

# FOUNDATION LINE

AUTUMN 2024

 lionsmedicalresearch 
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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Wow, is it March already? Welcome to Foundation Line, the quarterly newsletter of the Queensland and Northern New South Wales Lions Medical Research Foundation, aka LMRF.



The Foundation Board continues to meet on a regular monthly basis, with committee meetings taking place throughout the month. Directors are Lions. We are volunteers yet we are responsible for the operation of a company limited by guarantee. The Foundation has substantial commitments to research, which I am sure will, as in the past, lead to better results for people suffering from illness. I am extremely pleased to work with the directors who are an energetic and knowledgeable group.

The Foundation has two goals, raise money and fund research. The Foundation has several fundraising projects, but bequests from deceased estates have proven to be a major source of funding. No matter how small a tax-deductible donation, a raffle ticket, or the purchase of an apron or hat, the Foundation is very thankful for all the support from Lions Clubs throughout Australia, and the public. The Foundation receives no government support at all.

At the end of the day, research is tomorrow's hope.

The Foundation has partnered with Safewill, an online Will writing platform. Check it out at <https://safewill.com/lmrf>

The Foundation has partnered with Doing Good Rewards, a shopping loyalty programme that not only gives you discounts but provides an income stream to the Foundation. Here is the link <https://doinggoodrewards.com/app/?accesscode=lmrf1234>

The Foundation has joined Play for Purpose. Purchase an ongoing ticket, and win big. Details are at <https://www.playforpurpose.com.au/lmrf-qld-nnsw>

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### HAVE A STORY YOU WANT TO INCLUDE IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

Contact us on 07 38321688 or email [info@lmrf.org.au](mailto:info@lmrf.org.au)



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE *continued*

I encourage you to take a moment and visit the Foundation web page at <https://lionsmedicalresearchfoundation.org.au/>

Check out the YouTube video where research fellow Dr Olivia Holland discusses her research into gestational diabetes. The link is at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b\\_VqrLI58tc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_VqrLI58tc)

Have a look at our video of the District Governor's tour of the research facility. The link is at <https://lionsmedicalresearchfoundation.org.au/resources>

As summer recedes and nights become a little cooler, we at the Foundation look forward to continuing the legacy of 60 years of Foundation research, and with your support we will do just that.

Remember; the life you save may be yours or that of someone you love.

Cheers

Tom Braes

Chair

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year of the Dragon!

On Saturday, 10th February we welcomed in the Chinese Year of the Dragon—a year brimming with promise, evolution, abundance, and good fortune. Let's harness this auspicious energy to drive our initiatives forward and achieve remarkable success together.



LMRF continues to build a sustainable framework with the addition of talented individuals to our Board at the most recent AGM. Their knowledge, experience, skills and input are already proving to be invaluable to the Foundation and will undoubtedly enrich our strategies and propel us toward our goals. Let's extend a warm welcome to our new members as they find their stride within our team.

I'm delighted to share the heartwarming news of sizable donations coming in from our Lions Clubs of Ashgrove/The Gap, Atherton, Burleigh Heads, Golden Valley Keperra, Home Hill, Maroochy North Shore, Palm Beach Currumbin and the Leo Club at Robina State High School. The support from your Clubs and members is what drives our Foundation and Research Fellows forward.

We express our deepest gratitude to the Joan & George Higgs Foundation for their generous bequest, which will significantly bolster our efforts to create a positive impact on health outcomes through the progressive research of our Research Fellows. George was one of the longest serving Lions in Australia and was a Past International Director. He was a charter member of the Lions Club of Carrara in 2010 and was previously a charter member of Broadbeach Mermaid Lions Club which closed. Previously, Joan & George resided in New South Wales.

If you or your loved ones are thinking about your future legacies but are yet to do something about it, then LMRF in collaboration with Safewill are offering everyone the opportunity to write their Will for free in the upcoming Free Wills Week from March 18-24 on Australia's leading online Will-writing platform. This initiative ensures that our supporters and their loved ones can plan for their future with confidence and peace of mind. By offering this valuable service, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting our community members beyond the present moment.

While we're all still here in the present moment, how about some Play for Purpose? LMRF have recently partnered with Play for Purpose where you have the chance to win a first prize worth \$250,000 and more!!! Tickets are only \$10 each with LMRF receiving \$5 of each ticket purchased from our webpage <https://www.playforpurpose.com.au/lmrf-qld-nnsw>

As we March on in 2024 let's remain steadfast in our commitment to raising funds for early career, world class medical researchers working tirelessly to improve outcomes for those affected by ovarian cancer and gestational diabetes. Together, we have the power to shape a brighter future for all.

Wishing you all continued success and fulfillment in the year ahead.

Warm regards,

Deanne  
Executive Manager

## PLAY FOR PURPOSE

LMRF are pleased to partner with Play for Purpose for your chance to win \$250K!!!

What would you do with a cool quarter million suddenly in your hands?

Maybe it's that new luxury car you've wanted or that dream holiday abroad that you never thought you'd be able to take! How about a massive shopping spree for those special people in your life, or even just for yourself! Invest it, use it to upgrade your home or put a deposit down on an investment property. You could even charter a yacht or buy some fine art!

Raffle 22 closes 8pm AEST on Thursday, 14 March 2024 and will be drawn and announced on Friday, 15 March 2024 at [playforpurpose.com.au/winners](https://playforpurpose.com.au/winners) and on our socials.



### THERE'S HUNDREDS OF FANTASTIC PRIZES TO BE WON!

Prize Number	Prize Type	Value	Qty	Total Value
1	\$250,000 of Gold Bullion	\$250,000	1	\$250,000
2	Visa gift voucher* <small>*If a Victorian resident is drawn as the winner, prize will be a Woolworths WISH gift voucher</small>	\$15,000	1	\$15,000
3	Travel Associates gift voucher	\$7,500	1	\$7,500
4	JB Hi-Fi gift voucher	\$5,000	1	\$5,000
5	Woolworths gift voucher	\$2,500	1	\$2,500
6 to 25	JB Hi-Fi gift voucher	\$500	20	\$10,000
26 to 45	The Good Guys gift voucher	\$150	20	\$3,000
46 to 395	Woolworths gift voucher	\$20	350	\$7,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>395</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>



## LMRF CURRENT RESEARCH FELLOWS

### Dr Olivia Holland

Gestational diabetes is a major cause of health problems during pregnancy, and about 50% of women with gestational diabetes go on to develop type 2 diabetes after pregnancy. Gestational diabetes affects one in six pregnancies and incidence is rising, with almost 54,000 Australian women diagnosed each year.

The goal of my research is to better understand this disorder and its effects. If we can tell which women are likely to suffer from gestational diabetes and how severe her diabetes will be we can personalise her care to improve health both during and after pregnancy.

#### Sharing our research story and findings

Meeting the District Governors Elect and other Lions and supporters in November was a highlight. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to be able to share a little about our research and what your generosity makes possible with representatives from around the region. I have always been impressed with the interest of the Lions in our work as researchers and your compassion in helping us work to improve health.

This year is off to a great start with the publication of two scientific papers, one on how a mother's diet during pregnancy can affect how her offspring will process their food, and another on why male babies may do worse when there's a problem with the pregnancy.

In November last year I was honoured to be able to give a talk on some of the work supported by the LMRF at the important international joint meeting of the Endocrine Society of Australia and Society of Reproductive Biology that was held in Brisbane, as well as support my PhD students Hannah Han, Hasini Rathnayake, and Dayna Zimmerman with their presentations. I was also privileged to be a session Chair at the Australian and New Zealand Placental Research Associations Satellite Meeting at the Sunshine Coast, which was full of fantastic research about the placenta's critical role in pregnancy health.

#### Student Success

As well as my PhD students being selected to present their work at influential conferences, I am very happy to report that my previous Honours Student Mariama Kamara passed her degree with first class honours. Mariama is planning to continue her successful research studies on better ways to predict gestational diabetes through a PhD in my research group. In February Caitlyn Lovi also successfully passed the last big milestone of her Masters of Medical Research programme with very positive comments from her panel of assessor and the audience.

The teaching year has just started, and this year I will be supervising two new Masters of Medical Research students and a Master of Pharmacy student who will investigate gestational diabetes and improving how we predict pregnancy complications. I look forward to letting you know how Mohamed, Emmersen, and Samantha's projects progress. I have also taken on a new mentee from the Griffith Honours Collage, with Kayleen planning to



become a medical doctor like her older sister. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to mentor these high-achieving students for the last four years and to see them flourish.

The Lions should be extremely proud of the support that they provide to these nascent researchers and medical professionals, who show so much promise and passion to help improve health and lives. They are a wonderful example of what your backing of me as a research leader makes possible.

### Collaborative research between university and hospital

To make a real tangible difference to health our research needs to reach women in need. Our group includes researchers who are experts in both fundamental and clinical research, and this is critical to our findings advancing care.

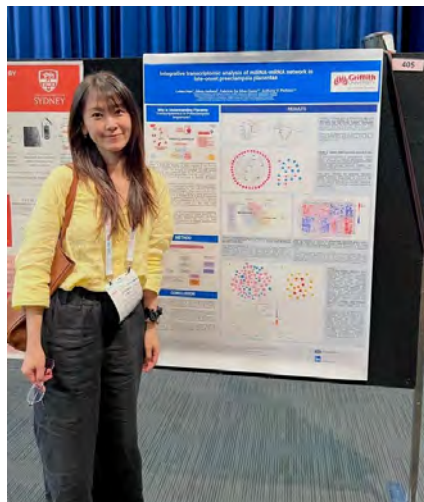
In recognition of these ongoing successful partnerships, in December our team was awarded a Collaborative Seed Grant of \$5,000 from the School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences to investigate genetic based markers to help predict if a women will get gestational diabetes and what treatment would work best for her.

### Thank you to the Lions community

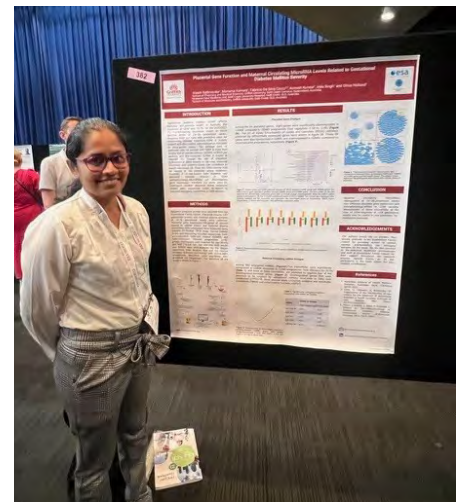
Through the LMRF, we are part of a community that is trying to make things better, whether is through direct research or funding support. Donating to the LMRF might feel like a small act but when combined with the contributions of other supporters, your generosity has a profound impact on our ability to continue this research and improve lives.



*(left to right) Dr Olivia Holland, Dr James Cuffe, Dayna Zimmerman (our current PhD student), and Dr David Simmons at the 2023 Joint Endocrine Society of Australia and Society For Reproductive Biology Annual Scientific Meeting in Brisbane*



*PhD student Hannah (Luhao) Han with her poster on how genetic changes in the placenta can help better define a dangerous pregnancy complication*



*PhD student Hasini Rathnayaka with her poster a how we might improve screening for gestational diabetes*

## Dr Dominic Guanzon

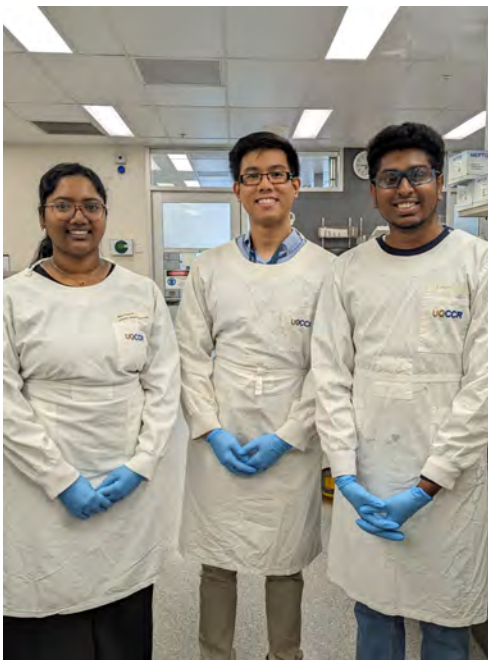
I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Lions Medical Research Foundation (LMRF) and the Lions Clubs for their unwavering support of our research program.

We recently bid farewell to Vidya Gummagatta, who has successfully completed her master's degree (*picture 1*). It was a delightful experience serving as Vidya's primary supervisor during her investigation of extracellular vesicle RNA in ovarian cancer, and I wish her the very best in her future endeavours.

This year I am pleased to present our newly formed research team dedicated to DNA-based blood diagnostic projects (*picture 2*). We extend a warm welcome to Reshinthine Purushothaman (Reshi), a new honours student who will be engaging herself in the investigation of extracellular vesicle DNA in gestational diabetes mellitus. Additionally, Rakesh Sankar will be carrying forward his project from the previous year, focusing on the exploration of extracellular vesicle DNA and ovarian cancer chemoresistance.



*Picture 1 - Graduation of master's student Vidya Gummagatta (left) and supervisor Dr. Dominic Guanzon (right)*



*Picture 2 - Honour's student Reshinthine Purushothaman (left), master's student Rakesh Sankar (right) and supervisor Dr. Dominic Guanzon (middle)*





The year 2024 holds great promise and excitement for our research endeavours. Currently, we are examining the DNA extracted from the blood of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Specifically, we're studying two groups: those unresponsive and responsive to chemotherapy. Our goal is to use the differences in DNA between these groups as a diagnostic tool for predicting chemotherapy response – distinguishing between responders and those resistant to chemotherapy (chemoresistance). Additionally, Rakesh and I are working on a method to capture DNA fragments in blood indicative of chemoresistance, which will improve the speed, sensitivity, and accuracy of our test.

Recently, we conducted a successful laboratory tour for the LMRF and Lions Club members at the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research (UQCCR), which involved media coverage (*picture 3*). I invite you to watch the video to gain insights into LMRF and our research program (<https://lionsmedicalresearchfoundation.org.au/resources>). It was a gratifying experience for me to engage with the public, Lions and LMRF members during the tour. Additionally, I am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to present at the Q1 Lions District convention in November 2024, where I will highlight the latest achievements in our ovarian cancer research program.



*Picture 3 - Picture 3 – Laboratory tour at the University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research (UQCCR) with members of the LMRF and Lions clubs*

LMRF's continuous support has played a pivotal role in launching and sustaining DNA analysis projects in our laboratory. Your generous backing has allowed us to establish a foundation for DNA analysis, a crucial component previously absent from our research program. Using this important DNA molecule as a diagnostic tool, we are committed to developing a blood test for the early detection of ovarian cancer and addressing chemoresistance in women facing ovarian cancer.





## SPARQ-ed

SPARQ-ed (Students Performing Advanced Research - Queensland Education) is a unique biomedical educational program for school students, delivered through a collaboration between the Department of Education and the Translational Research Institute (TRI).

Students and teachers from across the Queensland schooling sectors (State Schools, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland) are provided with a practical introduction to biomedical research at our cutting-edge facility featuring a fully equipped Physical Containment (PC2) teaching laboratory and learning centre, located at the TRI in Brisbane. Student workshops, teacher professional development and research immersion programs use contemporary biomedical research contexts to enhance the delivery of curriculum, including the development of 21st century skills.

LMRF generously provides financial support to remove barriers to engagement for students and staff located outside of the Brisbane metropolitan area. The scholarship can be used by families to assist with the costs associated with travelling to and/or staying in Brisbane.

### 2024 SPARQ-ed Program Overview

During school terms SPARQ-ed takes school group bookings for both excursions to TRI and incursions to individual schools in and around Brisbane. We are currently booked out for 2024.

Individual students are invited to apply to attend special programs which go beyond the curriculum and aim to inspire students to select STEM subjects at school and consider STEM careers. In 2024 these programs are:

*For students in Years 8 and 9 – Junior Research Engagement Program.*

- 10-11 June
- 13-14 June
- 2-3 December
- 5-6 December

*For students in Years 10, 11 and 12 – Senior Research Immersion Program.*

- 8-12 April
- 15-19 April
- 24-28 June
- 1-5 July
- 23-27 September
- 30 September – 4 October

*Regional Roadshow – taking SPARQ-ed outside of Brisbane.*

- 18-22 November – location yet to be finalised.

## Recent Programs supported by LMRF

In January, 24 excited Year 8 and 9 students participated in a two-day Junior Research Program. Four Beryl Phippard Memorial Scholarships were awarded to Year 8 and 9 students travelling from Townsville.

Over the two days students learnt how to use essential laboratory equipment, such as micropipettes, before performing a bacterial transformation. The next day they analysed the DNA of the transformed bacteria by completing a PCR and gel electrophoresis.



*"I decided to participate in the SPARQ-ed research program as it was recommended to me by one of my friends who also participated in this program last year. We both felt that this program would provide a valuable experience to choose a career pathway in the future. After participating in this program, I plan to do the same and encourage fellow friends and classmates to explore opportunities in STEM and Biomedical research to help our local community. In addition to this, this program will give me experience to aid my interest in Medical Technology. Medical Technology helps many people every day, and after I finish my studies, I hope that I can use my knowledge and skills gained to provide the same opportunities in regional and remote areas of Queensland including my local community."*

*Year 9 Beryl Phippard Memorial Scholarship awardee*

## Upcoming Events

We are currently processing Beryl Phippard Memorial Scholarship applications for Year 11 and 12 students attending the upcoming Senior Immersion programs. So far, applications have been received from students in Cairns, Tully, Bundaberg, Sunshine Coast, and Gold Coast.

Students will be working with Dr Timothy Wells from The University of Queensland's Frazer Institute seeking to answer the question: "Do some antibodies do more harm than good?" They will explore how our immune system interacts with Gram-negative bacteria during chronic lung infections. We'll let you know what they find in our next update.



# Write your Will

## for free

**March 18 -24**

Start, complete & update your Will with Australia's leading online Will-writing platform.

[WWW.SAFEWILL.COM/LMRF](http://WWW.SAFEWILL.COM/LMRF)





1

## Prepare your Will

We'll ask a few simple questions to create your Will. We've made it easy enough to use on any device, and our team are here to help if you have any questions.

2

## Leave a charitable gift

Once you've taken care of your family, you can leave what feels right to you to charity. Any gift, no matter the size, can make a significant difference to charitable organisations.

3

## Submit for review

When you're ready, checkout and submit to our affiliate law firm to ensure the steps have been filled out correctly. We'll be in touch within 10 business days.

4

## Print and sign

We'll email you when your Will is ready to be printed and signed. Find two witnesses, sign the Will, upload it back onto the platform, and keep your physical copy somewhere safe.



An important opportunity to protect your family and safeguard your life's work - with all the added benefits.

## Support

We offer local customer support 7 days a week. Get in touch with our local team via live chat.

## Free updates for a year

Free unlimited updates for the first year, thereafter it costs just \$15/year. This is optional, and you can opt-out at any time in your account settings.

## Always online

Access and update your Will anytime, anywhere online.

## Legal expertise

Your Will is reviewed by practicing Australian Solicitors to ensure it has been filled out correctly.

## Safe and secure

Your personal information is safe and secure and won't be shared with anyone.

Write your Will for FREE  
between March 18 - 24

[SAFEWILL.COM/LMRF](https://SAFEWILL.COM/LMRF)



## Doing Good Rewards



### LIONS MEDICAL RESEARCH REWARDS



## 4 Ways to Shop

- 

**1. Shop online retailers**  
Click through from platform & pay with registered card
- 

**2. Shop In-Store with your registered card**  
No need to show the app or a loyalty card - happens automatically when you tap your card
- 

**3. Buy e-Gift cards**  
Buy e-Gift Cards, Tickets and Movie eVouchers on the platform; they'll be emailed to you to spend in-store or online
- 

**4. Buy Movie eVouchers & Event Tickets**



Download the **Doing Good app** and sign up to **LMRF Rewards** with access code

**lmrf1234**







LIONS  
MEDICAL  
RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION



Order your rose today  
and fundraise for LMRF  
by selling in your local  
community or at your  
Mother's Day function!



**ATTENTION!**

**NO MORE CHEQUES  
AFTER 1ST MARCH 2024**