

# NEURO NEWS

**FUNDING LIFESAVING** NEUROSURGICAL RESEARCH



## SCHOLARSHIPS DRIVE RESEARCH INNOVATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Left: President Dr Glenn McCulloch & Prof Stuart Pitson NRF Chair of Brain Tumour Research

NRF President Dr Glenn McCulloch said the establishment of scholarships drives investment in new research and promotes careers in research in SA - which is a centre for excellence in neuroscience and neurosurgery.

Dr Glenn McCulloch acknowledged that without the support of families such as the Adams, Butterys and others, there would not be as much research into the causes and potential cures of brain tumours and other neurosurgical diseases and conditions.

"Please donate to the NRF to support these new scholarships - we could not

support these new early-phase researchers without your help. These scholarships are supporting the next generation of world-class researchers who are working hard to discover new treatments, medications and ultimately a cure," Dr McCulloch said.

Prof Stuart Pitson, who leads the Molecular Therapeutics Laboratory and is also the NRF Chair of Brain Tumour Research, said the scholarships would help to build a future workforce for brain tumour research in SA. It is well known that such opportunities, where students are exposed to and partake in quality research, play

a major role in encouraging students to choose a career in biomedical research and most often in the research areas they are exposed to."

"Thank you to family and friends for their long-term and ongoing support of the NRF. Brain tumour research requires urgent funding to help discover improved treatments, new medications, and better quality of life outcomes for patients," Prof Pitson said.

**Please donate to the scholarships now!  
Thank you.**

### RICHARD BUTTERY NRF GLIOBLASTOMA RESEARCH VACATION SCHOLARSHIP



Kerry Buttery with Erica McGiffert and Stuart Pitson

Made possible thanks to the hard work and fundraising achieved by Kerry Buttery and her family and friends, in memory of her late husband Richard Buttery, who sadly passed away from brain cancer.

The inaugural recipient in 2022 is Erica McGiffert, who is now pursuing a career in brain tumour research as a result of this scholarship, which gave her an experience of what her life would be like working in the Molecular Therapeutics Laboratory at the Centre for Cancer Biology.

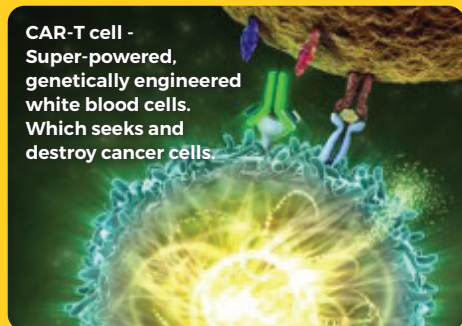
### CHRIS ADAMS UNISA RESEARCH GRANT

Provides support of \$5,000 to a UniSA PhD candidate to help them further their research. In 2021, this was awarded to Erica Yeo and the scholarship allowed her to delve more deeply into her vital research developing immune-based therapies for aggressive brain cancers at the Centre for Cancer Biology's Translational Oncology Laboratory. The scholarship is named after Chris "Crittter" Adams. Chris's family has been dedicated to honouring his memory and spirit through their 'Strong Enough to Live' campaign funding vital research into brain cancer through the NRF and UniSA researchers.



**"Images to Inspire" the next SETL fundraiser Art Auction.  
To learn more go to website [nrf.com.au/events](http://nrf.com.au/events)**

## TESSA GARGETT CLINICAL TRIALS PAEDIATRIC BRAIN TUMOUR CAR-T CELL THERAPY



Professor Michael Brown and Dr Tessa Gargett have been working to deliver immune therapy to cancer patients at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. This new treatment is known as CAR-T cell therapy and it super-powers the immune system to hunt down and kill cancer cells.

Over the last couple of years NRF have supported this team to investigate whether CAR-T cells could be useful in treating a devastating childhood brain cancer known as Diffuse Midline Glioma (DMG). The NRF funds directly supported a proof-of-principle study, enabling precious patient samples to be shipped between the Sydney Children's Hospital and the Centre for Cancer Biology in Adelaide to allow testing of the therapy.

The team found that the CAR-T cells were extremely effective at killing DMG cells in the lab, and with this evidence the team were able to approach the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for approval to conduct a phase 1 clinical trial. They are delighted to announce that the TGA granted them approval in November 2021.



Together with their collaborator Dr David Ziegler at the Sydney Children's Hospital they now anticipate opening the clinical trial for

patient recruitment this year, with CAR-T cell manufacturing to be performed right here in Adelaide! This exciting development was made possible by initial support from you our donors, and the NRF to get the project off the ground.

# KRISTEN'S 8.5 YEAR NEURO JOURNEY

## ASTROCYTOMA BRAIN TUMOUR



Kristen was diagnosed with a pilocytic astrocytoma one month before she turned 21 years old and went on to have 4 brain surgeries.

"The main concern of my neurosurgeon was the hydrocephalus. Being a slow growing and benign tumour and rather than render me blind, it was decided the best course of action would be to remove as much of the tumour as possible, without compromising my vision, and to monitor from then on."

"What was initially 'one, maybe two operations' turned into four (in three weeks.) The first to conduct an endoscopic septostomy, a biopsy, and to put an external drain in place (to continue to drain fluid while measuring build-up.) Second and third were the debulking of the tumour, and the fourth was to insert a shunt on the left."

"Time for chemotherapy: I began six rounds and after being told "it's a low-grade chemotherapy so you shouldn't get too sick" - I was throwing up on the regular. I had learnt early in my journey that when a doctor says "you shouldn't get too sick" - I will definitely get sick."

"Fast forward three weeks and I began having issues with my vision. A subsequent MRI revealed fluid build-up and an increase in tumour size. I underwent surgery to relieve the fluid build-up and had a stent inserted (surgery 5)."

"Once recovered, I began 30 rounds of radiotherapy. I continued to work through treatment and became good at excusing myself from meetings to run to the bathroom for a spew. My last check-up was stable again and showed further, yet small, deterioration in the tumour itself."

"So, after 8.5 years, for the first time, I was given 12 months off between appointments. There are not enough, nor adequate, words that convey my gratitude to all those involved in my past and ongoing treatment."

Thank you to my medical team:  
Neurosurgeon: Stephen Santoreneos,  
Ophthalmologist: Anna Galanopoulos,  
Endocrinologist: David Torpy, Special mention: Nick Vrods  
The end (I hope.)

Full article available

[www.nrf.com.au/patient-stories/kristen-my-brain-tumour-journey](http://www.nrf.com.au/patient-stories/kristen-my-brain-tumour-journey)

## WILKINS FAMILY FOUNDATION

It was Kristen's experience that prompted the family to want to give back and help others going through similar situations - and why they established the Wilkins Family Foundation.



Since that time, the Wilkins Family Foundation has donated funds to purchase a variety of different life-saving neurosurgical and research equipment throughout SA hospitals and research facilities.

Their generous latest donations of 3 items to the SA neurosurgical departments in 2021/2022

- Royal Adelaide Hospital - XR2 Radiolucent Mayfield Skull Clamp and Headrest
- Royal Adelaide Hospital - AEX Generator for PlasmaBlade and Aquamantys
- Women's & Children's Hospital - Pneumatic Endoscopy Holder

Full article available: [www.nrf.com.au/news](http://www.nrf.com.au/news)

# NRF GREY MAY RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS WILL ALL BE LIVE



SCREENED ONLINE 1PM EVERY TUESDAY  
IN MAY ON NRF FACEBOOK PAGE.

Can't make that time?  
Don't worry they will be  
recorded and available  
at your convenience  
on the website under  
events [www.nrf.com.au/events](http://www.nrf.com.au/events) and on  
**Facebook.**

## TUESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 1PM

Research. Meet the faces of Brain Tumour  
Research in Adelaide.



Walk through the Uni SA / Centre for  
Cancer Biology and SAHMRI labs with Prof  
Stuart Pitson, NRF Chair of Brain Tumour

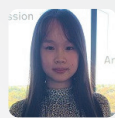
- Dr Lisa Ebert B.Sc. (Hons), PhD Senior Research Fellow - Analysis of patient tumours to support new immune-based therapies for glioblastoma.
- Dr Melinda Tea BLabMed(Hons), PhD Research Fellow - Developing advanced models of recurrent brain tumours.
- Dr Guillermo A. Gomez PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Laboratory Head - Use of artificial intelligence to predict patient's response to treatment.
- Associate Professor Cedric Bardy PhD Director of The Laboratory for Human Neurophysiology & Genetics.

## TUESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1PM

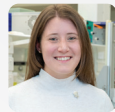
Meet the future of Brain Tumour Research:  
Our up and coming Scholarship Students  
training here in Adelaide.



- Erica McGiffert the inaugural recipient of the newly established Richard Buttery NRF Glioblastoma Research Vacation Scholarship.



- PhD candidate Erica Yeo is the recipient of the 2021 Chris Adams Research Grant, developing vital research immune-based therapies for aggressive brain cancers.



- PhD Candidate Kaitlin Scheer wins 2020 Chris Adams Research Grant, researching the complicated vascular network in the biology of glioblastoma.

## TUESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1PM

Learn about all the Support Services  
available to Brain Tumour Patients in SA,  
detailed information available on the NRF  
website [www.nrf.com.au/brain-tumour-info](http://www.nrf.com.au/brain-tumour-info). Go to the NRF website to register for  
this Zoom meeting.



- **National Advocacy Service (NAS)**  
Critical in assistance with applying to the NDIS, Centrelink, Carer Gateway and My Aged Care. [www.peaceofmindfoundation.org.au/resources-advocacy](http://www.peaceofmindfoundation.org.au/resources-advocacy).  
**Please call 0456 608 484.**
- **Brain Tumour Alliance Australia (BTAA)**  
Support phone line for brain tumour patients, their carers and families.  
**Please call 1800 857 221.**
- **Adelaide Brain Tumour Support (ABTS)**  
Facebook Group

## TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1PM

Meet the Advocacy Service (NAS). Go to  
the NRF website to register for this  
Zoom meeting.



- NAS is a collaboration between Peace of Mind & Cure Brain Cancer Foundation, supporting people with a primary diagnosis of brain cancer.
- Equipping patients and carers with sound advice, information and practical support. Critical in assistance with applying to the NDIS, Centrelink, Carer Gateway and My Aged Care.

## TUESDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 1PM

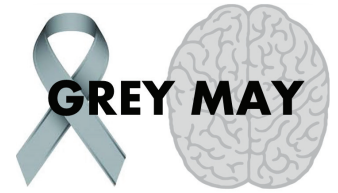
Walk through the South Australian  
Neurological Tumour Bank - the brain  
tumour bank



- Dr Santosh Poonnoose FRACS Director of South Australian Neurological Tumour Bank - Flinders University - Department of Neurosurgery.
- Dr Rebecca Ormsby BSc (Hons), PhD Coordinator, SA Neurological Tumour Bank, Research Associate - Flinders University - College of Medicine & Public Health.

# GREY MAY FUNDRAISING

## GO TO [NRF.COM.AU/EVENTS](http://NRF.COM.AU/EVENTS)



### BRAIN TUMOURS KILL MORE ADULTS UNDER 40 THAN ANY OTHER CANCER.

That is why the NRF is committed to investing in innovative new brain tumour research - to help find better treatments and improve quality of life outcomes for brain tumour patients. Support innovative new brain tumour SA research:

Visit [www.nrf.com.au](http://www.nrf.com.au) and click on the Grey May page to find out more. 

**BUY YOUR GREY MAY RIBBON BADGE** to show your support for \$10.



**A STAR OF HOPE** Make a donation and purchase a star in memory of a loved one or in recognition of a loved one living with a brain tumour.



### 2022 CITY TO BAY FUN RUN

**DR JONES & PARTNERS**  
MEDICAL IMAGING

Sunday 18 Sept 2022



- Register now for this year's race or do your own DIY version locally!
- Start fundraising now!

NRF Team Neuro 2021 raised an incredible \$27,130 for neurosurgical research in the DIY City to Bay 2021. "A highlight this year was Tyler Fuller, a survivor of a traumatic brain injury, running with neurosurgeons from Flinders Medical Centre where he was treated. Thank you sponsor Dr Jones & Partners.

**Buy your \$10 raffle ticket online now and win BIG!**  
Closing Date 9th June



Play For Purpose is Australia's 100% not-for-profit community raffle. They partner with hundreds of ACNC registered charities and grassroots sporting clubs to help them fundraise.

**Raffle tickets are just \$10, with a guaranteed minimum of \$5 directly supporting the NRF, the rest helps fund prizes and the running of the raffle. There are 4 Raffles a year.**

Every Play For Purpose ticket gives you the chance to share in over 300 prizes, and the chance to win a first prize valued at \$250,000. With a 1 in 380 chance of winning a prize, all while supporting our good cause - giving has never been so rewarding!