The Impact of your Support

February 2026

Children's Cancer Institute

Thanks for your support in 2025

On behalf of everyone at Children's Cancer Institute – and the children and families whose lives you are changing – thank you for your extraordinary support over the last 12 months.

Since joining the Institute as the new Executive Director in December 2025, I have been deeply moved by the generosity and commitment of our supporters. You understand the vital role research plays in improving outcomes for children with cancer, and your belief in our work is helping to create a brighter future for families facing the unimaginable.

As you read this report, you will see powerful examples of research impact that simply would not be possible without your support. I hope you feel proud of your contribution.

Together we can and we will cure every child of cancer. It's not if, it's when.

Professor Louis Chesler
Executive Director
Children's Cancer Institute

Carys is Thriving Thanks to ZERO

Last year we shared Carys' story, and how at just six years old, she was diagnosed with leukaemia. When she later relapsed, her parents were desperate for answers.

Thanks to the Zero Childhood Cancer Program, researchers analysed the specific genetic makeup of Carys' disease and discovered she had a rare subtype known as ph-like leukaemia. Armed with this knowledge, her clinicians completely changed their treatment approach, incorporating immunotherapy and a bone marrow transplant.

"If we didn't have ZERO, she would have died," said her mum Laura. "I want every child with cancer to have access to genomic testing, like Carys did. It could save their life like it has saved hers."

Today, Carys is thriving. She's approaching nearly two years post-transplant with excellent health and no major complications. She's excited to be starting high school this year, having earned a place in her school's High Potential and Gifted Education program. She's enjoying horse riding lessons and loves attending Sydney Women's A-League matches.

To see her living such a full and happy life is a testament to the powerful impact of supporters like you.

ZERO to Expand to Help More Young Australians

Thanks to your generous support, the Zero Childhood Cancer (ZERO) Program continues to transform childhood cancer care in Australia.

In March, the Australian Government committed $112.6 million to ensure ZERO remains available to all children with cancer. The program is also set to expand to include young people aged 19 to 25 with paediatric-type cancers, a group with historically poor outcomes.

This expansion will support an additional 300 young Australians each year, bringing the total who will have access to ZERO's precision medicine approach to approximately 1,300 annually.

Thanks to supporters like you, ZERO has effectively established precision medicine as standard of care for Australian children with cancer, with the aim to now take the necessary steps to embed this world-leading program into the Australian health system as a permanent, clinically accredited platform.

A Powerful New Tool Advancing Personalised Cancer Care

Your support has enabled our researchers to develop a breakthrough tool that rapidly identifies the most effective treatments for each child with a solid tumour.

Led by Professor Maria Kavallaris AM, the innovation uses 3D bioprinting to create advanced tumour models called “tumouroids” that retain all the characteristics of a child’s original cancer and can be grown rapidly in the lab. Published in the journal EMBO Molecular Systems Biology, this approach overcomes major barriers seen in traditional methods.

Critically, this technology works seamlessly with ZERO’s drug screening platform, meaning it can be integrated into existing precision oncology workflows to better identify the most effective therapies for individual patients.

“The technology we’ve developed allows us to rapidly grow tumours that maintain the features of the original sample, meaning they are truly representative of the patient’s tumour. This allows us to test for drug sensitivities not only quickly, but with confidence that the results are relevant,” said Professor Kavallaris.

Your support is shortening the time from lab discovery to clinical impact, helping ensure more children get the right treatment, at the right time.

A Legacy That Will Change the Future for Children with Cancer

Dorothy lived a life shaped by resilience, independence and a deep belief in community. She valued knowledge, generosity and compassion, and believed every child deserves the chance to grow up and grow old.

Although she had no children of her own, the illness and loss of a neighbour's infant profoundly affected her and helped shape her determination to support children facing serious medical challenges.

In honour of this belief, Dorothy made an extraordinary decision to leave the bulk of her estate - a gift of over $1 million - to Children's Cancer Institute. This transformational gift will have a lasting impact on research dedicated to curing childhood cancer.

Dorothy lived simply and gave deeply. Her generosity now lives on in the work of researchers striving to change outcomes for children with cancer.

A legacy gift like this - no matter how large or small - is an investment in hope, progress and a future where every child has the chance to grow old. To find out more about leaving a gift in your Will, contact our friendly team at bequests@ccia.org.au.

Asher's Story: Courage, Heartbreak and the Need for Better Treatments

Asher was a vibrant toddler whose life changed forever when he was diagnosed with Stage 4 neuroblastoma at just two and a half years old.

What followed was nearly two years of relentless treatment, gruelling chemotherapy, major surgery, a bone marrow transplant, and rounds of radiation and immunotherapy. Despite brave responses to initial treatment and facing life-threatening complications, Asher's cancer ultimately did not respond to available therapies.

Asher passed away at four and a half years old, leaving behind the profound impact of his courage and resilience.

"He only lived for four and a half years, but he taught us a lot of stuff, especially in those last few weeks. About true courage and true determination," says his mum Stacey. "I don't think people realise what these kids go through, how horrific it is. We need research."

Asher's story highlights why new treatments are so desperately needed. Even with the best available therapies, many children's cancers remain unresponsive, and the side effects can be extremely severe.

There is an urgent need for new, more effective and less toxic therapies - research that you're making possible.

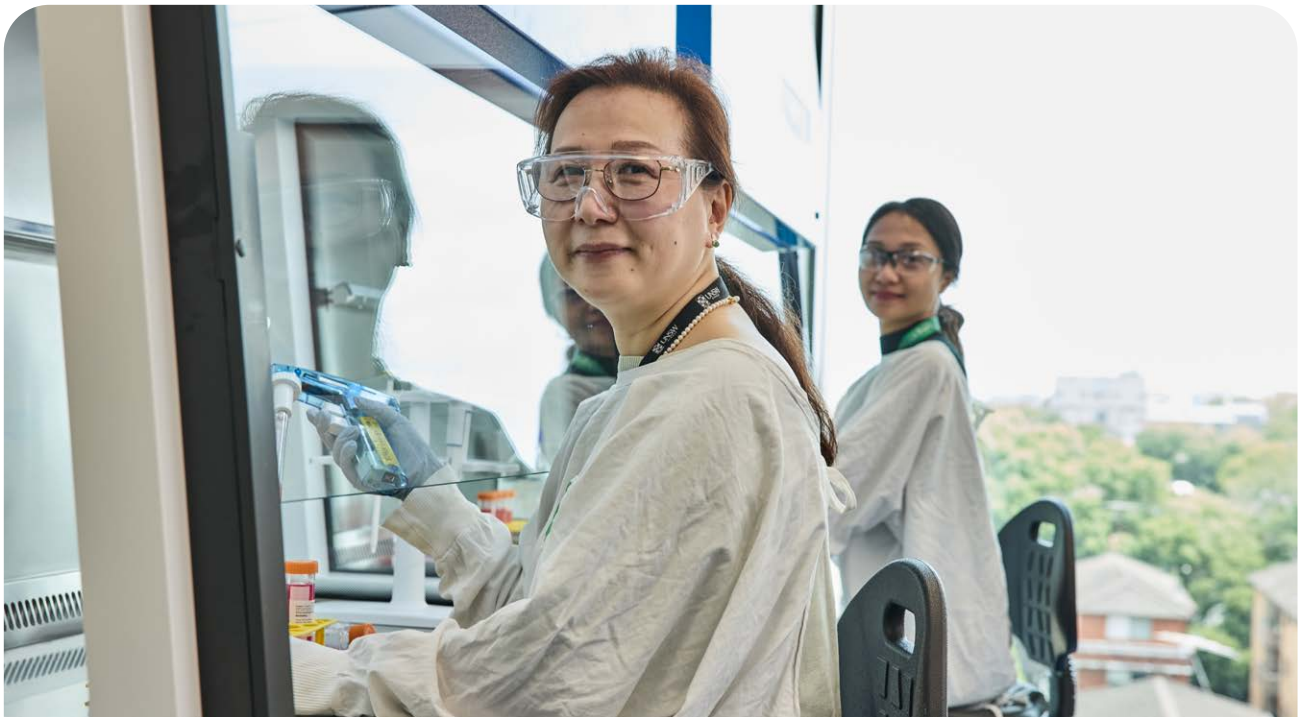
New Hope for Children with High-Risk Neuroblastoma

Our researchers have made a major breakthrough in the fight against neuroblastoma, a devastating childhood cancer that remains difficult to treat, especially in high-risk cases.

The discovery shows that restricting the cancer's access to an essential amino acid called arginine can significantly disrupt tumour growth and enhance response to existing therapies.

Neuroblastoma cells cannot make arginine themselves and rely on circulating sources for survival. By using an enzyme called arginase to lower arginine levels, researchers observed profound tumour suppression in laboratory models. When combined with standard chemotherapy and immunotherapy, this approach not only slowed cancer progression but also extended survival without added toxicity.

Your support is helping pave the way toward future clinical trials that could improve outcomes for children with aggressive neuroblastoma.



Hope for Children with Deadly Brain Cancers

For children diagnosed with diffuse midline glioma (DMG) - including the incurable brain cancer DIPG - treatment options remain devastatingly limited. Average survival is just 12 months, and for decades, families have been told there are no options.

Thanks to your support, our researchers have achieved a major breakthrough by developing a new dual-therapy strategy that may be far more effective than existing treatments. Published in the international journal, *Science Translational Medicine*, this research shows how combining two next-generation targeted therapies can shut down the biological machinery that drives these aggressive tumours.

Led by Professor David Ziegler and Associate Professor Maria Tsoli, the research tackles one of DMG's greatest challenges: thousands of genes are switched on at once. By targeting two critical proteins involved, researchers were able to simultaneously switch off thousands of cancer-driving genes, causing tumour cells to die and significantly extending survival in disease models.

Crucially, the combined treatment also exposed cancer cells to the immune system, opening the door to future approaches that could include immunotherapy.

Your support is helping turn scientific insight into real hope for children facing the most aggressive brain cancers.

Every Month, Extraordinary People Like Johan Give Children a Second Chance

Like you, we believe every child deserves to live a long and healthy life. Your monthly gift will help make that possible.

Monthly donations provide our researchers with the stability and security they need to commit to new pilot studies, explore new technologies, and fund long-term research initiatives that bring us closer to finding a cure for every child with cancer.

Johan has been making monthly donations to support our research since 2007. When we asked Johan why he became a regular donor, he said, “Losing a childhood friend to leukaemia stayed with me all these years and it made me determined to help find cures. This is why supporting the research of Children’s Cancer Institute really aligns.”

Join compassionate supporters like Johan by becoming a monthly donor today, and help us create a better future for children with cancer.

To be part of this incredible mission, scan the QR code to set up your monthly donation, or call our friendly team on 1800 685 686.
ccia.support/impact26-rg

2025 Snapshot

260
researchers
Including
72 students
48 new researchers

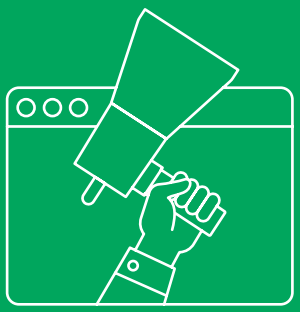
89
publications
49% with our researchers
as first/asenior author

550
collaborations worldwide
150 new in 2025

26
clinical trials supported by our research

82
recognitions
13 new conjoint appointments
10 academic progressions
14 internal research promotions

19
lab tours
For approximately
110 visitors



903,000
website visitors

Children's Cancer Institute

Together we will cure every child of cancer. It's not if, it's when.

SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE OR VISIT ccia.support/impact26