TOWARDS ZERO

THE FUTURE OF BREAST CANCER SCREENING COULD BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

3D mammography: the latest technology in breast cancer detection

Does stress feed breast cancer? What does the latest science say?

Walk the highlands with NBCF An exclusive offer from Auswalk.

A race against cancer It’s training time for the Mother’s Day Classic
Dear Supporters,

The new year is still young, but there is already lots happening and the NBCF team have hit the ground running.

The first exciting event of the year is the annual Mother’s Day Classic fun run or walk. It’s great for people of all ages and fitness levels. Being part of the atmosphere and feeling the community spirit is always a highlight for me.

Another key event in the calendar is announcing the grants that have been awarded for 2016. Thanks to generous support from people like you, this year NBCF has committed around $12 million to fund more than 30 research projects that will contribute towards our goal of zero deaths from breast cancer by 2030. This year we have continued to fund innovative researchers who will explore promising areas of investigation. These projects include more effective immunotherapies for hard-to-treat breast cancers; targeted treatment delivery systems; and predictive tests for relapsing cancer.

NBCF also launched the Leadership Fellowship, a five year grant that allows a senior researcher to address some of the big questions in breast cancer. In this issue, you can read about the inaugural recipient, Professor Nehmat Houssami, and how her research aims to gather evidence on the benefits of 3D mammography.

Finally, I am thrilled to announce that we have appointed a new CEO: Dr Sarah Hosking. Dr. Hosking has most recently been CEO of the Melbourne-based charity Very Special Kids, and has held multiple CEO roles and board positions. I know she will be a fantastic asset to the team at NBCF and will lead our organisation into an exciting new future.

Yours Sincerely,
Elaine Henry OAM, NBCF Chair

SARAH’S STORY

Sarah’s sister was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a mastectomy at 40. Her mother was diagnosed at 50 and passed away after a long journey with secondary cancer at 67. Her father died from prostate cancer.

In light of her family history, Sarah was tested for the inherited gene that both her mother and sister carried - the BRCA gene mutation - which is known to increase the risk of breast cancer.

When the results came back negative Sarah was determined not to take good health for granted, and has remained vigilant about her own health, diet and exercise. “Health is very important to me. I believe in a holistic approach and would like to see more research into the environmental factors that affect our wellbeing.”

When Sarah was asked why she supports NBCF, she said, “I give to NBCF’s ‘Project 2030’ because it focuses on understanding why and how breast cancer spreads. This area of research is very important to me because it’s what my mother went through. I also support NBCF because they receive no government funding, and I know that long-term research is expensive.”

Sarah believes, “If you’re one of the lucky ones, if you have health and wealth, be grateful and try to pay it forward and help others less fortunate.”

We are sincerely grateful for Sarah’s generosity and the generosity of all our supporters.

*This supporter’s name has been changed out of respect for her privacy.

TO DISCUSS BECOMING A DONOR WITH NBCF:
Contact Kate Meyers on (02) 8098 4855
Kate.Meyers@nbcf.org.au

MARCH

Lymphoedema Awareness Month
An awareness raising month for this chronic condition, which can be triggered by breast cancer treatment.

MARCH 8

International Women’s Day
Celebrate the year’s key women-led cultural and political achievements.

MAY 8

Mother’s Day
Events are happening all around Australia. You can walk, run or volunteer for breast cancer research. (See page 6)
mothersdayclassic.com.au

MAY 19-26

Great Wall of China Trek
If you’re not walking the Great Wall yourself, you can support those who are at:

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The National Breast Cancer Foundation is the largest 100% community-funded organisation in Australia raising money for breast cancer research. Our goal is to achieve zero deaths from breast cancer by 2030.

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As lead researcher in a team at the University of Queensland’s Diamantina Institute, Dr. Fiona Simpson is trying to find the answer to one of the biggest challenges in breast cancer medicine: Why do some breast cancer patients respond well to treatment and others don’t?

Dr. Simpson has made significant findings about drug resistance by testing new tools and technology. Her research has huge potential for people with triple negative breast cancer and she believes her findings will have positive implications for numerous forms of cancer, including sub-types that are especially difficult to treat.

Promising research like Dr. Simpson’s has been made possible by NBCF’s partner, Ford, who has helped NBCF accelerate their research by contributing $1.6 million over the past 12 years. Back in December, Ford auctioned off their first new model Mustang to arrive in Australia: the V8-powered Mustang GT Fastback. They also donated $100,000 to help turbo-charge research like Dr. Simpson’s work.

National Breast Cancer Foundation Acting CEO, Jackie Coles, said:

“Ford’s long-time support has had an immense impact on what we’ve been able to achieve in the lab.”

WIN A WINNEBAGO TOUR

The Pink Minnie Winnebago made her grand voyage along the east coast of Australia last year on a fundraising road trip.

This year, the Pink Minnie is hitting the road again… and it could be you behind the wheel!

In partnership with Dometic, and its ‘Follow the Sun’ initiative, we are giving one couple the chance to win a three-month tour, and another couple up to $25,000 worth of Dometic products to spruce-up their own caravan.

For more information or to find out how to enter, visit: dometicfollowthesun.com.au
THE FUTURE OF BREAST CANCER SCREENING IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK... AND IT’S IN 3D.

3D televisions are all the rage. And every other day, so it seems, someone, somewhere has figured out how to print something new using a 3D printer.

And now the 3D revolution might be about to change the way breast screening is carried out in Australia.

NBCF has awarded its inaugural Breast Cancer Leadership Fellowship Grant to Professor Nehmat Houssami for a world-first research program to gather evidence on the efficacy of 3D mammography.

This is just one of more than 30 new research projects that NBCF has funded in 2016, made possible by the generous donations we receive from supporters like you. All of these projects are focused on better prevention, treatment and after-cancer quality of life for men and women with breast cancer.

Prof. Houssami was first motivated to focus her clinical and research efforts in breast cancer after providing care to women affected by the disease during her medical internship. Over the course of her 20-year clinical career, Prof. Houssami’s patients have continued to be a major source of inspiration. Their need for improved methods of screening and detection prompted Prof. Houssami to undertake research into this critical area, and she is currently the lead researcher of the Breast Cancer Research Portfolio at the School of Public Health at the Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney.

How did we get here?

The current standard in mammography is 2D imaging. X-ray images of each breast can show if there is a tumour present. With 2D technology it can sometimes be difficult to tell the difference between benign and malignant cancers.

3D mammography uses a machine to take many low-radiation x-rays as it moves over the breast. These images are combined into a 3-dimensional picture, which allows doctors to see inside the breast more fully than a standard 2-dimensional mammogram.

Screening saves lives.
The number of Australian women diagnosed with breast cancer has doubled in the last 20 years. This statistic sounds alarming, but what it really means is that more women are receiving early diagnosis and early intervention.

NBCF has awarded its inaugural Breast Cancer Leadership Fellowship Grant to Professor Nehmat Houssami who is researching the efficacy of 3D mammography.
Prof. Houssami has previously demonstrated that 3D mammography has a 33 percent higher detection rate than 2D mammography. However, the next step is to prove that this new technology will actually reduce the risk of a woman developing breast cancer between screenings. Being able to better identify what’s going on in the breast is one thing, but effectively treating a cancerous tumour is another. So, even though a 3D mammogram can detect more tumours than a 2D mammogram, unless those problem tumours can be treated, we won’t know whether identifying them will make a real difference in reducing deaths.

Prof. Houssami will bring together data from clinical trials on 3D mammography from around the world so she can determine if the technology is making a positive impact on women’s survival. The results of this research will help the government decide whether to include the technology as part of the BreastScreen program, the national mammography service.

Getting older is the biggest risk factor in developing breast cancer. That’s why all women aged 50-74 are eligible to receive a free mammogram every two years with BreastScreen. Unfortunately, only half of these women currently take advantage of the free screening tests. It is our hope that better technology, combined with greater awareness and willingness to attend the free screening service will result in better outcomes for women across Australia.

NBCF’s Director of Research Investment, Alessandra Muntoni, says, “Early detection remains a crucial tool to improve survival outcomes for women. The technology is available and we expect that it will save lives. This grant is a major step in the right direction for making sure that Australians stop dying unnecessarily from breast cancer that could have been caught early.”

Below: Prof. Houssami, NBCF’s inaugural Breast Cancer Leadership Fellowship Grant recipient at her workplace, The University of Sydney.
Every Mother’s Day, in more than 100 locations around Australia, from capital cities to remote towns, the streets are awash with pink for the Women in Super Mother’s Day Classic fun run.

More than 130,000 participants including friends, families and teams of co-workers of all ages and fitness levels are expected to lace up their runners, don pink face paint and raise more than $4 million in the race against breast cancer.

How can you raise funds?
Over the years, we’ve seen participants come up with some wonderfully inventive ways of getting friends, family and colleagues to sponsor them. One runner, Luke Gooley, even ran with a pumpkin!
“The pumpkin is sort of an extra burden you have to carry. It makes the run that much harder, it’s almost a metaphor for living with cancer,” said the fundraiser extraordinaire.

What are the health benefits?
The real health benefit of the Women in Super Mother’s Day Classic isn’t so much the 4km or 8km run or walk on the day. It’s all the kilometres pounding the pavement or striking yoga poses in training that really count.

A research project made possible with the funding received from the Mother’s Day Classic is investigating how exercise may affect breast cancer risk.

Dr Brigid Lynch, a Cancer Council Victoria researcher, has received a four-year Early Career Fellowship from NBCF. Dr Lynch aims to improve upon evidence to show that exercise reduces the risk of breast cancer. Most studies suggest that 30 to 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity reduces breast cancer risk. The findings of this research will enable doctors to provide more specific exercise advice to improve survival rates for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

What’s more, the benefits of exercise aren’t only physical. Moderate exercise is de-stressing, reinvigorating and can be a great social activity. It’s a way of spending regular time together as a family or a group of friends. As a team, you can set goals together and motivate one another to keep on track.

“I’ve been running the Mother’s Day Classic every year since my cancer treatment ended. I’ve also been working as a personal trainer since then and I encourage all my clients to run too.”
— SUZANNE FROM ADELAIDE

When: May 8
Where: Multiple locations, nationally
More details:
mothersdayclassic.com.au
How does psychological stress affect people who have cancer?

When treatment ends, cancer survivors begin a new chapter in their lives, one that can bring hope and happiness – but also fear of the cancer coming back. Many survivors may experience high stress levels at this point in their cancer journey, and worry that the stress itself could increase the chances of the cancer coming back.

To examine the relationship between stress and cancer recurrence, researchers from Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences recently reviewed 15 studies that compared stress levels to rates of cancer recurrence, published from 1979 through to 2012.

The studies under review used a variety of methods for determining survivors’ stress levels. Some used questionnaires to find out if survivors were going through stressful events in their lives. Others measured stress through psychological symptoms including depression and anxiety. And the rest measured the levels of certain hormones that are known to be released into the bloodstream when people are under stress for long periods of time.

Most of the studies reported finding no relationship between cancer recurrence and stress. Although a few did find some relationship, and a few actually found the reverse (less cancer recurrence associated with more stress), overall the researchers concluded that the evidence does not show stress causes cancer to come back. They did, however, acknowledge that more research is needed to understand the relationship between cancer and stress.

The report concluded that even though stress is not shown to cause cancer recurrence, stress management is good for survivors’ emotional wellbeing and quality of life after treatment.
WHO’S MAN ENOUGH?

For years it’s been the ladies who dress-up, bake, walk and host tea parties to raise funds for breast cancer research. The research we’ve funded has resulted in better treatments, quality of life and survival rates. However, 7 women still die from breast cancer every day in Australia.

We want to make that number zero by 2030, but we need more help.

So now it’s time to get the men involved and flexing their fundraising muscles. Stepping up and showing what they can do to bring in the dollars. (Ladies - remember to swoon a bit.)

The more of a man they are, the more pink they’ll wear, the more money they’ll raise, the more lives we’ll save.

Find out more at nbcf.org.au/realmenwearpink

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