



A direct line to specialist care

Meet the specialist nurses who provide life-changing support, expertise and compassionate care.

Cancer care, choose hope

 Chris O'Brien
Lifehouse

Specialist nurses: redefining cancer care

I am so proud and passionate about our specialist nurse team. They are not only skilled in their discipline, they also show unwavering compassion and advocacy for all their patients.

They make a difference every day in helping our patients navigate through some of the most challenging times of their lives- their cancer experience.

They really do elevate the standard of care we provide our patients and their families.

Our specialist nurses blend a depth of expertise and compassion to provide a single point of contact to help patients navigate the cancer experience, ensuring that they have a direct line to specialist cancer care.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we have established a comprehensive team of 22 specialist nurses across 10 cancer streams. Our patients can access specialist nurses with expertise in:

- Breast cancer
- Upper GI cancer
- Lower GI cancer
- Head and neck cancer
- Sarcoma
- Gynae-oncology
- Lung cancer
- Radiation oncology
- Pain
- Palliative care

Specialist nurse involvement has shown to significantly improve outcomes, symptom management, and quality of life for



their patients. They provide practical and emotional support throughout cancer treatment and beyond, coordinating treatment plans, discussing side effects and helping patients with the other aspects of their life that might be impacted by cancer.

Your donation will ensure as many patients as possible can access a specialist nurse as their direct line to personalised care.

Thank you for your consideration of support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Melinda'.

Melinda Grimson
Specialist Nursing Services Manager
Chris O'Brien Lifehouse





Carla Wilkinson

Head and Neck Cancer Specialist Nurse

As a head and neck specialist nurse, Carla supports patients through treatment and the life-altering challenges with eating, drinking, nutrition, oral care, aesthetics and psychosocial wellbeing. “They will often call me and say, ‘I have a silly question’ and they’d be embarrassed to ask those things of the surgeons. But I can answer those questions for them. It’s really having somebody to talk to and relieving their fears and anxieties and making sure that they’re heard.”

With her experience as a specialist nurse, Carla has published research on head and neck surgery as a complex, life-changing procedure that demands intensive patient care and support following hospital discharge.

Within the paper, she highlights how the transition from hospital to home is a particularly vulnerable period for patients and their caregivers who can be overwhelmed by information about managing complex care needs such as wound management, tracheostomy care, feeding tubes, medication and rehabilitation.

“Relieving anxiety is the biggest part of the job and patients know they can rely on specialist nurses for their expertise and advice in line with the specialty they are working in.”

Roan Misoles

Breast Cancer Specialist Nurse

For breast cancer patients, there can be many health professionals involved in their treatment and care – teams of doctors, medical oncologists, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, radiation oncologists, and a range of allied health workers and nurses.

Specialist nurse Roan bridges the gap between patients and the other health workers and specialists on the patients care teams. He started at Chris O’Brien Lifehouse in the opening of one of our surgical wards in 2015 and has been looking after breast cancer patients ever since.



“We provide personalised care, support, and education to people diagnosed with breast cancer. We guide patients and their loved ones through diagnosis, treatment, and beyond, functioning as a first point of contact between them and the broader healthcare team.”



Beulah Benedict

Nurse Practitioner
Lung Cancer

A renewed focus on the early detection of lung cancer in Australia through the new National Lung Cancer Screening Program will help many people begin treatment earlier for better outcomes. At Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, lung cancer patients can access keyhole, open and robotic thoracic surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and clinical trials.

A key member of our lung cancer team of experts is nurse practitioner Beulah Benedict. She helps patients navigate the most challenging times of their life and as a specialist nurse she can help make a tremendous difference to their physical and psychological wellbeing.

“Many of our lung cancer patients say they are okay but are overwhelmed due to the complexity of care, especially those who are vulnerable or socially isolated.

We step in as a care coordinator and help to navigate the system, organising scans, blood tests, appointments, and treatment schedules.”

Nilika Kansaka

Colorectal Specialist Nurse

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse has some of Australia's most experienced bowel and colorectal cancer surgeons and specialists.

These types of cancers have been identified as one of the 'early-onset cancers' that have seen an alarming increase in diagnosis of people aged under 50 in Australia and around the world.

Specialist nurse Nilika offers personalised care for patients with colorectal and bowel cancers from diagnosis to treatment and beyond. Nilika's position is funded by the Lachlan Kean Foundation in memory of Lachlan, who passed away from bowel cancer in 2023.

Your donation can help fund more positions for nurses like Nilika, Roan, Beulah and Carla.

“My vision is to ease the burden of cancer for our patients by seamlessly coordinating multiple streams of care. I also want to ensure patients and their loved ones always have someone to turn to if they have a question or just need emotional support.”



Help patients with cancer have a direct line to specialist care.

Donate today.



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your investment.

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