

# Newsletter

## Volume 16 – October 2015

[www.stgeorgescancerinstitute.co.nz](http://www.stgeorgescancerinstitute.co.nz)



**ST GEORGE'S**  
CANCER INSTITUTE  
*(Registered Charitable Trust)*

### Greetings

Another few months have gone by and the development of the new bunkers and ancillary services building is taking shape, with the first patients being treated from the new building in February/March 2016. Already the chemotherapy suite has two smart new offices and a staff room.

On 13 August we went south to Timaru for an information evening. Chris Atkinson and Chris Wynne spoke to about 50 people, about the Centre and its new equipment and treatment capabilities.

On 15 August Bradley Nuttall held a fundraising rugby evening for clients in our basement. Along with the top performance by the All Blacks against the Wallabies, everyone was well entertained.

On 5 November we will be hosting an information evening in Wanaka. If you are from that region and would like to attend, please contact Dawn Hinton (T: 375 6013 or M: 027 432 3371) and we will add you to our invitation list.

We are still conducting information evenings in the Cancer Care Centre to various groups including corporates. These tours start with a drink and some delectable nibbles from our Executive Chef and his Food Services team, followed by a tour of the facility with one of our Radiation Oncologists explaining cancer, treatments and provides an opportunity to ask questions. Feedback shows people leave with a better understanding and feeling about cancer. If you are a member of a group who would like to visit the Centre please contact me on 021 662 195 or Dawn – contact details above.

The Institute continues to fundraise to provide financial, physiotherapy, psychosocial and dietary support.

Our Centre brings us a lot of pride in the way that we can provide the most up to date treatments and are able to accommodate patients with no waiting time.

Happy spring and I wish you good health.

**Cilla Glasson**  
Chair, Cancer Institute Trustees Limited and  
Fundraising Committee

### Our Team of Oncologists

As we have grown, more Oncologists have joined the team. We now have 9 Oncologists providing care:

#### **Radiation Oncologists**

- Assoc Prof Chris Atkinson
- Dr Chris Wynne
- Dr Avtar Raina
- Dr Ben Hindson
- Dr Lisa Johansson
- Dr Brendon Anderson

#### **Medical Oncologists**

- Dr David Gibbs
- Dr Jim Edwards
- Dr Bernie Fitzharris

### New PET CT Agents

PET CT for imaging of tumours is most commonly performed using an agent called fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG) which behaves like glucose in the body. Most tumours are dependent on glucose metabolism for energy, while most normal tissue can utilise other sources of energy.

Some tumours don't metabolise much more glucose than surrounding normal tissue and therefore don't show up on conventional FDG PET, either because of low levels of tumour glucose metabolism, like prostate cancer or high levels of surrounding normal tissue glucose use as in the brain. FDG is also concentrated by the kidneys limiting the usefulness of FDG PET for kidney and bladder tumours.

O-(2-18F-fluoroethyl-L-tyrosine) or 18F-FET is taken up by brain tumour cells to a much greater degree than normal brain tissue. 18F-FET can help define tumour extent and grade, allowing improved assessment of optimal treatment modality and planning of surgical or radiotherapy fields.

Another amino acid analogue, 18F-FACBC, a synthetic variation of the amino acid leucine has shown some promise in the staging of prostate cancer. 18F-sodium fluoride can be used for PET CT bone scanning which is significantly more sensitive for detecting bone tumour deposits than a conventional nuclear medicine bone scan or CT scan.

There are a number of other PET radiopharmaceuticals being developed including agents for imaging dementia and other neurological conditions. It is likely a variety of different tumour specific agents will become available in the future which should help us improve cancer diagnosis and treatment optimisation.

PET scans are available in Christchurch: call PET enquiries T: 0-3-366 5788 or 0800 TOXRAY (0800 869 729) if you require assistance.

### Relocation of our radiation treatment machines



The schedule is on track for relocating our two linear accelerators to their new home above ground. At the end of October the first machine will be decommissioned, dismantled, packed up and moved. It then needs to be reinstalled and recommissioned including a \$1million upgrade that will allow us to develop our cranial stereotactic programme, and make further improvements to all patient treatments.

It is going to take approximately three months before we will have a machine ready to use in the new space and six months to have both working in the new bunkers. During this period we will be working to ensure we maintain our excellent service and no patients will be compromised in terms of wait time for treatment.



## Treatment Support Grants

The Trust started providing financial assistance to qualifying patients in July 2011 and up to September 2015 has assisted 167 patients with financial support totalling \$509,615 with an average assistance amount of \$3,052.

The Institute continues to be grateful for the generous donations received from a patient who was so impressed with the care she received from Mary Thomson, Lymphoedema Physiotherapist, that she wanted other women, who could not afford this service, to receive the benefit of the specialised treatment. The Institute also received a donation from another donor, specifically tagged for this treatment.

Since the grant commenced in May 2014, support has been provided to 49 women to the value of \$12,700.

## Service Development

We have been looking into options for further developing the service with a key area of exercise programmes and other rehabilitation services for our patients. There is a lot of evidence now that shows the benefits of exercise for cancer patients including:

- reduced treatment related fatigue and anxiety
- improved arm mobility for breast cancer patients
- gaining a sense of control over health and wellbeing
- improved quality of life through improvements in
  - mood state and depressive symptoms
  - socialisation and body weight
  - sleep patterns and physical functioning

We recently ran a programme called "Next steps" – a Pinc & Steel initiative ([www.pincandsteel.com](http://www.pincandsteel.com)) that was funded by the Breast Cancer Foundation specifically for women who have completed their treatment. This was run by Julee Binns physiotherapist (who has been credentialled to run this programme) with help from our physiotherapist Mary Thomson and radiation therapist Adiella Stewart.

We are now focusing on how we might be able to provide programmes suitable for all patients during and after treatment.

## Volumes

The St George's Cancer Care Centre has grown significantly since opening its doors in February 2010 (and providing chemotherapy for a year prior to that). We have now provided approximately:

- 5,500 chemotherapy administrations for over 500 patients
- 32,000 radiation treatments for 1,500 patients
- 1,500 psychologist consultations
- 4,500 physiotherapy consultations
- 1,200 dietitian consultations

## St George's Cancer Institute Newsletters

We trust you find the regular updates on the St George's Cancer Care Centre and the fundraising activities of the St George's Cancer Institute interesting.

As previously advised, in an effort to reduce printing costs and improve distribution, you can receive future newsletters via email. **We may already have your email address in our database, however until you give us permission to send newsletters via email, we are legally unable to do so. We encourage you to add your name to our email distribution list - please advise details:**

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest in the St George's Cancer Care Centre and your support of the St George's Cancer Institute.

If you no longer wish to receive future newsletters, please tick (✓) the box and advise your name.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and return in the enclosed self addressed envelope or email [dawn.hinton@stgeorges.org.nz](mailto:dawn.hinton@stgeorges.org.nz) advising you wish to be removed from the database. Thank you.

## DONATION CARD

To support the St George's Cancer Institute, please fill out the form, including your cheque or credit card details, and post to: **St George's Cancer Institute, Private Bag 4737, Christchurch 8140.**

I will be paying by (tick appropriate)

Visa  MasterCard  Cheque  Internet Banking

Card no \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount NZ\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Internet banking to St George's Cancer Institute, Account no 06-0801-0643073-00

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mr/Mrs/Miss/other Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

A receipt quoting the St George's Cancer Institute number CC26864 will be posted to the above address.

The Trust is registered under the Charities Act 2005 No CC26864

Thank you

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