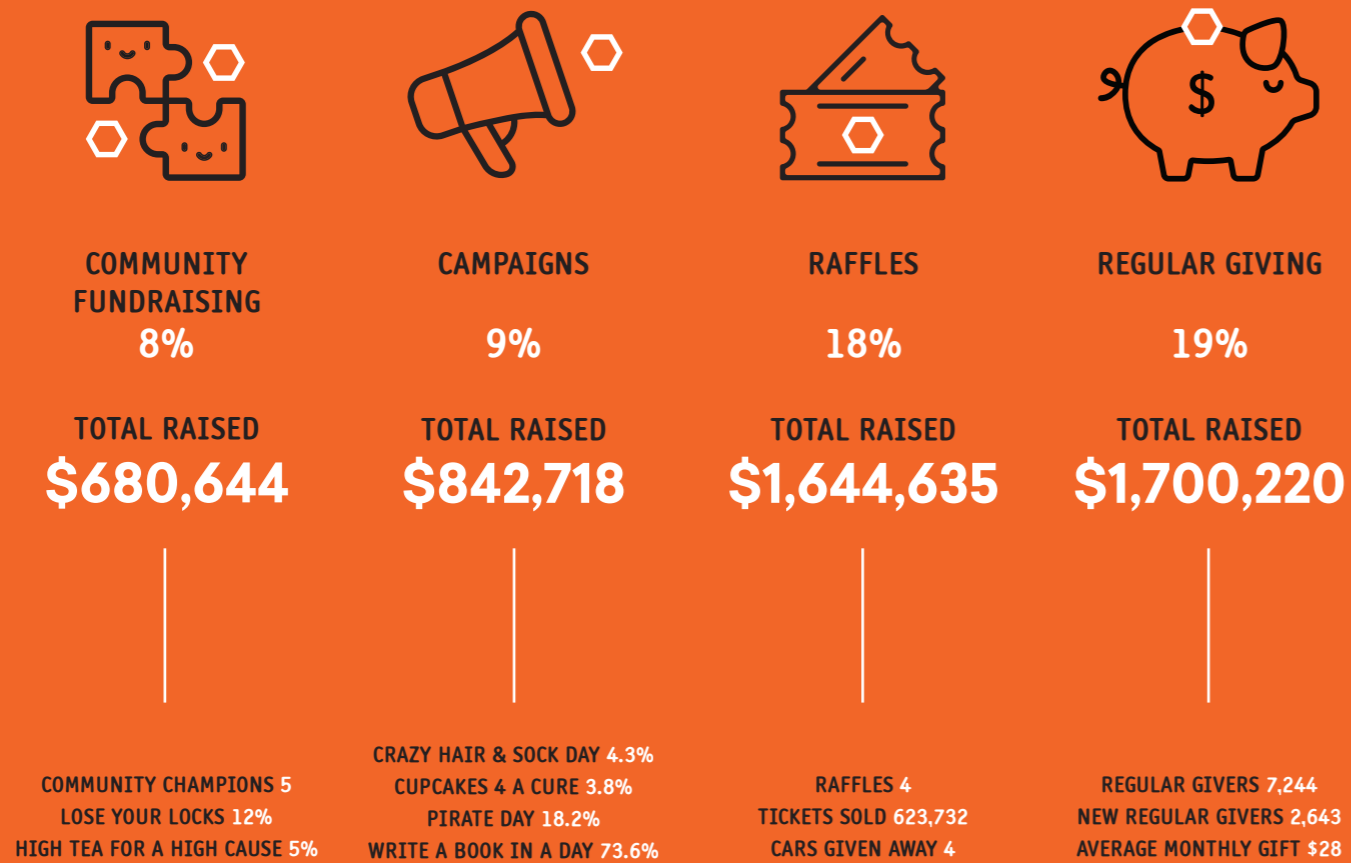
Dr Henderson knows she's working in a highly competitive research environment in Australia.

"A promise of continued funding, in particular, is a massive relief," she says. "It means you can not only build on previous research discoveries but also tackle more ambitious projects that could enable bigger breakthroughs."

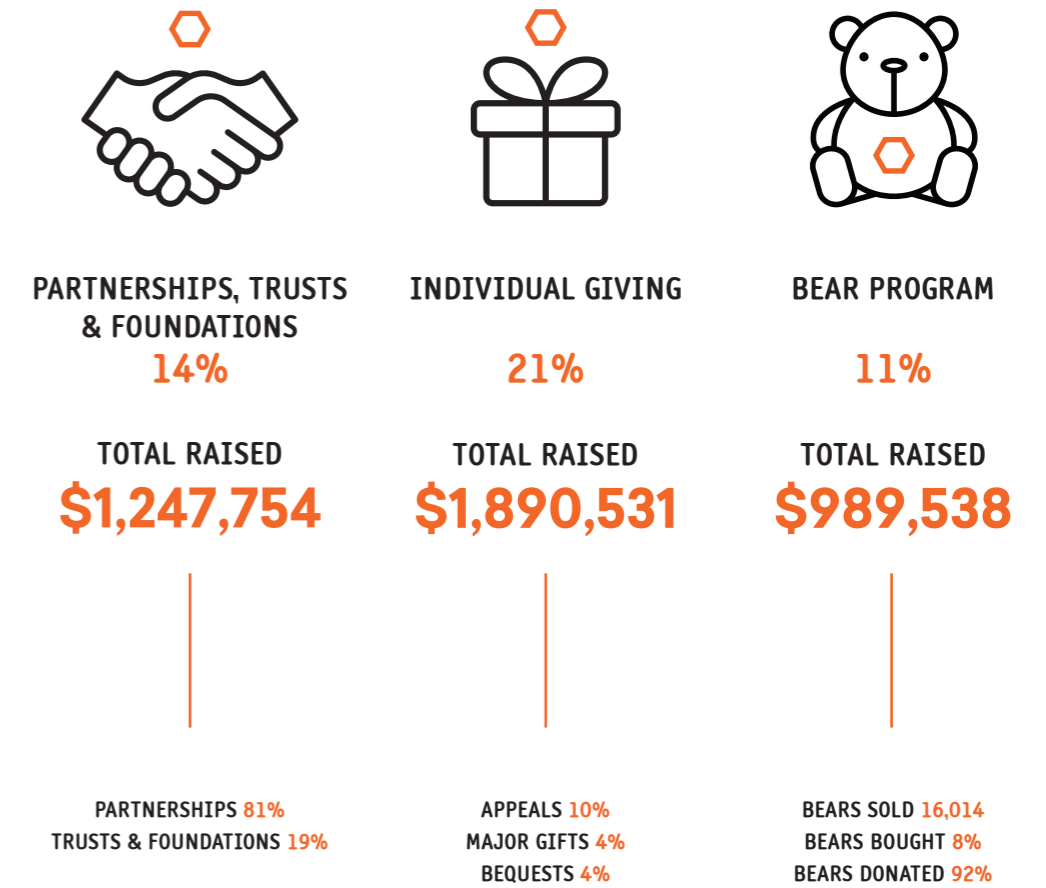


SENIOR SCIENTIST
DR MICHELLE HENDERSON

Income Received



TOTAL FUNDRAISING REVENUE
\$9M



The Kids' Cancer Project has a multi-faceted fundraising strategy offering many ways for individuals, groups and organisations to make a difference. In a challenging year, support from all areas of the community has helped the charity continue its commitment to funding bold scientific research.

Partnerships

With challenging lockdowns and event restrictions to navigate, The Kids' Cancer Project extends gratitude to the continued engagement of our partners. Their tireless support shows strong corporate social responsibility and a commitment to progressing childhood cancer research.



ABOVE: BROMIC GROUP SUPPORTED THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT WITH THEIR GO-KARTING DAY

CORPORATE PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

In its fourth year of partnership, Bromic found innovative ways to engage with the charity. Members of the team, including Bromic's Managing Director, had signed up for our Kokoda Trek. With this being postponed, Bromic held its first ever go-kart derby. Staff built go-karts powered by natural propulsion, using recycled materials found onsite. The more money each team raised, the better position they started with on race day.

QBE entered its eighth year of partnership. Staff members were actively involved in events and

volunteering opportunities. QBE also provided matched giving funds.

Lorraine Lea's exclusive partnership entered its third year. As a family-owned business touched by cancer, they are passionate about working towards 100 percent survival. Restrictions affected Lorraine Lea's month-long Party for Kids with Cancer®, but the resilient team kept fundraising.

RAMS stepped up for science again, donating generously and offering gifts in kind. They also collaborated with the charity on a successful golf day.

SAS, Fast Automation and Stylecraft continued their commitment to

the organisation, providing significant pro-bono data insights. They also attended events, provided auction prizes, and contributed significantly towards an annual matching campaign.

Facilities First Australia showed sustained support through annual donations, attending events, and providing prizes for the annual *Write a Book in Day* competition.

Colin Biggers & Paisley offered impactful pro-bono legal services, as well as contributing towards our Final Hour appeal and matched giving campaign. They made a Christmas gift donation and attended events.

Rondo Building Services got involved for their third consecutive year, showing outstanding commitment to raising funds through activities across their Australian operations.

WOTSO has again shown exceptional engagement, attending all The Kids' Cancer Project events and facilitating introductions to their networks.

Bartercard offers users a marketplace to trade goods and services. They continued to help make a difference to childhood cancer research through donations and introductions to networks.

TRUST AND FOUNDATIONS

Thyne Reid Foundation provided funding for a fourth year, facilitating a staff member to assist the charity with digital transition work.

The Ronald Geoffrey Arnott Foundation generously awarded funds to help children affected by brain cancer. This goes towards investigating an exciting immunotherapy project led by Professor Nick Gottardo and Dr Raelene Endersby at Telethon Kids Institute.

The charity was also successfully granted funding from Lin Huddleston Foundation, Isabella and Marcus Foundation and the Australian Turf Club Foundation.

ASSOCIATIONS IN PARTNERSHIP

The Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors' Association (AMCA) were proud to offer their support, raising funds through state offices, member donations and golf day fundraisers. Facility Management Association (FMA) supported The Kids' Cancer Project through their calendar of events.

Thank You

CORPORATE



ASSOCIATION



MEDIA



SUPPORTERS



GIFTS IN KIND



COMMUNITY



TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS



Community Spirit

While FY21 threw curveballs at everyone around the world, some fundraising events still went ahead, as individuals and organisations around Australia wanted to make a difference.

WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Despite challenging circumstances across the country, The Kids' Cancer Project's annual writing competition *Write a Book in a Day* raised an all-time high of **\$537,000** for childhood cancer research in 2020.

An incredible 7,368 team members from 378 schools and groups participated across over 1,000 teams. Navigating new words like "social distancing" and "pandemic", several schools really tested their writing skills, getting involved from lockdown. Of note, Box Hill High School had seven teams complete the competition virtually, with one going into the winners' circle. The incredible results show how much the loyal participants, team coordinators, sponsors and supporters rallied around the beloved competition. Books written as part of *Write a Book in a Day* are shared on our online library for kids in hospital to read.

PIRATE DAY

The Kids' Cancer Project set sail for a different sort of *Pirate Day* in FY2021, with office workers and children hoisting the mainsail in both September 2020 and May 2021.

Brain cancer kills more children than any other disease and *Pirate Day* funds were directed towards Dr Raelene Endersby and Dr Nick Gottardo, who are making waves in the lab investigating an exciting immunotherapy. The buccaneering team at We Are Social helped everyone become a pirate for the day, offering their expertise on a pro-bono basis to create a *Pirate Day* Instagram filter launched on Friday 14 May 2021.

The team also sang songs of the sea with shanty clubs in Sydney and Canberra, raising an additional **\$2,440** to help turn the tide on kids' brain cancer research. In total, *Pirate Day* events raised a swashbuckling **\$156,548** in FY21.

CRAZY HAIR AND SOCK DAY

Despite the block COVID-19 put on the netball season, Netball NSW Associations were so generous in their support of The Kids' Cancer Project, getting dressed up in silly socks and loony locks for *Crazy Hair and Sock Day*. It was fantastic to see supporters doing something fun for a serious cause. The Kids' Cancer Project's partner NSW Swifts led the way to putting cancer on the side-lines, and an amazing 32 Netball NSW Associations registered. Together, netballers and fans raised **\$36,522** to fund childhood cancer research.

CUPCAKES 4 A CURE

Supporters of The Kids' Cancer Project made fundraising look like a piece of cake, whipping up a storm for *Cupcakes 4 a Cure*. Clever cooks from all walks of life hosted bake sales and afternoon teas. Their fundraising efforts raised a scrumptious **\$32,608** in dough-nations. With new safety measures to factor in, bakers from across the country got creative in the kitchen, adding new ingredients like contactless delivery, ordering via QR codes and DIY decoration cupcakes into the mix. Can you imagine a batter way to raise money? Richardson & Wrench Hurlstone Park were a highlight of the year, raising nearly **\$15,000** with the help of their generous community.

LOSE YOUR LOCKS

Lose Your Locks is a key fundraising initiative for The Kids' Cancer Project, engaging passionate individuals from all walks of life. Some haven't met a child with cancer but are impacted by stories they've heard and want to do something bold to help. Others have a very personal connection to the cause, people like Team Blakely. Danny and Carlie Simpson were motivated by their daughter Blakely who almost passed away at birth after being diagnosed with an incredibly rare cancer that baffled global experts. Dad Danny added his own colourful spin, dyeing his beard a different shade when each fundraising milestone was met. The Locks Unlocked team at Clayfield College also stepped up for science, with brave students donating their ponytails in September 2020 to raise money for kids' cancer research.

HIGH TEA FOR A HIGH CAUSE

High Tea for a High Cause is an annual event that brings together the local community in Western Sydney to build awareness for many families going through childhood cancer and raise money for The Kids' Cancer Project.

The annual event was set up by mum Sarah, in honour of her daughter Evie Grace. Their family life changed forever when Evie was diagnosed with cancer just after her second birthday. Evie tragically passed away in 2017. In 2020, High Tea for a High Cause changed the style of the event, with networks of loyal attendees each hosting their own tea parties. Together they raised **\$34,000**.

MILLIE TRUSTUM

Millie is a committed childhood cancer advocate. After being diagnosed with T-Cell lymphoblastic lymphoma in December 2018 and going through intensive treatment, she's done everything she can to raise money and awareness for kids' cancer research. Showing huge initiative, young Millie reached out to local bakers. They helped Millie sell over 500 cancer ribbon iced biscuits and 20 dozen golden cupcakes. The bold fundraiser also contacted her School Principal to arrange a gold dress up day for Childhood Cancer Awareness month, with some of her schoolmates even cutting their hair for the cause. After leaping past Millie's goal of **\$1,000**, the family raised over **\$10,000** and continue to look for inventive ways to fundraise for scientific research.

BELOW: BALACLAVA STATE SCHOOL IN CAIRNS, QUEENSLAND, SAID 'ARRGH!' FOR THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT PIRATE DAY (PHOTO BY BRENDAN RADKE / NEWSPIX).



Individual Giving

The Kids' Cancer Project continued to focus on strengthening long-term organisational sustainability and provided varied opportunities for donor engagement.

BEARS

The Kids' Cancer Project's iconic teddy bears continued to be cuddly companions for children in hospital all over Australia. During FY21, nearly 15,000 bears were donated to more than 70 hospitals and over 1,200 bears were bought as home purchases. The Bear Program generated nearly **\$990,000** in funds for childhood cancer research. This included sales of the charity's popular new 'bear bundles': four pairs of bears sold together. The 'Toy Bear Drive' initiative was also established, providing an easy way for groups to fundraise together and donate numerous bears.

BEQUESTS

The charity is grateful to the generous individuals who have committed to leaving a gift in their Will. In FY21, The Kids' Cancer Project received ten bequests totalling more than **\$309,000**. These gifts leave a powerful legacy that will directly support medical research into childhood cancer. Awareness was raised for the charity's Bequests Program through digital advertising, direct mail, emails, and telemarketing.

MAJOR GIFTS

The generosity of major donors to The Kids' Cancer Project cannot be overstated, supporting life-changing childhood cancer research. During FY21, one major donor committed **\$145,000** to the charity, inspiring 17 others to give **\$140,000** which was matched during the Spring Double Impact Appeal. The *Good Sports* initiative replaced *Power Pledge* and is the most ambitious fundraising campaign to date. *Good Sports* aims to raise urgently needed funding for research into aggressive childhood cancers. With the support of major donors, over **\$425,000** has been raised by this campaign since its inception in March 2020.

RAFFLES

In partnership with Apple Marketing Group for telemarketing as well as Suttons Motor Group and Harvey Norman for prizes, four raffle campaigns took place in FY21. The charity also trialled Play For Purpose raffles, with great success. With no administrative costs for using this platform, a minimum of 50 percent of the ticket sale came straight to The Kids' Cancer Project, with the remainder funding prizes. In accordance with the goal of scrutinising operating costs, the charity continued to focus on cost-efficient digital acquisition mechanics for raffles.

REGULAR GIVING

Regular Giving continues to grow as a priority for The Kids' Cancer Project, providing a sustainable fundraising base that allows the charity to deliver its long-term vision. FY21 saw a 21 percent growth in the program. Through acquisition and conversion of donors to other areas of the charity, over 2,600 Regular Givers were acquired and reactivated. The average gift has increased and first year attrition dropped to 14 percent, a significant achievement given the overlap with the beginning of the global pandemic.

QUARTERLY APPEALS

Throughout the financial year, the charity ran four seasonal appeals through direct mail and digital marketing, highlighting families affected by childhood cancer. The Kids' Cancer Project research ambassador Jake de Kort headed the Spring Appeal. He was inspired to support science by his sister Alana who tragically passed away from Ewings sarcoma. Meanwhile four-year-old Sammy, who travelled to the USA during the pandemic to access a clinical trial, was the face of the Tax Appeal. All featured families advocated the charity's mission to fund bold science with the greatest chance of clinical success. Boosted by the Double Impact Appeal, Spring was a particular success. Altogether the appeals generated more than **\$871,000**.

Major Donor Story: A Life Saved by Science

When their baby boy beat the odds thanks to a clinical trial, this mum and dad realised the true value of funded research.



LEFT: THE MORSE FAMILY WITH COL REYNOLDS AND CR JENNY HILL, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF TOWNSVILLE.

It's all thanks to cutting-edge kids' cancer research, the type of bold science Orlando's parents, Levi and Tina Morse, have been actively supporting with fundraising events and significant personal donations.

SCIENCE IS THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT KIDS' CANCER

"The only thing you really care about is whether your child will survive and live a happy life," orthopaedic surgeon Levi says.

"The thing that could influence this is the ability to detect and treat these cancers appropriately, in a way that's not going to have significant, adverse side effects."

At the point when he was diagnosed, a treatment had recently begun clinical trial in Australia. "The nurses would regularly say to us, 'You're really lucky. Twelve months ago, we would have just sent you home.'" Tina says.

"So science helped our child survive, but there is still a high mortality rate for his type of cancer even with that treatment, which is concerning."

What can be done to help improve outcomes for kids with neuroblastoma? Plenty, Tina and Levi say.

"Anything that's going to be a game changer in the future is going to come from cutting edge research," Levi says. "A lot of the immunotherapy and gene-directed therapy, etc., is going to be the way of the future. That's what The Kids' Cancer Project does well, and that's why we support them."

FUNDING: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

"We wanted to give to an organisation that is dedicated to improving outcomes," Levi says.

"We were impressed with the lack of overheads and the way in which The Kids' Cancer Project is very frugal with their spending, in terms of every possible dollar going to supporting research."

Tina and Levi's fundraising events have included a dinner and a bus tour, scrunchie drives and discos, significant personal donations and promotions via Levi's surgery.

"There's no end date or reason to stop fundraising," Levi says. "However much or however little you might be able to give, it goes to something that is extremely important for somebody right now."

Jamie's Story



LEFT: JAMIE, SURROUNDED BY HIS FURRY FRIENDS.

Four-year-old Jamie loves life, especially when it's full of teddy bears! His cuddly companions are an important source of support, having been gifted by generous donors at a time when he needed them most.

In 2019, Jamie's world changed drastically when he was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. His mum, Nicky, says her boy was just a very normal two-year-old living on a 40-acre property in rural Western Australia.

"Jamie enjoyed running around on the farm with the horses and cows, feeding the chickens and collecting their eggs every day. He loved playing in the sandpit with his digger and trucks. Life was free-flowing," says Nicky.

LEAVING THE FARM

When Jamie started to experience a strange combination of symptoms - high temperatures, loss of appetite and sore tummy - Nicky and husband Les took him to the doctor.

That's when they received the crushing news.

"Finding out your child has cancer is one of the hardest things any parent will ever hear," says Nicky.

"Life changes in that moment. You drop everything and become 100 percent focused on your child and knowing what the 'fix' is to make them get rid of this horrible disease that's trying to kill them."

Nicky had to bundle her farm-loving toddler up and take him to the city for life-saving treatment at Perth Children's Hospital. Along with the financial stress of relocating, was the toll of watching the little boy go through a multitude of tough medical procedures.

"Holding your child down screaming and looking at you to rescue them from agony is so heart-breaking, I can't begin to describe it," says Nicky.

FURRY FRIENDS

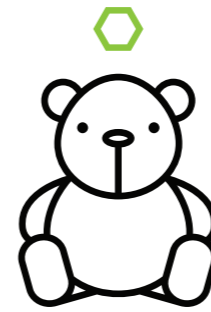
One thing that brought a smile to Jamie's face during particularly tough moments were The Kids' Cancer Project bears. Gifted by generous donors and handed out by hard working hospital staff, Nicky describes the enormous impact they've had on her son.

"Every time Jamie went in for a procedure, he was given one of the teddy bears," she says. "He just loves them and the fact they all have a different purpose and character. They're a little bit of happiness on a horrible day. I can't thank the people who donate them enough."

Jamie is now well enough to continue his chemotherapy treatment at home but the furry friends, who supported him through his worst days, continue to be firm favourites.

Nicky says between the tangible support of the teddies from The Kids' Cancer Project and the scientific research that is being funded through the proceeds of sales, she and Les are hopeful for the future.

"Jamie still has some very bad days and he's not out of the woods just yet," says Nicky. "Thank you everyone for your ongoing support, it is appreciated so very much."



When a bear cares

Many families get in touch to share stories of how The Kids' Cancer Project bears have helped their child.



JOY & COURAGE

"Our daughter was given one from the nurses during her stay and the joy, courage and strength it gave her was priceless. They were inseparable. We donated two a few months ago and feel so blessed that it brings a smile through their journey. Please buy a teddy."

- CAROLYN DI-MIERI



SUPER BEAR

"My son got a bear recently. We're very grateful."

- BEC KERWIN



BELINDA BEAR

"Our little lady was lucky enough to receive one of these bears. She absolutely loves it and it's now her go-to teddy when she has floor time. She loves to chew on the silicone chew toys and shake the flower rattle.

We've named our bear Belinda after the lovely nurse who gave it to her."

- AMANDA CORLEY



FURRY FRIEND

"My son Parker has received a couple of teddies from The Kids' Cancer Project during chemotherapy or after waking up from procedures. These treatments are not easy but these special bears give him comfort and gives our family hope as every time we see one we know that we are one step closer to curing cancer."

- KRystal WILLIAMS

Ollie's Story



ABOVE: BIG SISTER TAHLIA GIVES OLLIE A KISS.

In December 2018, during her family's early Christmas celebration, mum Rachel noticed bruises suddenly appear across her three-year-old son Ollie's body.

"The whole world stood still. Then it reorientated itself, and everything took off in an entirely new direction."

The bruises signalled something was very wrong, and within hours Ollie was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL).

"You naturally assume your children are going to live long, happy and healthy lives," Rachel says. "Having that torn away is very life-changing."

THE MEDICAL JOURNEY

"ALL has had so much really good research done around it," Rachel explains. "It has the best outcome of any type of cancer."

Despite the promising prognosis, Ollie spent the next nine months undergoing chemotherapy, experiencing distressing side effects.

"The treatment itself almost took him out. On the worst day, he went into liver failure after having a reaction to one of the drugs."

Rachel video-taped her sleeping boy, believing it might be the last time she'd see him alive. All hope rested on an experimental drug.

"He was deteriorating, and the doctor said we just have to hope the drug gets to the hospital on time."

Luckily, it arrived. "It pulled him back from the brink."

A few weeks later, Ollie was released from hospital.

Maintenance treatment will continue until mid-2022.

The Kids' Cancer Project is funding several exciting projects studying more targeted, less damaging therapies for ALL. These include Dr Michelle Henderson's investigation into new therapeutic strategies, and Associate Professor Tamas Revesz's clinical trial to improve paediatric survival in relapsed ALL.

LIGHT IN THE DARK

"When I look at Ollie now, it blows my mind," Rachel says.

"Last year I was hoping for one more hour. This morning I dropped him off at school like any other child!"

Rachel remembers one moment of Ollie's hospital journey fondly.

"During the last round of intense chemo, he received a teddy from The Kids' Cancer Project. He'd been so sick and almost died. That bear brought the biggest smile to his face."

"He just loved it. It still sits in his room, watching over Ollie," says Rachel.

During clinic sessions, Rachel says children can be very fearful of what's coming.

"Kids get so excited to have something cuddly to hold onto when they're not feeling great. For ten minutes, they're not thinking about all the horrible things that are going to happen. It lifts their entire day."

Sammy's Story

Why would a parent take their child overseas multiple times during a pandemic? It's a question Kristy and Steven Colakidis repeatedly ask themselves. The answer remains the same: to give their daughter the best chance of living.

"We weighed up every factor and it's worth it," says Kristy.

Five-year-old Sammy was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma in 2019, aged just three. The Colakidis family made the tough decision for Kristy to take Sammy to the US every few months to participate in a two-year clinical trial of a maintenance drug.

"We have to go across the world because Australia doesn't have access to this trial," says Kristy.

Neuroblastoma is a solid tumour cancer that can occur anywhere along a child's sympathetic nervous system. About 40 kids are diagnosed with this cancer in Australia every year. "Our hope in doing this clinical trial is to prevent Sammy having a relapse," Kristy explains.

FROM DEVASTATION TO HOPE

Before getting sick, Sammy was known for her smile. However, 12 months of harrowing cancer treatments, enduring countless infections and a collapsed lung, changed her.

"Going through all that affects a kid's personality. There's pain and anxiety," Kristy comments. But she notes, it's also made Sammy sassy and tough. "She's more resilient than many adults."

Thankfully, Sammy came out cancer-free. But Kristy and Steven know successful frontline treatment doesn't always mean a permanent cure. When Kristy read about

a drug in the US that showed promise in reducing relapse, she pursued it with dogged determination.

"I had to do everything I could."

A FAMILY SEPARATED

There's never a dull moment in the Colakidis house. Alongside Sammy, there's also twin sister Alexandra and older siblings Georgia, 6, and Charlotte, 8.

"My girls are out to change the world," Kristy says proudly.

Adding to the stress of travelling, COVID-19 quarantine means Sammy and Kristy are spending additional time away from home.

"It's hard," admits Kristy. "We do lots of video chats, particularly between Ally and Sammy, so they have their twin connection."

SCIENCE DESPERATELY NEEDED

Kristy is willing to take Sammy around the world to give her a greater chance of survival.

The Kids' Cancer Project wants to ensure opportunities like this are available closer to home. More funding is urgently needed to link Australia to international research for all types of childhood cancer.

For Kristy, this can't come soon enough. "I wish we could access this science here. I don't want any other family to go through this."



LEFT TO RIGHT: GEORGIA, SAMMY, STEVEN, CHARLOTTE, KRISTY & ALEXANDRA.

We're for the believers.

For those who demand more than a band-aid fix for kids with cancer.

Who insist we prioritise children and get to the root of the problem.

We're for the ones with hearts of gold who know science is the solution. Who realise we have the smarts, just not the funding.

We're for those who believe a cure can happen in our lifetime.

Because we can imagine what a world without children dying of cancer looks like.



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