

OpenHouse



Supporter newsletter



MEET NIAMH MULVEY

Supportive Care Specialist Nurse

SURFEBRARY FUND

From one wave to a movement

RICHARD SCOLYER CHAIR

A Chair in brain cancer research



Chris O'Brien
Lifehouse

Cancer care, choose hope



Welcome to OpenHouse

I am delighted to welcome you to the Autumn edition of OpenHouse, a newsletter celebrating the life-changing impact our donors make at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse.

This year is already shaping up to be one of great achievement and progress at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse.

In this issue, you'll meet Niamh Mulvey, a member of our specialist nursing team, whose role is entirely funded through donations.

You'll also read about the Federal Government's commitment to establish the Richard Scolyer Chair in Brain Cancer Research at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse.

Additionally, we're pleased to share the success of our Music in Health fundraising appeal and the transformation of our foyer and waiting areas.

I'm so grateful to our donor community for their compassion and commitment to enabling exceptional care today and driving the research that will shape tomorrow. I hope you enjoy reading this issue of OpenHouse.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Professor Michael Boyer AM
CEO, Chris O'Brien Lifehouse



Your support helps provide world-class care, groundbreaking research, and hope for people facing cancer. [Please donate today.](#)

Meet specialist nurse Niamh

Niamh Mulvey is a Supportive Care Specialist Nurse at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. With over 10 years of experience working in cancer care in Ireland and Australia, Niamh has been a member of our nursing team since 2021.

At Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, our specialist nurses like Niamh are the embodiment of patient-centred care. With advanced expertise and training, specialist nurses are a patient's primary point of contact and source of emotional and practical support throughout treatment.

As you know, cancer treatment can feel complicated and overwhelming. When a patient is under the care of a specialist nurse, they have someone to text or call whenever they have a question or concern about treatment. Specialist nurses also coordinate patients' treatment schedules, to make the experience of cancer treatment easier.





Niamh guides new patients through our holistic Living Room services.

“Without specialist nurses, I think our patients might feel a little bit more lost, or unsure about how to navigate their treatment. We are that extra level of support our patients need – a pillar of strength for them.”

As a specialist nurse for Supportive Care, Niamh supports patients with different cancer types, with the aim of helping them manage their symptoms and side effects with evidence informed therapies like oncology massage or exercise physiology, alongside empowering

them in self-management and lifestyle changes.

“I look at every aspect of a patient’s wellbeing – not just their cancer-related symptoms but also how they are doing in themselves. This allows me to take a holistic approach to their care and support them to live well both with and beyond their cancer diagnosis.”

At Chris O’Brien Lifehouse, our team of specialist nurses make an incredible difference to the lives and outcomes of hundreds of patients every day. **Even more remarkably, these positions only exist thanks to the committed support of our donor community.**

We are so grateful to our donors for their generosity, that is touching the lives of patients every day.

Rose's gift for the future

In her thirties, Rose knows she's ahead of the curve when it comes to having a Will. For her, it simply felt like the right thing to do.

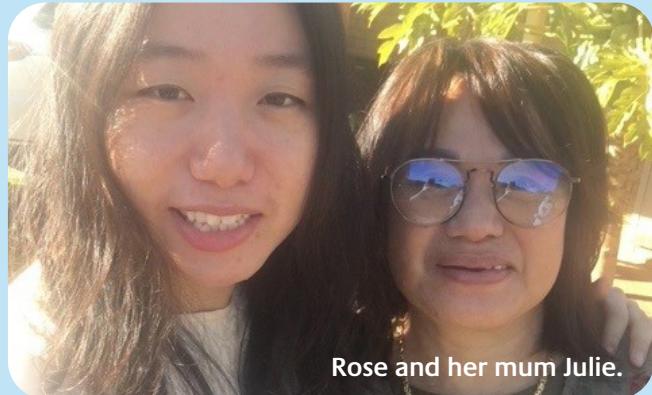
Rose's connection to Chris O'Brien Lifehouse is deeply personal. In recent years, both of her parents received treatment here. "I know the road well," Rose says. "Spending so much time coming in and out, you really see what a difference the care makes."

What stood out most was the compassion woven into every part of her mum's cancer experience. "The nurses always remembered her. She could choose her own music during radiotherapy. Those small, human touches made something incredibly hard feel more manageable."

Just as striking for Rose was the accessibility of that care. "I can't believe how lucky and privileged we are to have somewhere like Chris O'Brien Lifehouse in this country."

When Rose came across Safewills's Free Will Week, it felt like the perfect opportunity to plan for the future and give back for the care her parents received. Working in the tech sector, she did her research before starting.

"Safewill is credible, the lawyers are qualified, and it's an Australian-owned service. That really



Rose and her mum Julie.

mattered to me. The whole online process was extremely simple and seamless."

For Rose, making a Will wasn't about planning for the worst, it was about planning ahead. For her, this meant leaving a gift in her Will to Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. "Life is unexpected," she says. **"Having a Will in place just makes things easier for the people you care about. And if leaving a small gift can help another family the way it helped mine, it's absolutely worth it."**



Write your Will for free with Safewill from 16–30 March.

Scan the QR code to register for a reminder.

Music that heals

This Christmas, you helped fill Chris O'Brien Lifehouse with hope, comfort and connection through music.

Thanks to your generosity, our Christmas Appeal raised \$190,000. These funds will support our Music in Health program and ensure it can stay completely free of charge for patients.

Thanks to the support of our donors, the

Music in Health team can continue to offer bedside music therapy on the wards, host singing for wellbeing groups, and schedule live performances in our foyer. **In 2026, we aim to reach 1,000 patients and families, and celebrate a decade of music therapy at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse.**

This kindness also allows us to expand these services. We look forward to creating more original songs with patients, welcoming new musicians, and introducing more guided music and relaxation sessions at the YouCan Centre.

Thank you for helping ease anxiety, lift spirits and bring moments of calm through music.

From one wave to a movement

Community Fundraising event SurFebruary started as a simple way to give back. Nine years on, it's now an inspiring, community-driven movement. As we wrap up another year, SurFebruary shows just how much people can achieve when they come together for a cause.

The goal is simple: get in the water every day in February and raise funds for cancer research. This challenge was born in 2018, when 28-year-old Jenna-Lea Clark received a life-changing cancer diagnosis. Wanting to turn a difficult time into something meaningful, Jenna-Lea and her husband Arron, a passionate surfer, invited friends and family to surf every day in February to raise funds for Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. That first year, their surf community from Cronulla raised an incredible \$20,000.

In 2021, the grassroots challenge took on an even greater purpose with the creation of the SurFebruary Cancer Research Fund. The fund now supports vital seed funding for young researchers. This is the initial funding required



“We started SurFebruary to help create awareness for cancer, and fundraise for Chris O’Brien Lifehouse.”

Jenna-Lea Clark, co-founder SurFebruary

for new ideas, which often can lead to life-changing breakthroughs.

SurFebruary has grown into a nationwide event that has raised \$2 million for cancer research. The fund has supported over 26 research projects, helping drive better treatments and outcomes for people with cancer.

Thank you to everyone who has surfed, swum, splashed, or cheered from the shore. If you have a fundraising idea, just remember: one small wave can spark lasting change.



Turning promise into progress

Last year, your generosity helped raise over \$600,000 for biomarker research at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. One year on, that impact is already being felt and gaining attention around the world.

Dr Tahlia Scheinberg and her team are continuing to develop a simple blood test to help personalise treatment for men with advanced prostate cancer.

Over the past year, Dr Scheinberg has been invited to present her research at leading international events, including the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the Prostate Cancer Foundation Scientific Retreat in the United States.

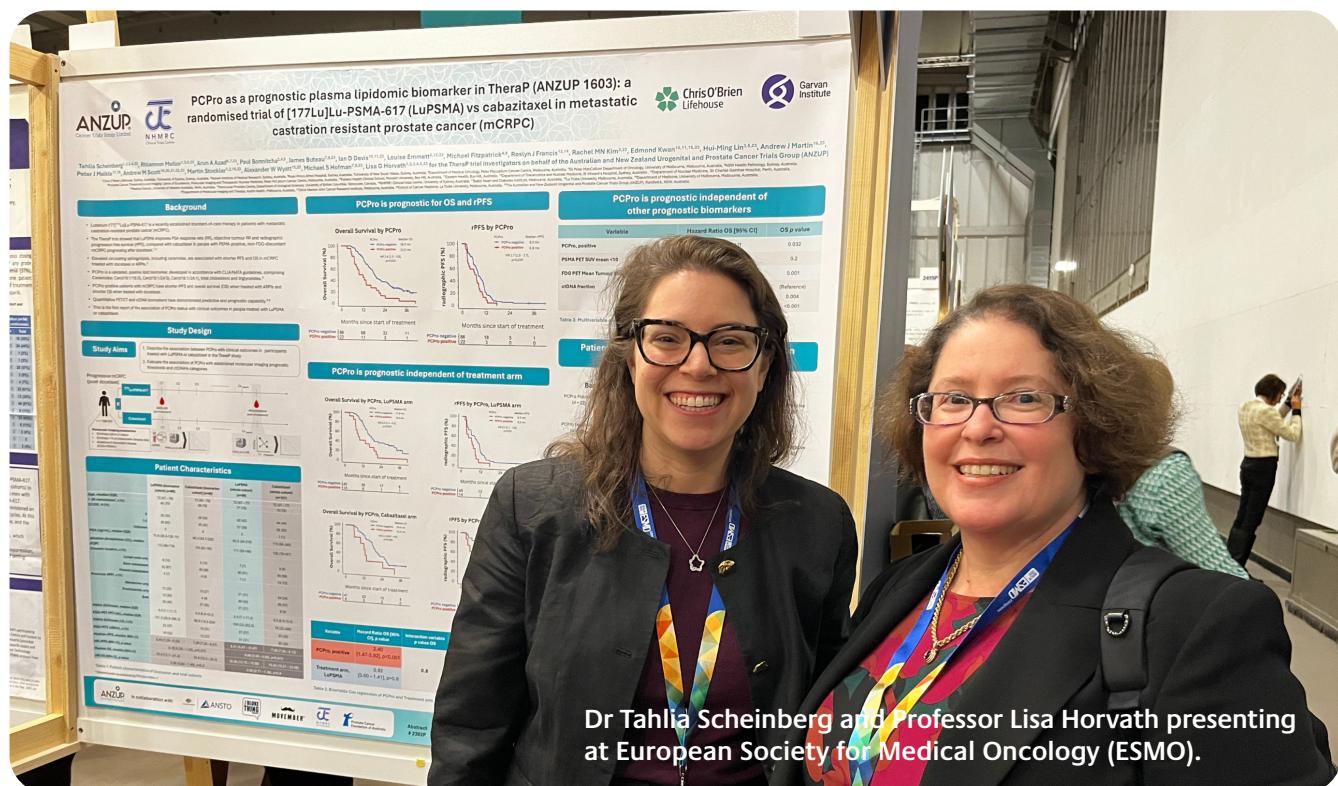
These presentations allow other scientists to understand the findings, ask questions, and explore how the research could be applied in future studies and patient care. Being selected to present at these conferences is a strong sign of the quality and importance of a researcher's work.



“We’re learning that tiny molecules in the blood can help predict which treatments will work best for each patient. Sharing this research internationally helps move us closer to truly personalised cancer care.”

Research at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse is not only advancing patient care locally but is being recognised and respected on the world stage.

Your generosity is helping turn promising ideas into meaningful progress. **You are supporting researchers who are shaping the future of personalised cancer care and improving outcomes for patients everywhere.**



Dr Tahlia Scheinberg and Professor Lisa Horvath presenting at European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO).



Professor Richard Scolyer AO,
Gail O'Brien AO and Prime
Minister Anthony Albanese.

A new Chair for Brain Cancer Research

Last September, the Federal Government announced a \$5.9 million commitment to establish the Richard Scolyer Chair in Brain Cancer Research at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse.

Created in partnership with the University of Sydney and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, this important commitment came about thanks to the advocacy of Professor Richard Scolyer AO, his wife Katie, Gail O'Brien AO, and members of the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse leadership team.

You may already recognise the name Professor Richard Scolyer. A leading pathologist and 2024 joint Australian of the Year, Professor Scolyer spent decades progressing melanoma research. In 2023, he was tragically diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer and the same cancer type that his friend and colleague, Professor Chris O'Brien AO, sadly passed away from in 2009.

After his diagnosis, Professor Scolyer became 'patient zero' in a world first experimental treatment, receiving a combination of immunotherapy and a personalised vaccine before surgery. This treatment, adapted

from melanoma breakthroughs, drew global attention.

Professor Scolyer has received surgery and treatment at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, and has been a public advocate for the hospital, raising over \$129k when he ran City2Surf last year. The Chair position was announced by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Canberra the following month.

The new position will build capacity across our high-performing brain cancer research team to accelerate brain cancer research. **For patients and families, this means new hope for better treatments and outcomes for this deadly disease.**

We're grateful to the Federal Government, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Minister for Health Mark Butler for their commitment to brain cancer research and to Professor Richard Scolyer for his tireless advocacy of Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. We would also like to thank our donor community for supporting our world-leading brain cancer research to a level recognised by the Federal Government.

A fresh welcome for every visitor

If you've been to Chris O'Brien Lifehouse lately, you might have noticed our foyer and waiting areas have had a makeover.

Thanks to the generosity of one very special family, we began refreshing these spaces with new carpet, lighting, and furniture at the end of 2025. This is our first major refurbishment in over 12 years.

This wonderful transformation was made possible by an incredibly generous gift from the family of Jemma Juckes, a beloved patient who passed away in 2024. To honour Jemma's memory, her family wanted to give back in a way that would touch the lives of everyone who comes through our doors. A refurbishment of the foyer and waiting areas was the perfect place to start.

We're also grateful to King Living, who generously gifted the beautifully designed custom furniture. With comfortable lounge seating in calm blue tones, they've created a space that is both welcoming and functional. The project is on track to be completed in March, with the creation of more spaces for patients and families to connect, pause and reflect.

This refresh is more than just new furniture; it's a lasting tribute to Jemma's legacy, bringing warmth and comfort to our patients and their loved ones.

Get involved

If you're looking for new ways to make a difference, why not join one of our upcoming events:

Sydney Half Marathon

3 May

Take on the challenge of the Sydney Half Marathon while raising funds that make a real difference. Every kilometre you conquer helps provide care, support, and hope to people with cancer.

City2Surf

9 August

Join thousands of Australians in the iconic City2Surf and make every step count! Whether you run, jog, or walk, you can raise vital funds. Scan the QR code below for regular updates.

Go The Distance

1-30 September

Set your own challenge this September! Walk, run, roll or swim your chosen distance and raise funds for Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. It's flexible, fun, and open to everyone.



Scan the QR code to explore the full list of events.



Recent refurbishment in our foyer including new carpet, lighting and furniture.