



ST GEORGE'S
CANCER INSTITUTE
(Registered Charitable Trust)

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newsletter

Radiation Clinical Nurse receives accreditation

The first Radiation Oncology Nurse at St George's Cancer Care Centre, Anna Low, has received her accreditation as a Registered Nurse Designated Prescriber in primary and health specialty teams.

Two years of full-time study through the University of Auckland, while working full-time as a radiation oncology nurse, has earned Anna a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences Specialisation in Advanced Nursing.

Employed as the Centre's first Radiation Oncology Nurse in July 2023, her specialist role now allows her to prescribe specified prescription medicines to cancer radiation patients.

Through working in radiation oncology, Anna saw first-hand the difference a Registered Nurse (RN) Designated Prescriber can make. For Anna, being able to achieve this specialist accreditation and provide this service of care to Cancer Care Centre patients is a personal career highlight.

A RN Designated Prescriber at the Centre is hugely beneficial as the demand for health care increases. This specialised role enhances care, makes effective use of all medical staff's time, strengthens inter-professional work practices and increases the skill capacity when radiation oncology consultants aren't on site every day.

In addition to prescribing medicines, Anna applies her new skills on a daily basis to assessing and reviewing patients' symptoms, and managing side effects for those going through radiation treatment.

She also attends arranged weekly reviews with the combined chemotherapy and radiation patients.



Radiation Oncology Nurse at St George's Cancer Care Centre, Anna Low

Educating and reinforcing symptom management is important, as these patients are identified as the most at-risk of treatment-related side effects.

Across her multi-faceted role Anna works closely with a broad team of radiation consultants, radiation therapists, dietitians, speech language therapists, the medical oncology team and administration staff to ensure that patients receive positive and timely care.

"Working in radiation oncology can be challenging, but also very rewarding," Anna says.

"As a radiation nurse you are an integral link for the patient during treatment – advocating for them, providing them support, symptom management and continued education."

After working in both public and private oncology settings in Christchurch and overseas, Anna says the team at St George's Cancer

Care Centre make it an enjoyable place to work.

"We are a supportive team to one another, working collaboratively to achieve better outcomes for patients going through cancer treatment."

Leaves are falling
and the thought
of winter doesn't
excite me.

**Hopefully most of you are
planning a few weeks escape to
the sun somewhere.**

The Cancer Care Centre is busy and the MR-Linac has started treating metastatic cancers which is great news. The team is now preparing to treat liver and pancreatic cancers. You will read more about the MR-Linac in this newsletter.

We thank John Belcher for once again organising a fun 4-wheel drive day covering two properties.

About 24 vehicles took part and the money was donated to the institute.

The institute is planning several more information evenings in the South Island – one on prostate cancer and another being a further update on the MR-Linac.

Read on for more interesting information on the Centre.

Wishing you all a warm, healthy winter.

Cilla Glasson

*Chair, Cancer Institute Trustees
Limited Board of Directors*



Dr Feng-Yi Soh

New radiation oncologist – Dr Feng-Yi Soh

Leading radiation oncologist Dr Feng-Yi Soh has returned to Christchurch, where he initially trained, to join our team of experts and to develop the MR-Linac Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy (SABR) programme.

Qualified in Singapore and trained in oncology at Christchurch Hospital, Dr Soh has an impressive career spanning radiation and clinical oncology. He was the first Australia/New Zealand trainee to be accredited in clinical oncology by the General Medical Council (UK).

Having led breast and head/neck oncology services in the North of Scotland, Dr Soh gained significant experience in the delivery of cancer care to rural populations and ensuring equity of care to under-served communities.

Dr Soh has also acted as the Principal Investigator to a number of breast and prostate cancer systemic and

radiation therapy trials, and is a keen medical educator, examining for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists (UK).

New Zealand has many similarities to Scotland. Both are advanced economies with great medical innovation, challenged with a backdrop of limited resources in a national healthcare system.

"I hope that my experiences can be translated into progress in the field of oncology locally. Coming back to Christchurch where I trained speaks to my confidence in the future of New Zealand's oncology care," Dr Soh says.

"The Cancer Care Centre's MR-Linac also provides the perfect platform to implement new treatment modalities for a variety of tumour sites and engage with advanced radiation oncology clinical trials."

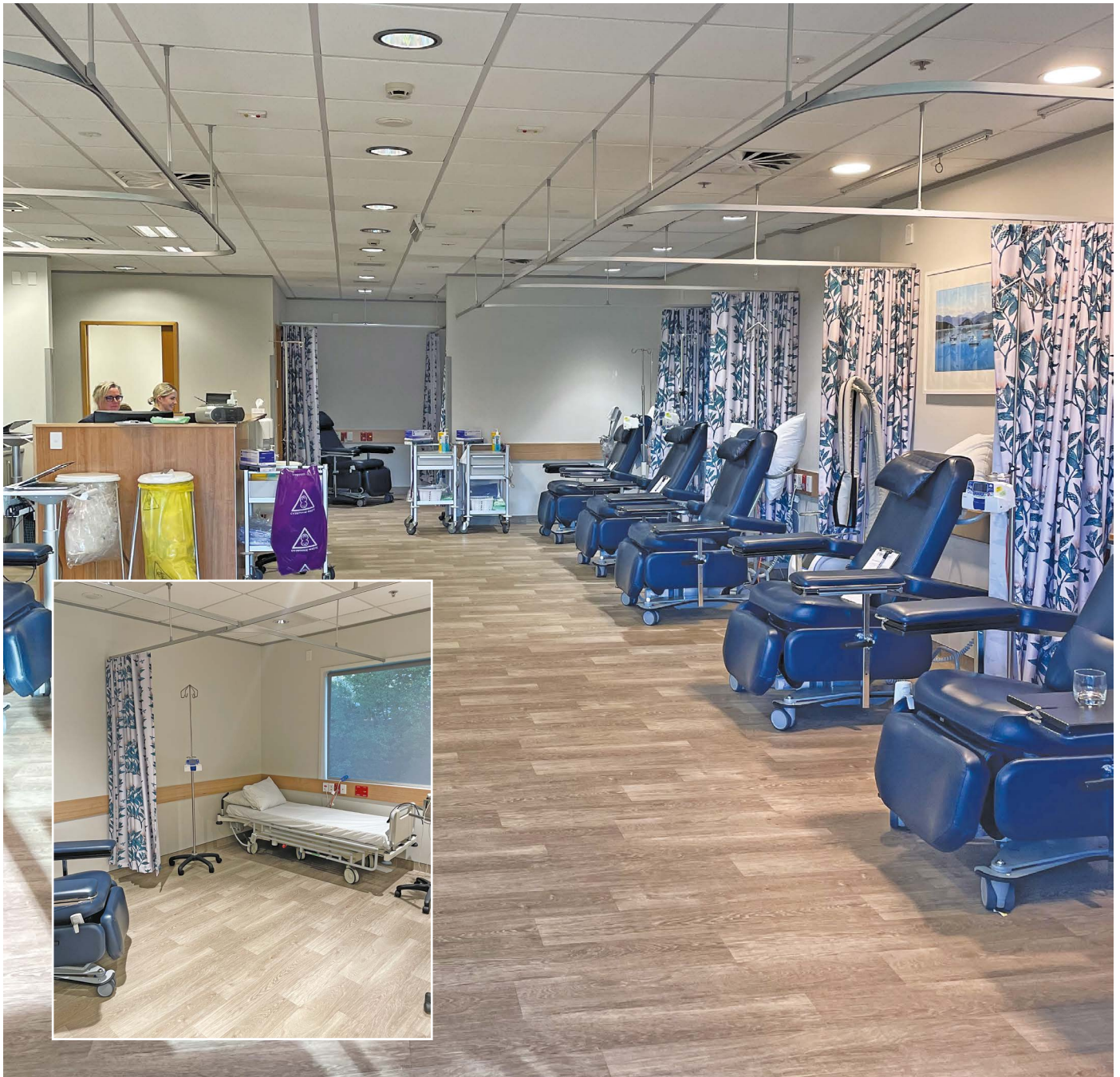
In 2019, Dr Soh was elected a Fellow in Surgery by the Royal College of

Physicians & Surgeons of Glasgow. His ongoing involvement in professional Colleges, including the examination of young oncologists, spurs him to keep abreast of new developments and international best practice.

Dr Soh says that since starting with the St George's Cancer Care Centre team in November 2023, he has been astounded by his team's receptiveness to innovation and new ideas.

"Improvements to technology increase the precision of treatment, allowing for shorter treatment regimes, better tumour control, and a reduction in toxicity that the patient is exposed to," says Dr Soh.

In his time away from the Centre, Dr Soh enjoys reconnecting with New Zealand's beauty by exploring the hills and supporting his children in their ever-changing sports interests and hobbies.



Above and inset: New consulting rooms and extension to the chemotherapy suite.

Medical Oncology update

The Cancer Care Centre received an upgrade to its consulting rooms and extended the chemotherapy suite late last year. The first patients used the refurbished suite in December, and we are pleased to say the additional space has allowed us to welcome back family and friends who are supporting patients during their treatment.

The extension also allows us to increase the number of patients we can have on treatment at any time, provides us with space for a bed and



makes treatment more comfortable for some patients. We've received great feedback from our patients and nurses, specifically commenting on the positive feeling of the Centre.

We now have several staff trained on the Centre's new ultrasound machine. This means patients can be seen onsite for guided cannulation, significantly improving patient comfort and convenience.

Left: The new 'vein finder' ultrasound machine in action.

