

STRATEGY

# 2024 - 2029



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## OUR STORY

Established in 2009, the VCCC Alliance is a powerful partnership of leading research, academic and clinical institutions working together to accelerate and amplify leading-edge cancer research, knowledge and expertise to benefit the national and international community.

Through innovation and collaboration, the alliance is leading the development of integrated, research-driven and consumer-informed, cancer research, education and models of patient care to fundamentally change the way we tackle cancer.

The VCCC Alliance takes a dynamic, inclusive, system-level approach. We collaborate for local impact and leverage success to scale initiatives nationally and internationally. Innovative programs, world-class cancer education, embedded consumer involvement, and a statewide network of members and partners—including eight regional cancer services—come together to strive for better outcomes for all those affected by cancer.

## OUR VISION

*To save lives through the integration of cancer research, education, and patient care. Through innovation and collaboration, the VCCC Alliance will drive the next generation of improvements in prevention, detection, treatment, and survivorship for all.*



Supported by



VCCC Alliance members



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE CHAIR

The Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC) Alliance is now entering its fourteenth year. Since our inception, the VCCC Alliance has made incremental but incredibly powerful progress towards realising our vision and improving outcomes for people with cancer. The alliance model has enabled groundbreaking advances: giving more Victorians access to cutting-edge treatments, addressing inequities in cancer outcomes, and boosting cancer research and treatment options.

Recent changes to our governance structure will have flow-on benefits throughout the Alliance. With skilled independent directors joining the helm, we believe the future of the VCCC Alliance has never been brighter.

These changes also have the potential to significantly expand our membership base, presenting a tremendous opportunity to increase our reach and impact across Victoria and Australia.

Developing stronger relationships and effective systems between metropolitan and regional hospitals and cancer centres are essential to increase research and clinical trial participation for regional Victorians. Importantly, this has the potential to improve survival rates and boost workforce capability.

Despite our progress, we know there is still so much to be done. Cancer remains one of the most significant health challenges faced by Australians and will continue to be so for some time. As we look to the future, the work of the VCCC Alliance will focus on using our collective reach and impact to drive a concerted and streamlined approach to improve care across the health system, unlock new treatments, and help more patients survive cancer.



**The VCCC Alliance has made collaboration the new normal in cancer research and education. This is a game changer. By working together, we achieve exponential improvements for all.**

*- Professor Sanchia Aranda AM*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant'.

Professor Grant McArthur AO  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sanchia'.

Professor Sanchia Aranda AM  
CHAIR

# OVERCOMING CANCER TOGETHER

Coordinated action across the medical research and healthcare sector is essential to achieve impact at the local level. No single health service or research institute has the population reach, clinical and partnership expertise, or scalability to make significant and sustainable population-level changes in cancer outcomes.

We build on a collaborative approach to amplify and scale the work of our members, associate members, and state and national partners. These efforts align with the Victorian Cancer Plan and Australian Cancer Plan goals to achieve equitable cancer outcomes.

## MELBOURNE CBD/ PARKVILLE PRECINCT

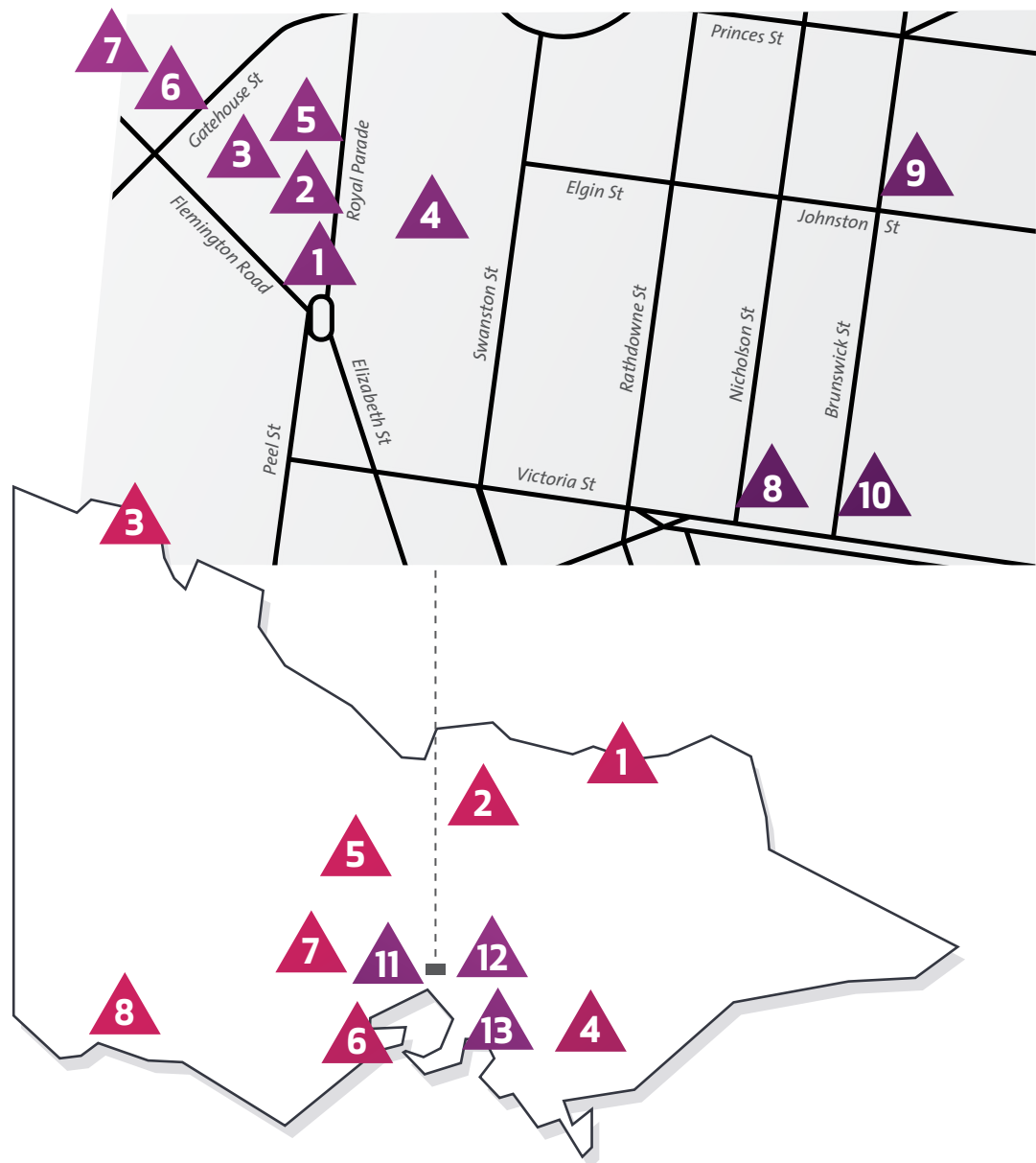
- 1 Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- 2 The Royal Melbourne Hospital
- 3 The Royal Women's Hospital
- 4 The University of Melbourne
- 5 Walter & Eliza Hall Institute
- 6 The Royal Children's Hospital
- 7 Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- 8 St Vincent's Hospital and St Vincent's Institute
- 9 Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- 10 Cancer Council Victoria

## GREATER MELBOURNE

- 11 Western Health
- 12 Austin Health and Olivia Newton John Research Institute
- 13 Monash Partners Comprehensive Cancer Centre

## REGIONAL

- 1 Albury Wodonga Health
- 2 Goulburn Valley Health
- 3 Mildura Public Base Hospital
- 4 Latrobe Regional Health
- 5 Bendigo Health
- 6 Barwon Health
- 7 Grampians Health
- 8 South West Healthcare





## OUR APPROACH

### Catalyse

Facilitate diverse perspectives and expertise across alliance members, partners, and the cancer sector to catalyse collaboration

### Translate

Act as a conduit for effective translation of new evidence into practice

### Advance

Accelerate improvements in policy, practice, and equity

### Include and Involve

Integrate diverse lived experiences through effective consumer involvement

**Focusing on equity means improving cancer experience and outcomes at all stages of the cancer journey for those facing disadvantage.**

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*- Dr Alesha Thai, Clinician Scientist,  
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre  
and Austin Health*





## OUR VALUES

### UNITED

#### Collaborative Spirit

We foster a culture of collaboration and bring together researchers, clinicians, healthcare professionals, and consumers to work as one cohesive unit towards a common goal— to eliminate cancer.

#### Shared Vision

United in our commitment, we work tirelessly to advance cancer research, treatment, and education. We share knowledge and resources to achieve the best outcomes for people affected by cancer and the broader community.

### RESPECTFUL

#### Dignity and Compassion

The expertise of our members and the shared experience of consumers, help us to recognise the individual needs and circumstances of those who have received a cancer diagnosis and those who work with them.

#### Inclusive Excellence

We commit to create an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, to ensure that every voice is heard and respected – from patients and their families to our staff and community partners.

### BOLD

#### Pioneering Innovation

Together, we courageously pursue groundbreaking research and innovative treatment options, and with our partners, push the boundaries of what is possible in cancer prevention and control.

#### Courageous Leadership

As leaders in the field, we are bold in our decisions. We consider taking necessary risks to help advance cancer care, research, and education, and aim to establish new benchmarks of excellence on a global scale.

### PATIENT-CENTRED

#### Individualised Care

Our approach to care is to ensure it is informed by the breadth and depth of our collective knowledge and expertise— tailored to the individual needs, preferences, and values of patients, to ensure lived experience is at the centre of every decision we make.

#### Engagement

A commitment to integrate the expertise of a lived experience in governance, design and implementation ensures patient-centredness as our core. We foster a learning environment to demonstrate quality engagement practices.

## FOR ALL

### Equitable Access

We strive to create a cancer sector that provides all individuals, regardless of background, ability, geography, or socioeconomic status, access to the highest quality cancer care, research, and education.

### Community and Global Impact

Our commitment extends beyond our immediate community; we aspire to make a global impact by sharing knowledge, fostering partnerships, and advocating for cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survivorship for all.

Our values guide strategic planning and daily operations, to ensure that every action taken aligns with our mission to lead in the fight against cancer through high-quality treatment, innovative research, and dedicated patient care.



## CANCER IMPACTS EVERY VICTORIAN

Cancer is the leading burden of disease and puts pressure on our health system – and all Victorians affected by cancer. Victorians’ experience of cancer varies widely based on factors including where people live, their socioeconomic status and whether they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

**98**

VICTORIANS  
DIAGNOSED  
WITH CANCER  
*every day*

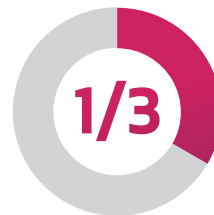


A CANCER  
DIAGNOSIS  
*every 15 minutes*



**63K** 

YEARS OF LIFE LOST  
*prematurely to cancer annually*



VICTORIAN DEATHS  
CAUSED BY CANCER

=

**9x**

THAT OF CAR  
ACCIDENTS

**> 6B**

THE ANNUAL ECONOMIC BURDEN  
*of cancer on Australia’s health system predicted  
to continue to grow alongside incidence rates*

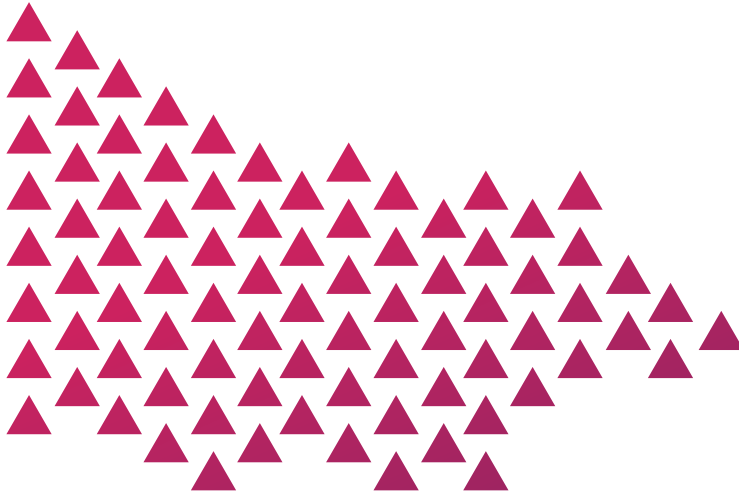
**▲ 30%**

INCREASE IN CANCER DIAGNOSES  
*during 2017-2021*

**51K**

PREDICTED NUMBER  
OF ANNUAL NEW  
CANCER DIAGNOSES  
*in Victoria by 2032-2036*





Regional Victorians are **10%** more likely to be diagnosed with cancer than those living in major cities and **16%** more likely to die from cancer. <sup>1</sup>

Areas with Victoria's **highest rates of cancer diagnoses** and **lowest survival rates** are also areas of **greatest social and economic disadvantage**. <sup>1</sup>

**SURVIVAL  
RATES**



**69%**

Patients with cancer living in regional and rural Victoria also experience lower 5-year survival rates (69%) than those living in metropolitan areas. <sup>1</sup>

Health services are often not well equipped to address the needs of people facing disadvantage due to **poor service coordination and communication, and an absence of trust**. <sup>1</sup>

A report found that recent migrants had a higher incidence of liver cancer than the Australian-born population, with the highest rates among migrants from **South-East Asia, North Africa, and North-East Asia**. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.cancervic.org.au/research/vcr/annual-report-2022](http://www.cancervic.org.au/research/vcr/annual-report-2022)

<sup>2</sup> *The Daffodil Centre (a joint venture between Cancer Council NSW and The University of Sydney) and Cancer Council Queensland.*



**Aboriginal people's poorer cancer outcomes are a result of limited access to health services, longer waiting periods, inadequate representation of Aboriginal professionals, and distrust of the health system.**

- A/Prof Kalinda Griffiths, Yawuru woman, Research and Education Lead, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

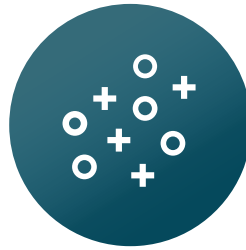
# OVERCOMING CANCER

## STRATEGIC GOALS 2024 - 2029



### COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Bring the best minds and organisations together to turn research into better cancer outcomes



### DATA AND TECHNOLOGY

Drive better sharing of data and knowledge, and use of technology, so patients benefit from latest evidence and advances



### EQUITABLE CARE AND OUTCOMES

Ensure all patients have access to optimal care by supporting those disadvantaged by current system structures.



### PATIENT-POWERED

Integrate diverse consumer perspectives to improve research and care



### LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Upskill, support and inspire the cancer workforce to deliver world-leading outcomes



## GOAL

Bring together the best minds to accelerate research and improve patient outcomes

### Context

For many years, the research sector has competed for scarce resources, which has often created silos and impeded genuine collaboration.

This competitive approach can lead to missed opportunities for researchers to work jointly on important breakthroughs and over time can lead to reduced impact.

There is an important need for research and clinical trials to be embedded into routine care to ensure optimal care for more patients.

### Opportunity

Utilising an approach of intensive collaboration and a collective impact framework represents an important multi-stakeholder approach to medical research, clinical trials, education, and care in the cancer sector.

Through collaborative research, we will continue to bring the best and brightest researchers and clinicians together to address the most important challenges that impact cancer patients.

### Aims

- > Accelerate promising discovery, translational and clinical research via multi-partner collaboration.
- > Translate more rapidly and implement research-derived evidence into practice to improve cancer prevention and early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and patient care.
- > Advance clinical trials, including registry trials and Electronic Medical Record embedded trials.
- > Ensure research and clinical trials are embedded into routine cancer care, improving outcomes for all.



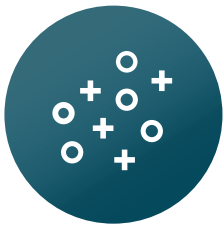
**This is the biggest single impact we can have on lung cancer. Nothing else we do can result in a 20 to 25 per cent reduction in lung cancer mortality.**

*- A/Prof Gavin Wright, VCCC Alliance Research and Education Lead, Lung Cancer, after the announcement in 2023 that the Federal Government would fund a National Lung Cancer Screening Program. A/Prof Wright's leadership and advocacy in this area contributed to this outcome.*

## New treatments for devastating liver cancer

The Centre for Cancer Immunotherapy scientists from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and the Peter Doherty Institute of Infection and Immunity are working with collaborators across the alliance to use gene editing technology to limit liver

inflammation and scarring. Ultimately, this can prevent or delay the onset of primary liver cancer with an intervention utilising a key delivery vehicle used for some current COVID-19 vaccines.



## GOAL

# Improve the use of linked data, knowledge and technology to improve diagnosis and care

### Context

Linking primary care data with hospital and outpatient data enables researchers to better understand cancer across the entire patient experience and examine important health system considerations.

Data has the power to enhance researchers' understanding of the full spectrum of disease from pre-diagnosis to diagnosis, treatment, post-treatment, survivorship and palliative care – and help them to understand where important changes need to be made.

### Opportunity

Enabling large scale studies utilising linked primary care and statewide data allows detailed examination and analysis of how variations in diagnostic and treatment intervals impact on clinical outcomes.

When combined with state-of-the-art artificial intelligence and machine learning, linked data has the capacity to provide deep insights into unresolved questions around optimal patient care.

### Aims

- > Harness the power of linked data research to inform optimal care pathways.
- > Develop risk prediction models of novel diagnostic approaches as tools to support early diagnosis.
- > Utilise linked data to investigate cancer along the continuum of care, including variation in diagnostic pathways, diagnostic delays and survivorship.
- > Use innovative technologies including artificial intelligence to understand variations in care and enhance clinician decision-making.



**Discovering early blood test markers of cancer, development of GP resources to optimise investigation of cancer symptoms, and creating personalised tools that use patient genetic data to improve cancer detection - these exciting programs would not have been possible without Data Connect.**

*- Dr Meena Rafiq, Academic GP and Clinical Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne and University College London (UCL)*

## Benefits to flow from Data Connect

Data Connect is a major collaboration between the VCCC Alliance, The University of Melbourne, hospitals and BioGrid Australia, that has enabled the linking of general practice and hospital data for the first time in Australia for cancer research.

There are already 23 projects underway including examining cancer risk in patients with unexplained weight loss, and exploring the potential of earlier detection when patients present to general practice.



## GOAL

# Address inequities to ensure all patients have access to optimal care

### Context

Despite some of the best cancer patient outcomes in the world, inequity persists in the Victorian cancer sector. Unwarranted variations in diagnosis, treatment and support are caused, in part, by a lack of quality data on priority populations, meaning resources are not targeted to those most in need.

While there exist pockets of excellent work addressing inequities, the whole health system, and the cancer sector specifically, requires the resources and capability to respond to the needs of patients facing multiple and intersecting disadvantages.

### Opportunity

Delivering a range of interventions to assist health services, the cancer workforce and cancer researchers to embed an equity lens into their core work.

Expanding the reach of the VCCC Alliance Cancer Equity Framework, created to support health professionals and service systems to identify and address inequity in a patient's cancer journey.

Priority areas include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, regional and remote populations, whilst addressing gender inequity amongst all these populations.

### Aims

- > Enable Victoria's health workers to respond to the needs of cancer patients facing multiple and intersecting disadvantage.
- > Ensure all Victorians affected by terminal cancer have timely access to high-quality palliative care to improve their quality of life.
- > With improved data collection, gain insights to enable better cancer outcomes for all Victorians.
- > Broaden understanding that women, men and non-binary people access and experience cancer screening and treatment differently.



**Addressing inequity in healthcare starts with improving access to services and embedding cultural safety. But moreover, it's about dismantling colonialist structures that exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and rebuilding those structures with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people leading the way.**

- Abe Ropetini, Executive Director, Population Health Unit,  
Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

## Hands-on learning improve teletrial take-up

Our Teletrials Toolkit includes a valuable set of practical, checklists and other tools on how to run successful trials and is complemented by our online course. It's another step towards making clinical trials more convenient for regional and

rural Victorian patients by reducing travel time to metro areas. This collaboration with Regional Trials Network Victoria and Alfred Health Trial Hub, further strengthens the educational resources available for the regional cancer workforce.



## GOAL

# Integrate diverse consumer perspectives to improve research and care

### Context

Healthcare in Victoria has financial incentives that focus on episodic service delivery, rather than patient-driven outcomes. This can lead to disconnects between service providers across the continuum of care.

Value-based care delivers health services where and when they are most needed, minimising low-value services, and maximising those that deliver the best possible outcomes.

Integrating the expertise of a lived experience of cancer in the development and direction of cancer care, will help improve patients' care experience and outcomes.

### Opportunity

Create greater impact through value-based cancer care by developing tools and processes for cancer clinicians to deliver the outcomes that matter most to patients.

Through a system-wide approach, elevate the patient perspective, share patient outcomes and experience data, and work to baseline to improve outcomes for disadvantaged populations.

### Aims

- > Enhance the relevance and impact of research through patient voices.
- > Achieve cancer care that is patient-centred, effective, efficient, equitable, safe and timely value-based care.
- > Develop a network of diverse consumer leaders across Victoria.
- > Establish patient-reported outcome and experience measures in priority areas.



**Harnessing consumer experience and expertise is the 'secret sauce' to enable equitable cancer care, research, and education. The Statewide Consumer-led Research Partnership is truly patient-powered. It supports, develops, and measures the influence of consumer leaders.**

- Melissa Le Mesurier, Chair of VCCC Alliance Cancer Consumer Advisory Committee

## Cancer Consumer-led Research Partnership

Launched in 2023, the Cancer Consumer-led Research Partnership is committed to a truly consumer-led initiative that acknowledges the central role consumers play in shaping priorities to increase influence in the cancer sector. Embracing a paradigm of action, research, and reflection to contribute to the scholarship and

value of consumer leadership, the program combines expertise from the VCCC Alliance, Monash Partners Comprehensive Cancer Centre, Regional Trials Network Victoria and Cancer Council Victoria, with academic support from the Collaborative Practice Centre, University of Melbourne.



## GOAL

# Upskill, support, and inspire the health workforce to deliver world-leading outcomes

### Context

The oncology workforce encountered significant psychological and physical stressors, exacerbated by attrition of skilled personnel following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disparities in healthcare delivery among vulnerable populations highlight the critical need for enhanced focus and strategies to ensure equitable patient outcomes across diverse demographic and geographic landscapes.

### Opportunity

Established in 2022, the Centre for Cancer Education delivers world-leading workforce training for all oncology disciplines, informed by cancer experts.

Our digital platform builds, facilitates, and disseminates cancer education opportunities across the state, country, and the world.

As part of this, the Leadership Academy supports the trajectory of clinicians, researchers, educators, and consumers, fostering emerging and established leaders to drive transformative change in the cancer sector.

### Aims

- > Equip healthcare professionals with the latest evidence-based advances in patient research and care.
- > Attract, retain, and develop highly skilled clinicians, researchers, educators and consumers across all cancer disciplines in Victoria.
- > Support the cancer sector to translate their research, education and expertise in clinical care into educational offerings.



**Before the course became available, options for people like me meant moving overseas, leaving family, and depriving the local health service of staff.**

- Dr Andrew Soma, Oncologist, Solomon Islands

## Online education a lifeline to Small Island Developing States

Small Island Developing States such as the Solomon Islands have a lack of trained oncologists and formalised training programs. Dr Andrew Soma defied many obstacles to become the first oncologist in the Solomon Islands after completing his Master of Cancer Sciences. The course is a pre-requisite to attaining specialist

recognition – enabling him to treat cancer patients and start the nation's first oncology unit. The University of Melbourne degree is Australia's first cancer-specific, multidisciplinary, wholly online postgraduate degree, developed with the VCCC Alliance.

## REALISING OUR VISION

The comprehensive cancer centre model has proven to be very successful. In Australia, other states have observed the achievements of the VCCC Alliance and are actively seeking to replicate it.

Our work is far from done. There is much work to do to further improve care, research, outcomes, and education across the oncology sector.

Over the next five years, the work of the VCCC Alliance will provide access to world-class, equitable cancer care closer to home, develop new therapies, upskill more health workers in oncology, and utilise new capability to link primary care and hospital data to improve early detection.

Together, we integrate the consumer voice to drive patient-centred care models in the Victorian health system, help hospitals care for complex cancer patients facing intersecting disadvantage, embed clinical research into routine care, and trial new models for early palliative care for patients with cancer.

The VCCC Alliance will continue to develop a case to secure appropriate funding from governments and other sources to enable our members and partners to deliver these impactful, life-changing outcomes.



Our vision is to save lives through the integration of cancer research, education, and patient care. Through innovation and collaboration, the VCCC Alliance will drive the next generation of improvements in prevention, detection, treatment, and survivorship for all.





**VCCC Alliance**

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