



ABCF

AUSTRALIAN
BRAIN CANCER
FOUNDATION

Impact Report

Sep 2024 – Sep 2025

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Message from the CEO

Dear friends,

It's hard to believe that an entire year has passed since we last stood together in September 2024, to launch the Australian Brain Cancer Foundation (ABCF).

That launch marked the beginning of something bold, a commitment to build a wrap-around model of care, research, and advocacy right here in Canberra and to connect families and patients with clinicians and researchers.

We promised to start local, listen deeply, and to build something that could one day be replicated across Australia. Thanks to our sponsors and ABCF members believing in that vision, we have made remarkable progress. In just twelve months, we have:

- Launched the **Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team** in partnership with the Peace of Mind Foundation, giving Canberra families personalised in-home navigation and practical, compassionate support, for the first time.
- Saved the **ACT Brain Cancer Biobank** with emergency funding and secured its first two Founding Partners to stabilise and grow this vital research asset with ANU's Quinn Group.
- Created Canberra's first post-mortem brain donation pathway, honouring Gail McCulloch's last wish.
- Developed Australia's first-of-its-kind **ACT Monthly Family Support Group** which offers families flexible support, whether connecting informally, joining a professionally guided group session,

or participating in breakout rooms. A qualified counsellor will be present at every session.

- Started designing Canberra's first comprehensive **Financial Hardship Grants Program** dedicated to brain cancer families, based on what our community told us they need most.
- Created Australia's First **Brain Cancer Directory** and **Resource Booklet**, starting with the Canberra region.

While we will not be holding a formal event this year, we've been laying the groundwork for what comes next, building carefully, listening deeply, and preparing to scale our impact.

We have achieved this as a volunteer-run foundation, guided by our values: collaboration over duplication, local first, and 100% of public donations going directly to programs (with overheads covered by sponsors whenever possible).

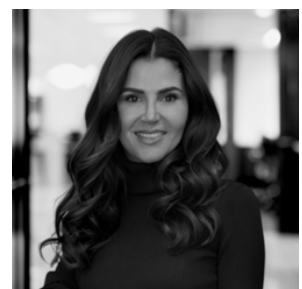
Thank you for standing with us in year one. The pages that follow showcase what we have built month by month and where we are headed next.

Together, we are proving that Canberra is not just part of the brain cancer story: we are leading it.

With gratitude,

Milena Skepev

Milena Skepev
CEO and Founder



About ABCF

Our mission

The ABCF is dedicated to transforming Canberra into the national hub for brain cancer care, research, and innovation.

By bringing the best medical and research minds together, we aim to deliver wraparound support for patients and families, driving breakthroughs in treatment while ensuring compassionate, practical care from diagnosis to recovery.

Our three initiatives

1. Patient and Family Care:

- Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team, Community Navigator.
- ACT Monthly Family Support Group.
- Financial Hardship Grants (in partnership with GIVIT and Rise Above).

2. Research into Brain Cancer:

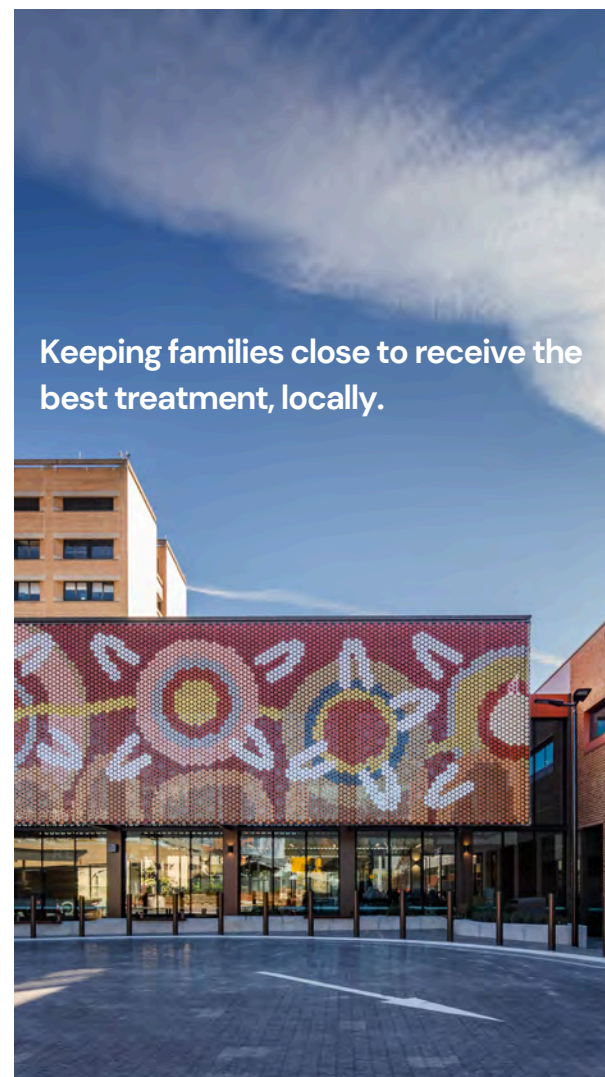
- ACT Brain Cancer Biobank; organoids and tumour genetics with the Quinn Group.
- Legacy donation pathways.
- Creating personalised drug treatments.
- Bringing human trials to Canberra.

3. Medical Equipment:

- Equipping Canberra hospitals with world-class diagnostic and surgical tools, so families can stay close to home and receive the best possible treatment and outcomes.

How we work

- **Collaboration over duplication:** to deliver essential programs faster.
- **Local first:** build the model in Canberra; replicate nationally when ready; funds raised locally will always stay local.
- **Accountability:** Medical Advisory Committee oversight; Board governance; transparent reporting and community consultation.
- **100% donation model:** 100% of public donations go to programs; overheads are covered by sponsors.



Our Achievements In Our First Year

1

Launching the Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team

Launched in April 2025, the Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team (CBCST) is the ACT's first dedicated program for families. Backed by \$585,000 from 13 Founding Partners and delivered by Peace of Mind Foundation, it provides in-home navigation by Community Navigator Elizabeth Blooms. In just three months, 19 referrals show its vital role in guiding families with dignity and hope throughout their battle with brain cancer.

2

Brain Cancer Directory and Canberra's Information Booklet

In May 2025, ABCF launched Canberra's first personalised brain cancer support booklet, proudly sponsored by Zapari. Distributed by Brain Cancer Support Team Navigator Elizabeth Blooms, it features the region's first Brain Cancer Services Directory with local and national supports. Also our online service directory and resources page have already gained 1,100+ views. Volunteers are expanding this vital resource nationwide.

3

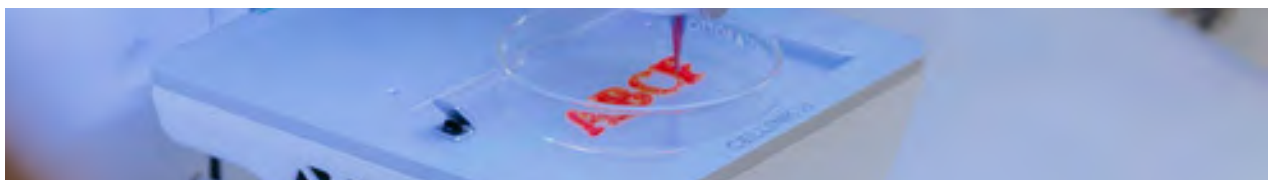
Canberra's First ACT Monthly Family Support Group

After extensive community consultation, the ABCF is launching the ACT Monthly Family Support Group in partnership with the Brain Tumour Alliance Australia (BTAA). Beginning late 2025 at the Griffith Neighbourhood Centre, the program offers professionally supported sessions for patients, carers, and children, providing counselling, peer connection, child-friendly activities, and access to other services.

4

Saving the ACT Brain Cancer Biobank

When ACT Government seed funding ended in March 2025, vital samples faced being lost. For families, biobanking is a final legacy, preserving tissue for future research and treatments. ABCF stepped in with a \$37,500 emergency donation, and launched a sustainable funding model. With two Founding Partners onboard, the Biobank's future is secured and advancing personalised research.



5

Developing ABCF's Financial Hardship Grants Program

From February to August 2025, ABCF worked with families to design Australia's first comprehensive Financial Hardship Grants Program for brain cancer. Grants of \$2,000–\$5,000 per year will help cover counselling, children's tutoring, sport, activities, funeral costs, legal and accounting needs, plus memory-making experiences. While funding is finalised, ABCF has partnered with GIVIT and Rise Above to provide immediate assistance.

6

Canberra's First Brain Cancer Community Focus Group

Launching in early 2026, ABCF is forming the ACT's first Brain Cancer Community Focus Group. This panel of 8–10 patients, carers, and advocates will guide ABCF's current and future programs and decisions. Reporting directly to the Board and Medical Advisory Committee, this panel ensures that lived experience drives strategy and focus. Expressions of Interest will open soon, with the group starting early 2026.

7

Equipping Canberra for Better Care

Brain cancer surgery is complex and life-defining. In 2025, ABCF identified three critical tools for Canberra Hospital: Gliolan Goggles (\$35k), Intraoperative Ultrasound (\$396k), and a LITT System (\$1m). These will improve surgical safety, reduce complications, keep families local, and attract top clinicians. ABCF is seeking partners to help fund this step-by-step.

8

Growing Partnerships and Leadership

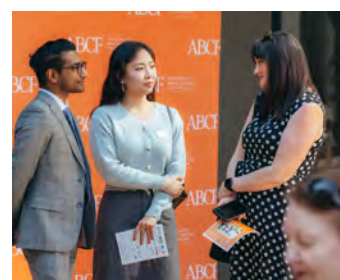
ABCF is strengthening its leadership and partnerships in 2025. Patron Beth Campbell and Professor Emma Schultz have joined the Strategic Advisory Committee. Partnerships with POMF, BTAA, Rise Above, and GIVIT remain central, ensuring coordinated, compassionate, wraparound care for brain cancer families across Canberra.

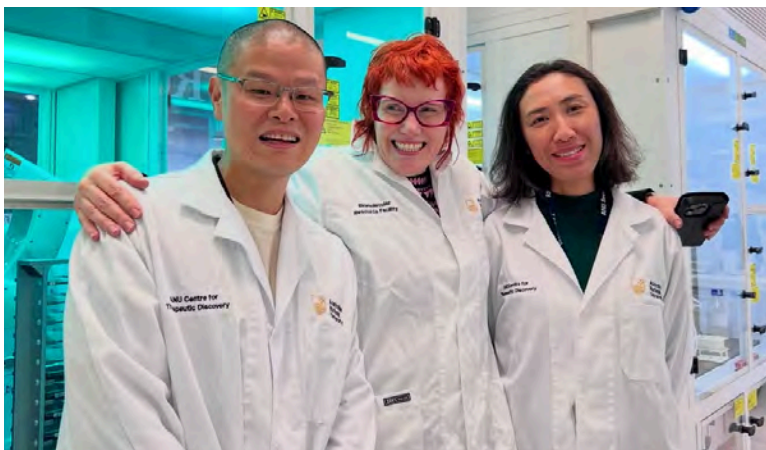
9

Annual Report

In 2024, ABCF published its first Annual Report, demonstrating accountability, transparency, and governance while showcasing programs, impact, and stories of families supported across Canberra and Australia.

ABCF Launch 2024 Photo Gallery





Scan the QR code to explore the ABCF Launch Gallery and relive the moments that started it all.



1. Launching the Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team (CBCST)

In April 2025, ABCF launched its first major program: the **Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team (CBCST)**, which is the first of its kind in the ACT.

Thanks to \$585,000 secured from ABCF's **13 CBCST Founding Partners**, and in collaboration with the Peace of Mind Foundation, ACT families now have access to dedicated, in-home navigation and support through our **Community Brain Cancer Navigator, Elizabeth Blooms**.

Elizabeth Blooms is a registered nurse with over 25 years of experience in home-based care, specialising in palliative support, grief, and loss. As the Community Brain Cancer Navigator for the Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team, she provides compassionate, in-home guidance to ACT families navigating the challenges of brain cancer.

In the first quarter (April – June) of operations, the CBCST received 19 referrals, more than double what was expected at this early stage. It just shows how great the need truly is.

Since April 2025:

- 26 new referrals received.
- Patients ranged from ages 19 to over 65, with most diagnosed with Glioblastoma (GBM).

Referrals came from:

- Canberra Hospital;
- ACT Health;
- Canberra Brain and Spine Centre;
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre;
- ABCF and POMF websites;
- Directly from families.



Client Testimonials

Beyond the numbers, the stories speak volumes:

- Lee, a mother of three, found comfort and strength as Elizabeth helped her plan meaningful family milestones after her diagnosis.
- Christopher was able to stay independent longer, with gentle support easing the transition to in-home care.
- Lloyd reconnected with old friends and made it to the coast one last time, something he thought he'd never do again. Elizabeth made that happen and helped keep joy and dignity in his final months.
- One of the first people supported was Gail McCulloch, a Canberra teacher and grandmother whose final wish was to donate her brain to research. Her story is on page 17.

The CBCST is proving that with the right support at the right time, families can navigate this journey with more confidence, dignity, and hope. This program is only just beginning and its early impact shows why sustaining and expanding it is one of our top priorities.



Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team 13 Founding Partners

The Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team was made possible by the generosity of the following 13 CBCST Founding Partners.



2. Creating Australia's First Brain Cancer Directory and Canberra's Personalised Information Booklet

We created Australia's first brain cancer directory and Canberra's first personalised information booklet because patients and families were struggling to find clear, reliable information. With services spread across different organisations, it was overwhelming to navigate. This central resource makes access simple, trusted, and supportive.

The directory is available online, alongside ABCF's broader resources page. Since launching, the combined digital resources have been viewed over 1,100 times by families and clinicians.

Volunteers across Australia are now working with ABCF to create regional versions of the directory, which will be hosted on our website in 2026.

Find a Service

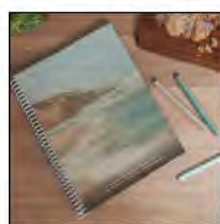
The Australian Brain Cancer Foundation (ABCF) (ABN: 18 669 852 902) provides a brain cancer services directory for the ACT region, which relies on information from publicly available sources. We aim to assist individuals and families affected by brain cancer in finding relevant healthcare professionals and ancillary services. The ABCF does not endorse or recommend any specific providers listed in the Services Directory. Users should conduct their own research and evaluation, as well as independent specialist medical advice prior to selecting a healthcare service. The information may not always be up-to-date, and the ABCF takes no liability for its accuracy or completeness. Consult qualified healthcare professionals for personalised advice on brain cancer care.

Chemotherapy Centre	Neurologists	Nursing Services
Oncologists	Other Specialist Services	Pain Specialist
Palliative Care Specialist	Rehabilitation Centre	Support Services

[Click here to visit the Services Directory or scan the QR code below.](#)



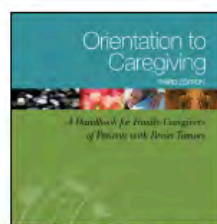
[Click here to visit the Resources page or scan the QR code below.](#)



The Survivorship Diary

This resource is designed to assist patients diagnosed with brain cancer to keep track of appointments, medications and important questions to ask.

Published by The Survivorship Diary



The Carer Handbook

This Handbook compiles educational resources for caregivers of loved ones with brain tumors.

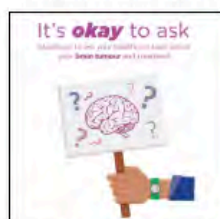
Published by The University of California, San Francisco Neuro-Oncology Gordon Murray Caregiver Program



Brain Tumours and Depression

If you or a loved one is living with a brain tumour, it's very natural to experience low moods or feeling depressed. This guide may help you cope with depression.

Published by the Brain Tumour Charity



It's Okay to Ask

Questions to ask your healthcare team about your brain tumour and treatment.

Published by the Brain Tumour Alliance Australia



Understanding Brain Tumours

A guide for people with brain or spinal cord tumours, their families and friends.

Published by Cancer Council NSW



Brain Tumours Online

Brain Tumours Online has been created by a passionate team of healthcare professionals, researchers, website developers, and brain tumour patients and their carers.

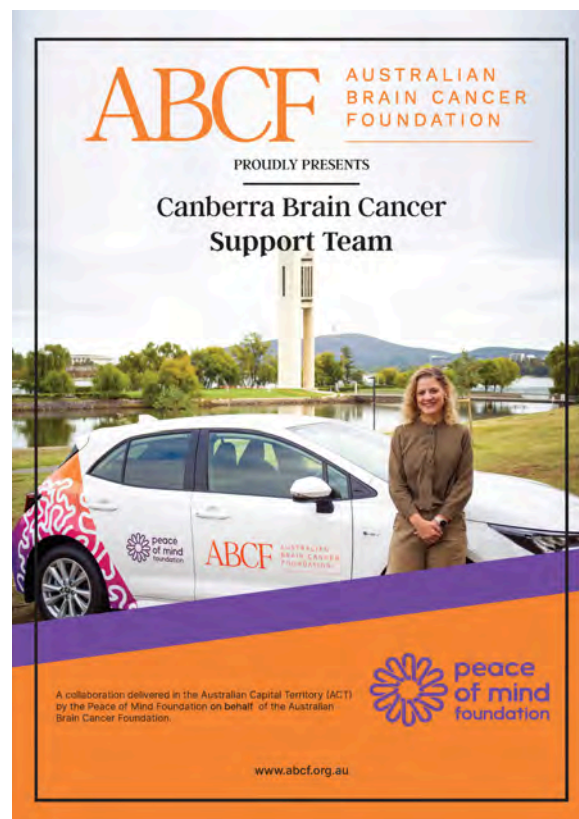
Published by Brain Tumours Online

Canberra's Personalised Brain Cancer Support Booklet

In May 2025, ABCF launched a personalised brain cancer support booklet for the Canberra region, the first of its kind in Australia. Developed over eight months and proudly sponsored by Zapari, this printed resource is hand-delivered to families by our CBCST navigator, Elizabeth Blooms.



To see the booklet online, please scan the following QR code.



At the heart of the booklet is **Canberra's first Brain Cancer Services Directory**, which brings together:

- A comprehensive list of local and national brain cancer services.
- Contact details for charitable organisations supporting ACT families.
- Practical information to help families access support without confusion or delay.

ABCF
Canberra (ACT region) Services Directory

At ABCF and POMF, we understand how overwhelming it can be to navigate the many resources available for brain cancer patients and their families. ABCF has created the first comprehensive directory of trusted medical practitioners and support services.

Neurologists

Name	Practice	Suburb	Phone
Dr Anna Willard	National Capital Medical Specialists	Garran ACT 2605	02 6222 6607
Dr Cezmi Jozwik	ACT Neurology Centre	Bruce ACT 2617	02 6223 6787
Dr Carmela Sales	ACT Neurology Centre	Bruce ACT 2617	02 6223 6787
Dr Craig McCall	Moodford Specialist Centre	Lynham ACT 2902	02 5100 9434
Dr Hugo Sampson	ACT Neurology Centre	Bruce ACT 2617	02 6223 6787
Dr Ravi Mathura	Canberra Specialist Centre	Bruce ACT 2606	02 6282 4007
Dr Robert Boland-Francis	Barton Specialist Clinic	Barton ACT 2600	02 6152 8998
Dr Ronak Patel	ACT Neurology Centre	Bruce ACT 2617	02 6223 6787
Dr Shauni Zhai	Canberra Region Neurology and Pain Centre	Phillip ACT 2606	02 6253 0066
Dr Yash Gawankar	Canberra Region Neurology and Pain Centre	Phillip ACT 2606	02 6253 0066

Support Services

Name	Practice	Suburb	Phone
Rise Above (Capital Region Cancer Relief)	Rise Above - Capital Region Cancer Relief	Queanbeyan NSW 2620	02 6297 1261
Samantha Grey (Coordinator)	ACT and Southern NSW Head and Neck Cancer Support Group	Garran ACT 2605	02 4921 1211
The Brain Tumour Alliance Australia	Brain Tumour Alliance ACT	Southern Cross Club	1800 857 221
Contact Cancer Support Group	Contact Cancer Support Group	Queanbeyan NSW 2620	02 6297 1261

CANBERRA BRAIN CANCER SUPPORT TEAM

It's okay to ask
Questions to ask your healthcare team about your brain tumour and treatment.

Understanding Brain Tumours
A guide for people with brain or spinal cord tumours, their families and friends.

Brain Tumours Online
Brain Tumours Online has been created by a passionate team of healthcare professionals, researchers, website developers, and brain tumour patients and their carers.

ACT Brain Tumour Support Network
BTAA's Canberra peer-to-peer Support Group.

Coming for Cancer Treatment in the ACT
If you or your loved one is going to hospital for cancer treatment you have probably got lots of questions.

INFORMATION BOOKLET

3. Preparing Canberra's Monthly Family Support Group

Introduction

After extensive community consultation in early 2025, ABCF began designing a first-of-its-kind program for brain cancer families in Canberra: the ACT Monthly Family Support Group, in collaboration with the Brain Tumour Alliance Australia (BTAA).

Co-designed with patients, carers, and bereaved families, this program offers whole-family, professionally supported peer connection and support. It recognises that families need more than traditional, patient-only support groups, they need a space that offers connection, flexibility, and support through every stage of the journey, including after treatment or loss.

What Makes This Program Unique

- **A qualified counsellor is present at every session**, giving families early and ongoing access to mental health support, something often missing in cancer care.
- **Whole-family inclusion**: children, partners, carers, and the bereaved are all welcome, not just as support people, but as participants in their own right.
- **Flexible engagement**: families choose how they want to connect each month, whether informally, through guided group sessions, or in smaller breakout rooms focused on specific needs or topics.

A Gateway to Wider Support

Beyond emotional support, this program acts as a central access point for ABCF's other services. Participants can connect directly to:

- Community navigation services.
- Financial hardship grants.
- Counselling and wellbeing referrals.
- Other ABCF programs and local resources.

Launch and Funding

Thanks to \$49,500 raised through grassroots fundraising, including a \$13,500 grant from the **John James Foundation**, the ACT Monthly Family Support Group is fully funded for its first year. Sessions will begin in November 2025 at the Griffith Neighbourhood Centre.





Informed by lived experience and clinical insight, the program includes:

- Structured peer support discussions, co-facilitated with BTAA and a professional counsellor.
- Emotional guidance from a registered (non-clinical) counsellor.
- Casual community connection spaces for informal engagement.
- Child-friendly activities to involve the whole family.
- Practical assistance, including free transport and access to financial hardship grants through ABCF's partnerships with GIVIT and Rise Above Canberra.
- Connection to ABCF's broader ecosystem, including the CBCST, BTAA, and other wraparound supports.

This program is designed to meet families on an emotional and practical level – with compassion, dignity, and continuity at its core – and is the first of its kind for brain cancer patients and families.

The launch has been made possible by the John James Foundation, whose generous grant provided the seed funding to pilot the program. We gratefully acknowledge their leadership and commitment to improving care for brain cancer families.

4. Saving the ACT Brain Cancer Biobank

The ACT Brain Cancer Biobank was established in 2023 with seed funding from the ACT Government through the Canberra Brain Cancer Collaborative. When that funding ended in March 2025, critical tumour samples were at risk of being lost forever.

For families, biobanking is more than research; it is their final legacy. It allows patients to make a final, meaningful contribution to science and future treatments. But unless these samples are properly frozen and preserved, that opportunity is lost.

ABCF stepped in with \$37,500 in emergency funding, ensuring all samples were preserved. We then began building a sustainable funding model, adapting the Founding Partner framework we used for the CBCST. This model invites local organisations to commit \$15,000 per year for three years, engaging the community and building long-term stability.



[Click the video to watch or scan the QR code below.](#)



Find out more on [our website](#).

Why the Biobank is a Critical Stepping Stone

The Biobank enables comprehensive drug testing on every viable brain tumour sample collected in the ACT. Each sample will be tested against every cancer drug currently approved for use in Australia. This approach allows researchers to identify promising treatment responses more rapidly, helping to expedite the pathway to human trials. By building this robust evidence base, we move closer to bringing personalised brain cancer treatment and human trials to Canberra for the first time.

In July 2025, we officially launched the ABCF Biobank Program with a three-phase strategy:

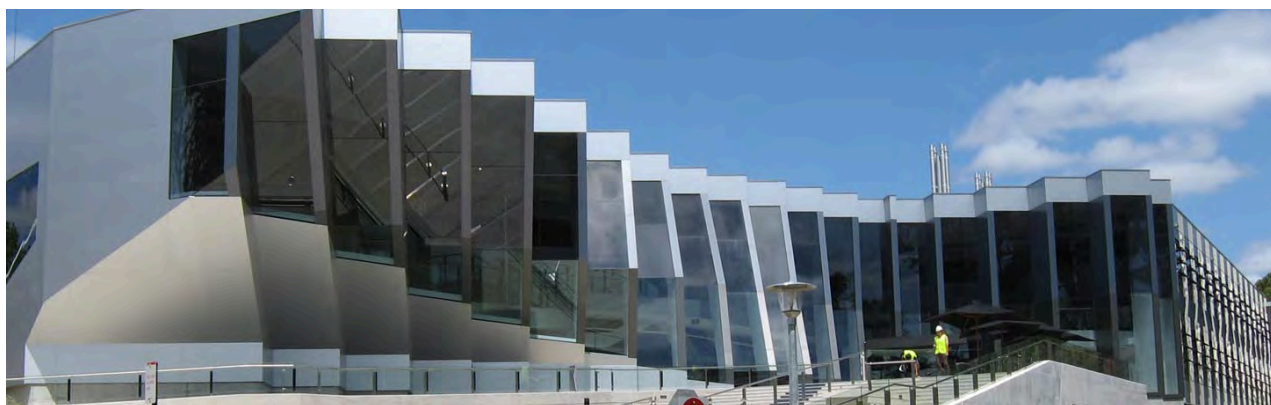
Phase 1 – Secure \$45,000 per year to freeze and preserve all viable ACT brain tumour samples for future research.

Since launching, we are proud to have secured two Founding Partners for Phase 1:

- Kenyon Foundation as our first Founding Partner (July 2025).
- Shaw and Partners as our second Founding Partner (August 2025).
- We are now seeking a third Founding Partner to complete Phase 1.

Phase 2 – Secure \$300,000 per year to sequence and run drug tests on 10 samples, and engage a full time research officer to support the work.

Phase 3 – Secure \$405,000 per year to sequence and run drug tests on 20 additional brain tumour samples. This funding will also support a full-time research technician. Together with the full-time research officer funded in Phase 2, the team will be equipped to sequence and test all 30 samples annually, significantly accelerating progress toward personalised brain cancer treatment.



Together with the Quinn Group at ANU, the Biobank is on its way to stable ground, driving tumour genetics research, mini brain organoid studies, and paving the way for personalised treatments while bringing clinical trials in Canberra for the first time.

Kenyon Foundation

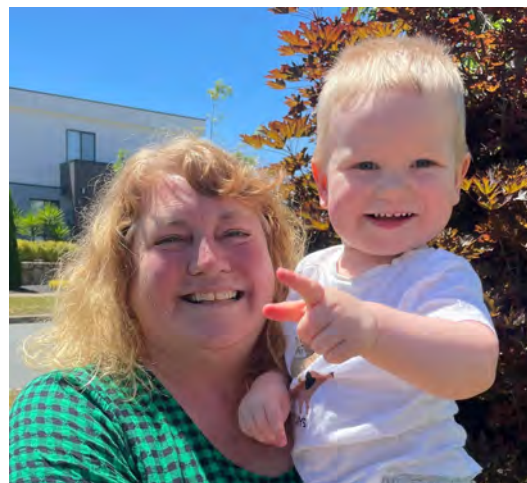
Shaw and Partners

Financial Services

Gail McCulloch Legacy

In November 2024, Gail McCulloch's life changed in an instant. After a peaceful day in her garden, she experienced a sudden seizure, what she thought was a stroke. But the diagnosis was far more serious: glioblastoma multiforme (GBM), an aggressive and incurable brain cancer.

Gail, a beloved Canberra schoolteacher, mother, grandmother, and one of the first patients of the ABCF Canberra Brain Cancer Support Team, faced her diagnosis with extraordinary courage and grace.



To find out more about Gail,
please scan the QR code.



She underwent chemotherapy and radiation at the Canberra Region Cancer Centre, where she received what she describes as first-class care from the doctors, nurses, and medical staff at Canberra Hospital. Gail is deeply thankful for their compassion, professionalism, and support throughout her treatment.

Despite the challenges, seizures, loss of speech, and paralysis on her right side, Gail's cognitive strength remains, and her determination to help others is stronger than ever.



At the time, there was no pathway in Canberra for post-mortem brain donation, especially for someone like Gail, who hopes to pass peacefully at home. But thanks to ABCF's wraparound care model, that changed.

When Gail shared her wish with Elizabeth Blooms, our Community Brain Cancer Navigator (through the Brain Cancer Support Team delivered by the Peace of Mind Foundation on ABCF's behalf), Elizabeth alerted ABCF CEO Milena Skepev, who coordinated an emergency response.

With just one email, an entire system came together:

- The ACT Brain Cancer Biobank team at JCSMR, ANU;
- The ACT Mortuary team at TCH;
- ABCF's Medical Advisory Committee.



Together, they built Canberra's first coordinated post-mortem brain donation protocol, with pathways for both business hours and after-hours scenarios. Elizabeth even volunteered to remain on call 24/7 to help fulfil Gail's wish.

- One half of Gail's brain will go to ANU's Quinn Group labs for sequencing and research.
- The other half will be preserved for medical education at ANU's museum, an incredible honour.

Even if full sequencing isn't possible, Gail's donation will offer critical insights into how long brain tissue remains viable after death, data never previously recorded in Canberra.

Gail is the first person in the ACT to walk this path. Her legacy will shape medical education, research, and care for generations to come.



[Click the video to watch or scan the QR code below.](#)



5. Developing ABCF's Financial Hardship Grants Program

Families told us that their greatest needs beyond treatment are practical and financial support and we listened.

ABCF is developing its Financial Hardship Grants Program for brain cancer families, offering \$2,000–\$5,000 per family per year. Through community consultation, families identified key areas of need:

- Counselling for patients and the whole family;
- Tutoring for children affected by disrupted routines;
- Keeping children in sport and extracurricular activities;
- Funeral costs;
- Legal and accounting support;
- Memory-making holidays and family photography.

This program will launch once consultation is complete and long-term funding is secured.

In the meantime, ABCF is collaborating with Rise Above to expand financial hardship support for brain cancer families in the ACT. We are also exploring a model where Rise Above would administer ABCF's hardship grants, ensuring funds are distributed fairly and in line with clear eligibility criteria. This approach reflects ABCF's core value: collaboration over duplication.

To provide immediate support, ABCF has partnered with both GIVIT and Rise Above Canberra.

- GIVIT helps connect families with urgent, practical assistance such as grocery vouchers, fuel cards, whitegoods, and school supplies by matching verified needs with generous donors across Australia.
- Rise Above continues to provide direct financial relief to brain cancer patients and families, and will also support ABCF's families while our program is being finalised.

Together, these partnerships allow ABCF to grow our broader support programs while drawing on the expertise of trusted community organisations. Our shared goal is to deliver compassionate, timely relief with dignity and cultural sensitivity.

To ensure families can access support in a compassionate and coordinated way, the ACT Monthly Family Support Group will serve as a trusted referral point. Through this program, families will be connected with financial assistance options including ABCF's upcoming grants and existing support from GIVIT and Rise Above in a safe, supportive environment guided by professionals and peers.



6. Developing Canberra's First Brain Cancer Community Focus Group

ABCF is establishing the ACT's first Brain Cancer Community Focus Group, a panel comprised of eight to ten patients, carers, and advocates who will provide direct input into ABCF's programs, priorities, and decision-making.

This initiative is a first for Canberra, and it reflects our commitment to ensuring that lived experience is not just heard, but embedded in everything we do.

Why it matters:

Families affected by brain cancer know better than anyone what support is missing, what systems feel overwhelming, and what truly makes a difference. By creating a formal mechanism for community input, ABCF is ensuring that:

- Programs are shaped by real-world experience, not assumptions.
- Decisions reflect the diverse needs of patients, carers, and bereaved families.
- Our governance remains transparent, inclusive, and responsive.

The Focus Group will report directly to ABCF's Board and Medical Advisory Committee, giving it a clear and respected voice in our strategic direction.

What's next:

We are preparing to open Expressions of Interest in October 2025, with the goal of finalising the group by the end of the year and launching in early 2026.

We are seeking individuals who bring a range of perspectives, from newly diagnosed patients to long-term carers, bereaved family members, and community advocates. The group will meet a minimum of 3 times a year and contribute to program design, evaluation, and advocacy.

[For more information or to express your interest, please click here.](#)

This is more than consultation, it's co-leadership. The ABCF Canberra Brain Cancer Community Focus Group will help ensure that ABCF remains grounded in the realities of brain cancer, and that our work continues to reflect the voices of those we serve.

7. Equipping Canberra for Better Care

Brain cancer surgery is complex, time-sensitive, and life-defining. The right equipment can mean the difference between a safe operation and a risky one, between staying close to home or travelling interstate, and between hope and uncertainty.

Over the past year, ABCF has worked closely with the Canberra Hospital and our Medical Advisory Committee to identify three critical pieces of diagnostic and surgical equipment that will transform care for ACT families.

Priority Equipment

- **Gliolan Goggles** – \$35,000 Plus \$10,000 for approximately three battery replacements over its 10-year lifespan.
 - These specialised goggles are used in fluorescence-guided tumour surgery, helping surgeons see and remove cancerous tissue more precisely. By enhancing visibility of tumour cells during surgery, Gliolan Goggles improve surgical accuracy and patient outcomes—making them a vital investment in brain cancer care for the ACT.
- **Intraoperative Ultrasound** – \$396,000
 - Provides real-time imaging during brain surgery, improving safety and accuracy in the operating theatre. This technology allows surgeons to visualise tumour boundaries and critical structures during procedures, reducing risks and enhancing surgical precision.
- **LITT System (Laser Interstitial Thermal Therapy)** – \$1,000,000
 - A minimally invasive procedure that uses a thin laser probe inserted through a small incision to heat and destroy tumour tissue deep within the brain. Guided by real-time MRI, it allows precise targeting of inoperable or hard-to-reach tumours, reducing the need for open surgery and enabling faster recovery with fewer complications.

Why these matter:

These tools will:

- Improve surgical outcomes and reduce complications.
- Keep families close to home, avoiding costly and stressful travel to other states.
- Attract and retain top clinicians in Canberra by equipping them with world-class technology.
- Ensure dignity and access for patients who deserve the best care, regardless of postcode.

Our goal is to fund these tools step by step, starting with the Gliolan Goggles. We are actively seeking philanthropic and corporate partners to help make this possible.

This is not just about machines; it's about people. It's about giving families the chance to stay together, to receive care in their own community, and to face brain cancer with the best possible support.

Our Canberra,
Our Community,
Our Fight Against Brain Cancer



8. Growing Leadership and Partnerships

ABCF continues to grow its leadership and strengthen its strategic foundations.

We are proud to share several updates:

- Beth Campbell, ABCF Patron, has joined our Strategic Advisory Committee, deepening her commitment to our mission.
- Professor Emma Schultz has also joined the Strategic Advisory Committee, bringing new expertise in grants, governance and financial management as well as energy to our work.
- Ngaire Parkyn, Clinical Brain Cancer Nurse Specialist at Canberra Hospital, has joined our Medical Advisory Committee, contributing vital frontline experience and advocating as a strong patient voice.



We also continue to grow key partnerships with:

- Brain Tumour Alliance Australia (BTAA) – peer-led expertise and national advocacy.
- Rise Above Canberra – financial support for families.
- GIVIT – connecting families with urgent practical assistance.

These partnerships are central to our wraparound model and ensure that families receive coordinated, compassionate care.



Spotlight – *Hao's Canberra*

A National Platform for Brain Cancer Awareness

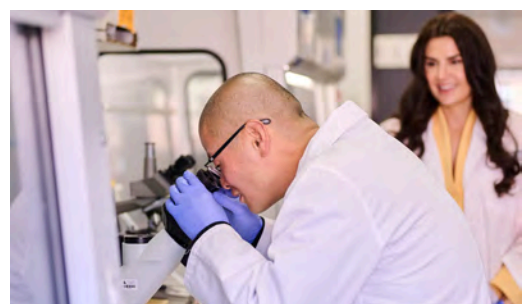
In 2025, ABCF will be honoured to be featured in *Hao's Canberra*, a truly special book by celebrated restaurateur, Chef Hao, owner of RAKU Dining. The book is written by former Canberra restaurateur and Canberra Times reviewer Chris Hansen, who is also the creator of *Chefs Eat Canberra*.

This is far more than a cookbook. It is a 250-page celebration of Canberra's people and places, featuring 30 of RAKU's most cherished customers, the stories of those shaping our city, beautiful photography, and a collection of recipes from the RAKU kitchen.

Among these stories is ABCF's own. It shares our mission, the people who helped create it, and the movement we are building together.

Chef Hao is generously donating a portion of every book sale to ABCF. This support helps fund our programs and expand our reach. But the impact goes beyond fundraising. The book brings national visibility to brain cancer awareness, introduces us to new audiences and donors across Australia, and creates a lasting sense of pride and legacy for Canberran families.

Stay tuned. *Hao's Canberra* will launch in late 2025.



HAO'S

CANBERRA

THE PEOPLE, THE STORIES AND THE RECIPES



HAO CHEN

CHRIS HANSEN

To Hao, Chris, and the entire RAKU team, thank you for reminding us that generosity and good food are two of life's greatest comforts.

Your vision for this book, your kindness in giving back, and your belief in our Canberra community mean that every dish served, every page turned, and every book sold will help a brain cancer family feel less alone.

May everyone who dines at RAKU know they are part of something bigger, a table where hope is always on the menu.



[Pre-order here](#)

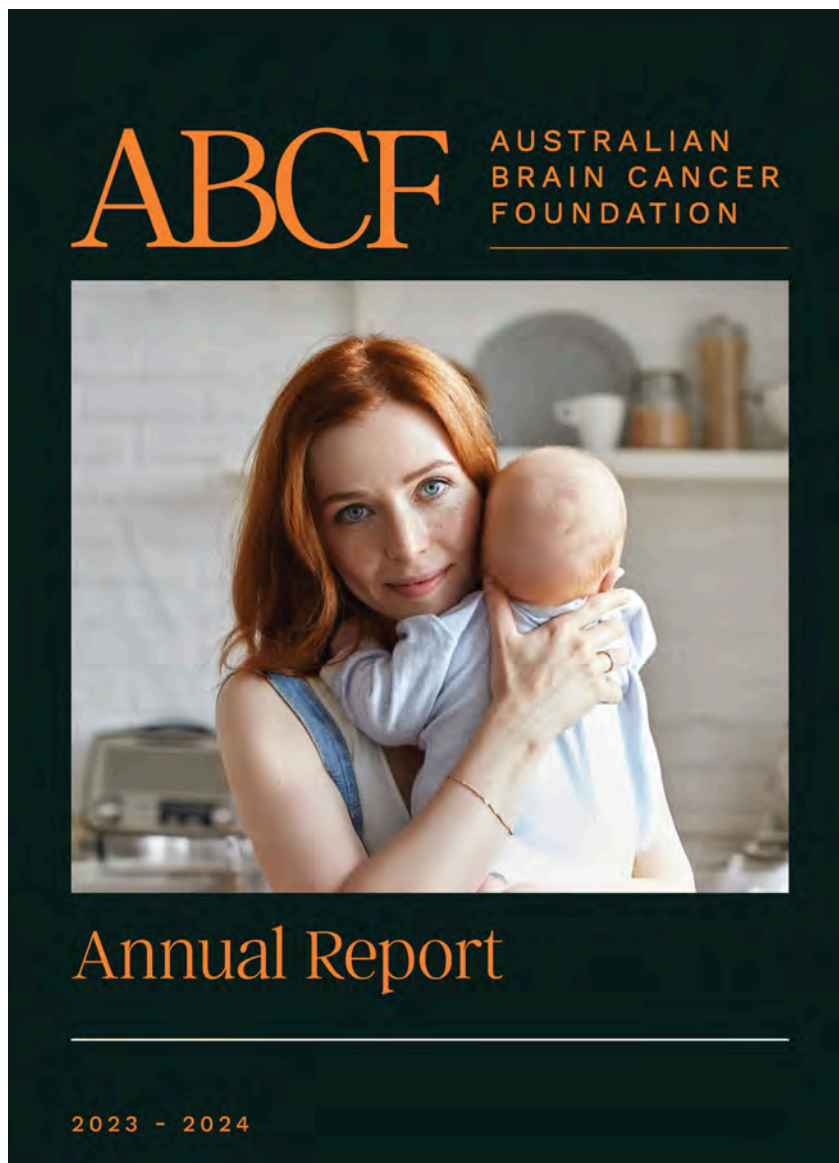
9. Annual Report

Transparency, Accountability and Reporting

In 2024, ABCF made the decision to publish an Annual Report, even though as a volunteer-run charity we are not required to do so. We chose this path because accountability, transparency, and strong governance are at the heart of everything we do.

The report goes beyond a simple financial statement. It is a comprehensive reflection of our mission, the programs we are delivering, and the impact we are creating for families across Canberra and Australia. It highlights the people and partners who make this work possible, shares the stories of families we support, and provides clear insight into how every dollar entrusted to us is used.

This initiative not only strengthens trust with our donors and partners, but also sets a benchmark for governance in the not-for-profit sector. By voluntarily holding ourselves to this standard, we ensure that the Foundation continues to grow with integrity, pride, and accountability.



[Click here to read the 2023 - 2024 Annual Report](#) or scan the QR code below.



Our Partners and Sponsors

Collaboration, Generosity and Shared Purpose

The work of the Australian Brain Cancer Foundation would not be possible without the incredible generosity of our partners and sponsors. From our founding sponsors to new collaborators, each contribution reflects a shared commitment to improving the lives of brain cancer patients and families. Their support enables us to deliver programs, fund research, and provide vital services that would otherwise not exist.

These partnerships go far beyond financial contributions. They represent a strong network of individuals, families, businesses, and institutions who believe in the importance of care, research, and advocacy. Their commitment allows us to not only meet urgent needs today but also build a stronger foundation for tomorrow. With their trust and belief in our mission, we continue to move forward with hope, courage, and determination.

PRIMARY SPONSORS

Our primary sponsors have generously funded our start up and essential ongoing operational costs including legal and accounting expenses, allowing us to direct all donations towards our initiatives



Zapari

Zapari has generously covered all start-up costs for the ABCF. Until further sponsorship is secured, Zapari will support our ongoing operational and administrative expenses.

www.zapari.com.au



Trinity Law

Gadens Trinity Law

Gadens Trinity Law has generously pledged to sponsor the Australian Brain Cancer Foundation's start-up costs and all of our ongoing legal expenses.

www.gadens.com



CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Maxim CA

Maxim Chartered Accountants has generously pledged to sponsor the Australian Brain Cancer Foundation's start-up costs and all of our ongoing accounting expenses.

www.maximca.com.au

PARTNERS



Australian
National
University



John James Foundation



ANTI-CHAOS
SOLUTIONS



The Mark Agency



GOOD
DAY PR

Partnering with ABCF: Supporting Overheads & Maximising Impact

ABCF is building a smarter, more compassionate brain cancer system for Canberra and we cannot do it alone. We are inviting business leaders like you to become part of something long-lasting, meaningful, and measurable.

The Australian Brain Cancer Foundation remains a volunteer-run organisation, and I continue to serve as CEO in a voluntary capacity for as long as I am able.

From day one, we committed to a 100% donation model, ensuring that every public gift goes directly to programs supporting families, research, and care. Wherever possible, our overheads are covered by corporate sponsors, not families.

As we grow, we know there will come a time when we must raise funds to employ a small number of essential staff. This will help us sustain what we've built and continue to grow without placing all operational duties on volunteers alone.

In the meantime, we are actively seeking new corporate sponsors to cover our core costs.

Right now, we are seeking a sponsor to cover our annual insurance cost of \$7,500. If you or someone you know would like to join our sponsor family or support one of our programs, please reach out.

We cannot do this alone. It truly takes a village to create change and to support one another.



Other Ways Your Business Can Support ABCF

You can choose to support the ABCF in many ways.

Support Our Initiatives

Choose a high-impact program that aligns with your values:

- **Biobanking** – support Australia’s most urgently needed brain cancer research resource
- **Medical Equipment** – fund life-saving tools at The Canberra Hospital
- **Financial Hardship Grants** – provide urgent support for local families
- **ACT Monthly Family Support Group** – sponsor emotional, practical, and peer support
- **ABCF Operational Corporate Sponsorship** – Help us grow and sustain the foundation we have built, ensuring long-term impact.
- **Sponsor our first Annual Gala** – bringing our community together to celebrate progress and raise vital funds.
- Continue expanding opportunities for families, volunteers, and researchers to shape the future of brain cancer care
- Strengthen our national model, preparing to replicate ABCF’s approach in other regions
- **Join the 2026 Gala Fundraising Committee** by completing this form:
 - [Gala Fundraising Committee Expression of Interest Form](#)



Our Team

Patron



Beth Campbell

We are honoured to have Beth Campbell, retired ACT Magistrate and Coroner, as our official Patron and as a Strategic Advisor. Beth brings integrity, public trust, and a powerful voice to ABCF's mission, lending her support with driving community engagement and raising awareness of our vision.

Board



Milena Skepev

Founder, CEO,
Managing
Director



John Irvine

Founding Director,
Secretary
Partner at Gadens
Trinity Law



Nick Skepev

Founding Director,
CEO and Managing
Director of Zapari



Tegan Elferkh

Founding Public
Officer, Director,
Partner at Maxim
Chartered Accounting

Strategic Advisory Committee



Mile Petrevski

Partner at Maxim
Chartered
Accounting



Beth Campbell

Retired Magistrate
and Coroner



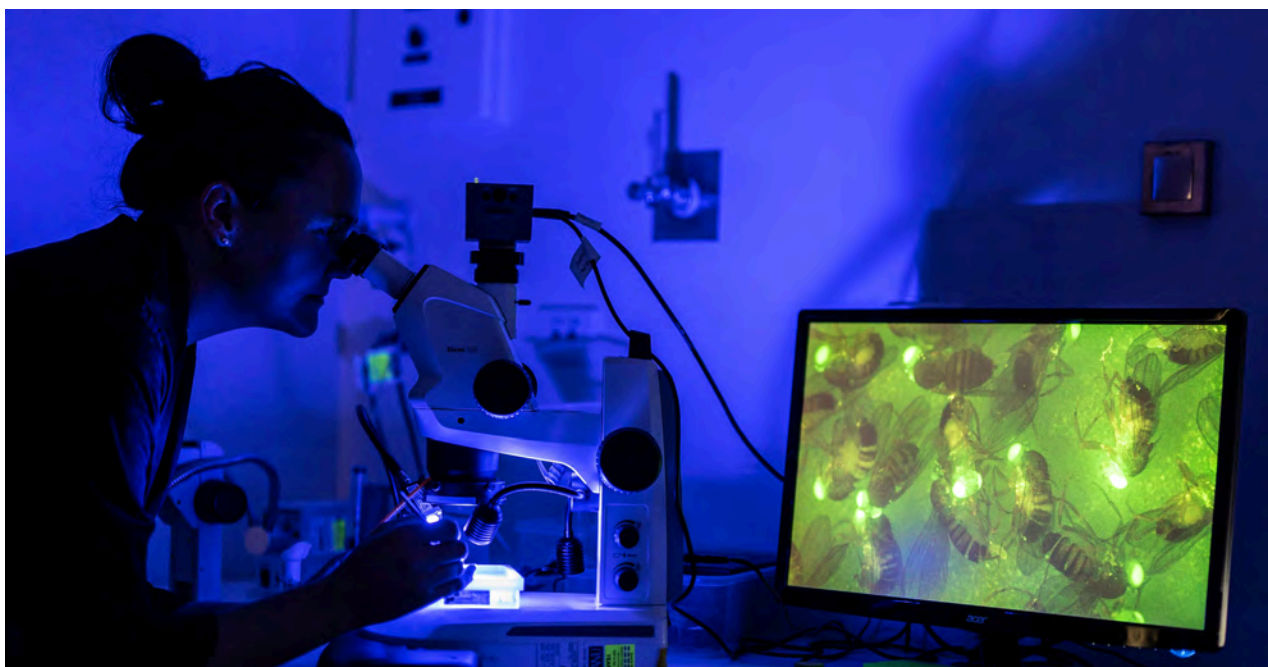
Professor Emma Schultz

Professor of Finance,
Research School of
Finance, Actuarial
Studies and Statistics,
ANU College of Business
and Economics



Stefanie Cordina

Director of
Cyber Division
KPMG



Medical Advisory Committee



**Professor
Leonie Quinn**

Medical Advisory
Committee
Representative,
Director (Quinn Group),
Researcher (ANU John
Curtin School of
Medical Research)



**Associate Professor
Peter Mews**

Neurosurgery
Director (The
Canberra Hospital),
Associate Professor
(ANU)



**Dr Hari Priya
Bandi**

Neurosurgeon
(The Canberra
Hospital),
Lecturer (ANU)



**Dr Ganes
Pranavan**

Staff Specialist
(The Canberra
Hospital)
Medical Oncologist



Dr Sivaraj Rajadorai

Palliative Care
Specialist
Clare Holland
House



Dr Kylie Jung

Radiation Oncologist
(The Canberra
Hospital), Lecturer
(ANU)



Naomi Mitchell

Senior Research Officer
(Quinn Group)
Manager – JCSMR Facility
Manager – ACT Brain
Cancer Biobank
(ANU)



Ngaire Parkyn

Brain and Central
Nervous System
Cancer Specialist
Nurse (The Canberra
Hospital)

Volunteers & Contributors: Expanding Our Reach

Volunteers are at the heart of ABCF's growth. Individuals like Kes, Katherine, Luisa, and Oliver have played a vital role in expanding our reach and deepening our impact across the ACT and beyond.

Community Outreach – Katherine

Katherine has led outreach efforts in schools and communities, connecting with students and families to build awareness and encourage local engagement. Her dedication has helped ABCF foster stronger relationships and inspire grassroots support.

Regional Leadership – Louise

Based in NSW, Luisa is a brain cancer survivor who is expanding ABCF's Brain Cancer Service Directory for the Northern Rivers Region. Inspired by her own experience, she is building the kind of support network she wishes had existed at the time of her diagnosis local, accessible, and community-driven.

Operational Support – Kes

Thanks to Zapari's generous sponsorship, ABCF has been able to engage Kes for approximately 15 hours per week to assist our CEO with operational tasks. Kes brings a diverse skill set across IT, legal, and administrative functions, and has been instrumental in strengthening ABCF's internal systems and day-to-day operations.

In addition to his contracted hours, Kes has generously volunteered countless hours of his time to support ABCF's mission. His dedication and generosity have made a lasting impact, and he is considered a highly valued member of our extended team. Kes's contribution has significantly enhanced our capacity to deliver on strategic goals, maintain operational efficiency, and respond quickly to emerging needs.

Marketing & Communications – Oliver Nguyen (Intern)

Oliver Nguyen, a final-year Marketing student from our partner University of Canberra, interned with ABCF from January to May 2025. He supported our marketing initiatives, helping strengthen visibility and engagement across the ACT. Oliver's creativity and professionalism made a meaningful impact on how we connect with families and partners, and his time with ABCF highlighted the importance of building future leaders through university collaboration.



Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere thanks to the ANU and the JCSMR for providing temporary access to office space. Special thanks to Naomi Mitchell and Professor Quinn, who were instrumental in organising this support and ensuring our team had the facilities to continue vital work while building new initiatives.

ZAPARI



**Australian
National
University**

Community Fundraising Heroes

Advocacy and Community Partnerships

ABCF's progress this year has been powered by grassroots generosity and strong community leadership. We are proud to highlight some inspiring fundraisers whose efforts are making a real difference:

Sam Allison – \$9,031.54 Raised

Sam has completed two marathons in support of ABCF, motivated by his grandfather's battle with Stage 4 glioblastoma. The cancer was detected early and within just one day, his grandfather underwent surgery. Since then, he has completed radiotherapy and is currently on a chemotherapy regimen. Sam shared that he's proud to run for a cause so close to home, knowing the funds will go toward helping other families facing the same devastating diagnosis.



Marko Toumo'ua – \$3,615 Raised

As part of his Year 6 project at Canberra Grammar School, Marko Toumo'ua organised a fundraiser in honour of his grandmother, who is living with brain cancer. His event brought together friends, family, and neighbours to support ABCF's programs.

"Thanks to the incredible doctors at Canberra Hospital, she's still with us today. I want to help find a cure so others can have more time with the people they love." Marco



We were deeply moved by Marko's compassion and initiative. In recognition of his efforts, Professor Quinn invited him for a private lab tour—a moment that celebrated the power of young leadership and the impact one person can make in the fight against brain cancer.

In loving memory of Sarah Mamalai – \$2,553 Raised

In 2007, at just 33 years old, Sarah Mamalai was diagnosed with Stage 4 glioblastoma in 2007 at age 33, she defied a three-month prognosis and lived more than a decade while raising her two young sons. She became a passionate advocate for brain cancer, co-founding Canberra's Brainstorm for a Cure gala with her best friend Amanda Fintan to raise awareness and funds.

Sarah's strength and advocacy were a key inspiration behind ABCF's creation. We are honoured that her family and friends chose to support ABCF as part of her memorial. The \$2,553 raised in her memory will help carry forward the mission she so passionately championed.



Community Fundraising Heroes

Jacob Kogelman – \$25,882 Raised

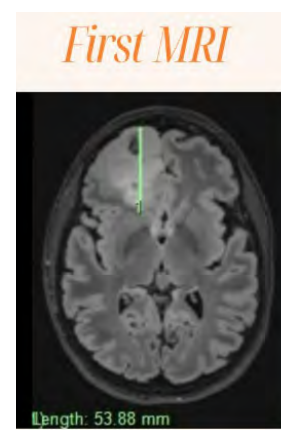
Jacob raised an extraordinary \$25,882 in honour of his sister, Hanna.

Hanna Kogelman, a Canberra mother of two, faced her second brain surgery within a year after being diagnosed with a grade 2 oligodendroglioma. Her condition was first discovered when she suffered a seizure while 32 weeks pregnant, leading doctors to delay treatment until after the safe delivery of her son, Archie. Months later, another seizure revealed that the tumour had grown, requiring a seven-hour surgery to remove a mass the size of a mandarin from her frontal lobe. Although recovery went relatively well, Hanna endured pain, loss of feeling, and ongoing side effects.

Further scans showed remnants of the tumour, and she underwent another operation in June. In support, her brother Jacob launched a marathon fundraiser. He completed the Gold Coast Marathon and raised \$25,882, far surpassing his goal. The funds supported Hanna's care, advanced brain cancer research, and provided essential assistance to families navigating similar challenges.



Read their story
by scanning the
QR code.



Community Fundraising Heroes



In loving memory of Bernadette Power – \$1,762

Bernadette was kind, loving, exceptionally intelligent and compassionate. She saw beauty and positivity in everything around her and everyone she met. She was an unstoppable force as a businesswoman. Bernadette founded Facialista's, an iconic South Australian skin and beauty business, and quickly built a community of like-minded beauty enthusiasts who were drawn to her authentic approach to skin care.

In honour of Fran Hassell– \$2,043

The Guys' Cross Farm Fundraiser was held in honour of Fran Hassell, whose passion, resilience and warmth left a lasting mark on all who knew her. Her influence continued to inspire those connected to the farm, celebrating her life and contributions with enduring respect and affection. By supporting vital brain cancer initiatives, it ensured that her legacy of care and strength extended far beyond the farm.



Laugh for a Cure – Kathleen Kenyon – \$820

Laugh for a Cure is an event run by Kathleen Kenyon, whose generosity, humour and compassion continue to inspire everyone around her. Through comedy and community spirit, Laugh for a Cure raises vital funds and awareness for brain cancer, reflecting Kathleen's wish to support patients and families with both care and hope.

Gadens Trinity Law Workplace Fundraiser – \$1,040

The Gadens Trinity Law Workplace Fundraiser was established as a powerful expression of generosity and community spirit. Through the program, staff came together to support brain cancer research and patient care, reflecting a shared commitment to making a tangible difference.



Sofia Milicevic (\$1,004) and Claudia Cataldo (\$2,109)

Sofia Milicevic and Claudia Cataldo took on the challenge of the Canberra Marathon with determination and heart, running to raise vital funds for the Australian Brain Cancer Foundation. Motivated by a deep desire to make a difference, they turned their athletic effort into a powerful act of generosity and solidarity with those facing brain cancer.

Community Fundraising Heroes

We are deeply grateful to every individual who chose to fundraise for ABCF. Whether raising \$50 or \$5,000, each effort plays an essential role in helping us continue our work. Every dollar raised makes a real difference, and we truly value the time, energy, and compassion behind each contribution.

Importantly, 100% of public donations and individual fundraising go directly to our programs, not to overheads, thanks to the generous support of our corporate sponsors. This means every dollar raised helps fund tangible outcomes for families affected by brain cancer.

In 2025, these community-driven efforts helped us:

- Save the Biobanking program which funded the freezing of all brain cancer samples collected from March 2025 to March 2026.
- Fully fund Canberra's first Monthly Family Support Group for its entire first year, ensuring families have a safe, supportive space to connect and heal.

We'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the following fundraisers, whose generosity and dedication are equally important to our mission:

- Bridie Tomkins – \$222
- Di Resiak – \$242
- Ellen Logan – \$481
- Emma McGregor – \$53
- Grant McKay – \$600
- Julie Ford – \$881
- Kerry Gallagher – \$3,237
- Kelsey Allan – \$666
- Liam MacAndrews – \$1,150
- Monique Focarile – \$211
- Sam Marynissen – \$297
- Tanya Javaid – \$628



Thank You

ABCF is not built on one person's shoulders. It belongs to every family who has shared their story, every volunteer who has given their time, every donor who has trusted us, and every partner who believes in a better future for brain cancer patients.

I want to take this moment to thank our Board, Medical Advisory Committee, Strategic Advisory Committee, sponsors, and Founding Partners. Without their expertise, financial support, and guidance, none of these achievements would have been possible.

Thank you for being with us from the very beginning.

Together, we are
proving that Canberra
is not just part of the
brain cancer story
— we are leading it