



IMPACT REPORT



United in Advancing Outcomes

Reflecting on the past year, we are reminded of the crucial role our community of supporters plays. Your commitment and belief in funding world-class research and projects drives meaningful change. Thanks to your generosity and dedication, we can support groundbreaking initiatives that make a real impact on patient lives. This collective effort fuels our mission and ensures continued progress in advancing lung transplantation outcomes.

Our Lungitude Long Lunch, featuring undercover entertainers, was a standout highlight of our year. Made possible by your support and the tireless work of our Fundraising Committee, this event was more than a gathering; it was a celebration of our shared commitment to helping others. It was wonderful to reconnect with so many of you and see the enthusiasm for what we are doing which propels us forward.

The success of our Lungitude Giving Day and Virtual Challenge was equally inspiring. Witnessing supporters 'double their impact' through donations or personal challenges, and hearing Hector's incredible survival story, reaffirmed the importance of our work. Your participation not only fuelled these initiatives but also raised crucial awareness for groundbreaking research.

We are immensely proud to be funding world-class lung transplant research projects at Alfred Health, VTIS Redcross Lifeblood, and Monash

University. Your contributions are driving advancements in medical science. We eagerly anticipate hearing from researchers each October about their innovative work, and our hybrid presentation approach has allowed us to reach even more of you. This report includes a story about one researcher we're funding and highlights the benefits of international collaborations.

This year, Lungitude made its debut at two major lung transplantation events in Melbourne. This opportunity enabled us to showcase our work, forge valuable connections within the field, and advance our mission of enhancing lung transplant outcomes while strengthening our community.

Thank you for being an essential part of this shared journey. Your support is invaluable, and together, we are making a significant impact that you can be proud of.

Gordon Jenkins
Lungitude Foundation Chair

Lungitude Giving Day Ambassadors

Lung transplant recipient Hector and his wife Ana kindly agreed to be the faces of our campaign this year. Hector has a remarkable story of survival and beating the odds, and we are proud that the research Lungitude funds will give Hector a greater chance of a longer life with Ana.

Hector spent six months in intensive care, received over 4,000 hours of critical care from 1500 medical professionals, and had the longest recorded stint on ECMO, a type of artificial life support.



Transformational Lung Transplant Research

World-class outcomes

With the support of our generous community, we are proud to be able to fund groundbreaking projects that lead to improved outcomes and quality of life for transplant recipients.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PAST YEAR INCLUDE:

NOVEL TOOLS TO MONITOR POST-TRANSPLANT REJECTION IN LUNG TRANSPLANT PATIENTS – STEVEN HIHO (AND DR LUCY SULLIVAN, VTIS / RED CROSS LIFEblood)

Identified that pre-transplant AT1R antibodies are linked to acute kidney injury post-transplant, leading to a larger cohort study and increased assessment of AT1R antibodies in waitlisted patients.

Discovery that having eight or more out of 39 non-HLA autoantibodies pre-transplant correlates with a higher risk of Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction (CLAD).

Working with donor-derived cell-free DNA (ddcfDNA) non-invasive tests is logistically challenging however has the potential to be used to assess antibody mediated rejection, and may negate the requirement for protocol lung biopsies looking for rejection.

INDIVIDUALIZING IMMUNOSUPPRESSION TO PREVENT INFECTION IN LUNG TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS – DR BRAD GARDINER, ALFRED HEALTH

Quantiferon®-Monitor (QFM) blood testing could help identify individuals at higher risk for infections earlier, potentially allowing for timely interventions that might be able to improve not only their short-term longevity but also long-term survival.

NOVEL BIOMARKER FOR PREDICTING CHRONIC ALLOGRAFT DYSFUNCTION (CLAD) FOLLOWING LUNG TRANSPLANT – DR DIMITRA ZOTOS, MONASH UNIVERSITY AND RED CROSS LIFEblood

Analysis of bio-banked samples identified two blood cell types potentially predictive of Chronic Allograft Dysfunction (CLAD). One cell type remains a strong predictor, though its reliance on a specific cytokine necessitates further study. Findings suggest that B cells and T regulatory cells, reduced in patients who developed CLAD, could serve as early indicators.

IDENTIFICATION OF ALLOREACTIVE T CELL TARGETS ON HUMAN TRANSPLANTABLE TISSUES – DR NICOLE MIFSUD, MONASH UNIVERSITY

Identification of 187,009 peptides from 21 donor tissues, with 58 peptides shared across different donor tissues, with next phase assessing these peptides' ability to trigger T cell responses. The findings are moving researchers one step closer to enhancing post-transplant monitoring and developing universal diagnostic tools for solid organ transplants.

Progress update with key philanthropy donors Lesley & Roger Gillespie and Tony Pratt, at Monash University Clayton.



WWW.LUNGITUDE.COM.AU/RESEARCH/



ZOE BROOKES PAEDIATRIC FELLOWSHIP

Heart and double lung recipient Zoe Brookes' legacy continues with the awarding of the inaugural fellowship to Dr Miranda Paraskeva. This fellowship is made possible through Lungitude's fundraising endeavours, including events like our Giving Day, and community fundraisers such as the Zo Kart Cup organised by Zoe's family and friends.

75 years
oldest lung
recipient

34 years
longest surviving
lung transplant



Lungitude Foundation Research Grants

2024-2025

We are thrilled to announce the recipients of our latest Lungitude Foundation Research Grants. Please join us in congratulating these outstanding principal research investigators whose dedication and innovation are shaping the future of lung transplantation.

PROJECT 1

DR MIRANDA PARASKEVA, LUNG TRANSPLANT SERVICE, THE ALFRED HOSPITAL (AWARDED THE INAUGURAL ZOE BROOKES PAEDIATRIC FELLOWSHIP)



DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANIMATED EDUCATION RESOURCE FOR PAEDIATRIC LUNG TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS VIA A PROCESS OF CO-DESIGN.

Lung transplantation offers a crucial treatment option for children and young people with end-stage lung disease. The Alfred Hospital, Australia's largest lung transplant centre, is the only provider of lung transplants for children aged 4-16 years in the country. Children from across Australia travel to Melbourne for surgery and initial post-operative care before returning to their home states for ongoing treatment. This centralisation necessitates providing education remotely, supported by local healthcare providers.

During childhood and adolescence, neurocognitive development is rapidly evolving and influenced by health status, social context, and learning opportunities. For children undergoing lung transplant, challenges such as prolonged hypoxia and fragmented educational engagement can affect cognitive development. Thus, education about lung transplantation must be developmentally appropriate.

In 2020, studies revealed a gap in age-appropriate, child-friendly resources for young lung transplant recipients. Current materials are primarily paper-based and adult-oriented, failing to engage children effectively. This project aims to create an educational resource that caters to the cognitive and developmental needs of young patients, enhancing their understanding and involvement in their healthcare.

It is anticipated that the creation of this animation will support the more effective translation of knowledge about the process of transplant and living well thereafter.

PROJECT 2

STEVEN HIHO, PHD CANDIDATE, LUNG TRANSPLANT SERVICE, ALFRED HOSPITAL AND VICTORIAN TRANSPLANTATION AND IMMUNOGENETICS SERVICES (VTIS), AUSTRALIAN REDCROSS LIFEBLOOD



IMPACT OF TRANSFUSION PRODUCT USE ON HLA SENSITISATION, SHORT AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FOLLOWING LUNG TRANSPLANTATION.

Australia performs approximately 200 lung transplants annually, with the Alfred Hospital conducting over half. Human Leukocyte Antigens (HLA) are crucial for transplant compatibility; mismatches can lead to donor-specific antibodies (DSA), provoking an immune response against the transplanted lung. An audit of 434 lung transplants from 2018-2023 revealed that two-thirds of recipients needed transfusions for platelets or red blood cells. These transfusions can cause HLA sensitization, raising the risk of antibody-mediated rejection (AMR) and chronic rejection due to mismatched HLA between recipient and donor blood products.

Previous research found that increased HLA mismatching is linked to a higher risk of Chronic Lung Allograft Dysfunction (CLAD) and reduced survival. Sensitisation from pregnancies or prior transplants is inevitable, but transfusions can exacerbate broad HLA sensitization, adversely affecting transplant outcomes and future transplant options. Given that transfusions often involve mismatched HLA, this research study aims to assess whether using HLA-compatible blood products can reduce sensitization and improve outcomes. Researchers will investigate the impact of transfused blood products on various clinical outcomes, including ICU stay, dialysis use, steroid requirements, early rejection, CLAD, AMR, and DSA development.

The Alfred are the main centre of Australian paediatric lung transplants.

5 years youngest lung recipient

31 Paed LTx recipients between 2015-2023 referred from all of Australia and NZ

(NB: paediatric is up to 16 yrs of age as per national funding)

58% male
42% female

Age range 5 years - 16 years

Median age 13.8 years

Most common diagnosis resulting in lung Tx

Cystic Fibrosis	26%
Pulmonary Hypertension	32%
Pulmonary Fibrosis	13%
Congenital Heart Disease	10%
Re-transplant	6%
Other	13%

PROJECT 3

**DR NICOLE MIFSUD,
DEPARTMENT OF
BIOCHEMISTRY AND
MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AND
THE BIOMEDICAL DISCOVERY
INSTITUTE, MONASH
UNIVERSITY**



DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN T CELL HEROES AND VILLAINS TO IMPROVE TRANSPLANT OUTCOMES.

The immune system protects the body from harmful pathogens like viruses and bacteria and helps prevent cancer. Key to this defence are T cells, which circulate throughout the body, detecting and eliminating infected or cancerous cells. However, these same T cells can also trigger graft rejection after transplantation, recognizing the donor organ as a foreign entity.

To prevent rejection, transplant recipients receive anti-rejection drugs that broadly suppress the immune system, including the T cells necessary for normal protection. This suppression increases the risk of infections and cancers.

Advances in single-cell technology have revolutionised researchers' ability to study immune cells, allowing them to identify and differentiate individual T cells. This key scientific advance enables researchers to distinguish between T cells that protect and those that contribute to graft rejection. This will provide the transplant community with the opportunity to track specific T cells involved in damaging responses and to develop targeted therapies that can eliminate these T cell "villains" while preserving the protective "heroes" of the immune system.



PROJECT 5

**DR MELANIE WONG, DEPARTMENT OF RESPIRATORY MEDICINE,
THE ALFRED HOSPITAL**

OUTCOMES OF LUNG TRANSPLANTATION FOR PULMONARY SARCOIDOSIS.

Pulmonary sarcoidosis is typically a mild, self-limiting condition, but a small number of cases progress to end-stage lung disease despite treatment. For these patients, lung transplantation can be a curative option. However, there is limited data on the outcomes and characteristics of lung transplantation for pulmonary sarcoidosis due to the small patient numbers. This research aims to analyse data from The Alfred Hospital, one of the world's largest and most successful lung transplant programs, to evaluate patient outcomes and identify risk factors associated with sarcoid recurrence post-transplant.

Current management practices for lung transplant recipients with sarcoidosis are the same as for other patients, though previous studies suggest that sarcoid recurrence post-transplant is common. There is also uncertainty about whether these patients are more prone to infections due to their pre-transplant immunosuppression. Identifying specific risks for these patients will help in developing strategies to monitor, prevent, and treat sarcoid recurrence.

Further investigation is also needed to explore treatment options for recurrent sarcoidosis and determine if altering treatment can improve graft survival.

PROJECT 4

**DR ANDREI M. DARIE.
LUNG TRANSPLANT SERVICE,
THE ALFRED HOSPITAL**



IMPACT OF PRE-TRANSPLANT ANGIOTENSIN TYPE I RECEPTOR ANTIBODIES ON SPIROMETRY AND KIDNEY FUNCTION.

Lung transplantation often becomes the last treatment option for severe lung diseases. Despite advancements in surgical techniques and medication, lung transplant recipients generally face poorer outcomes compared to those receiving other organs. This disparity is largely due to uncontrolled scarring in the lung, driven by an excessive immune response. Recent studies in kidney transplantation have shown that antibodies against angiotensin type 1 receptors (AT1Rabs) are linked to worsened kidney function. Elevated levels of these antibodies have also been observed in lung transplant patients.

In this study, researchers measured AT1Rabs in 49 lung transplant patients at The Alfred Hospital and correlated these levels with lung function data from routine follow-ups. Preliminary results suggest that AT1Rabs may be associated with increased lung scarring and diminished lung function. Additionally, higher levels of AT1Rabs were noted in patients with lower preoperative kidney function. To confirm these findings, researchers plan to analyse blood samples and lung function data from 182 patients. This research aims to explore whether targeting AT1Rabs could then enhance transplant outcomes and patient care.

**6
average lung
transplants per
month**

**1 of the 10
largest lung transplant
programs globally**

**1,888
lung transplants
at The Alfred**

Spotlight on Dr Andrei Darie

Dr Andrei Darie is a recent and deserving recipient of one of our Lungitude Foundation Research Grants. Supported by the University of Basel and the FAG Basel of Switzerland, Andrei has embarked on a 24-month postdoctoral research fellowship with The Alfred Lung Transplant Team.

Andrei's move to Australia was driven by the opportunity to deepen his interest and expertise in respiratory infections, particularly in vulnerable, immune-compromised patients, at one of the world's leading centres for lung transplantation. He and his wife, Cezara, have been warmly welcomed, with Andrei remarking that Australians are amongst the friendliest people he has encountered.

Currently, Andrei's research at The Alfred is focused on two pivotal areas: the impact of pre-transplant angiotensin type 1 receptor (AT1R) antibodies on spirometry and kidney function, and the influence of donor age on lung transplant outcomes.

Andrei's work on AT1R antibodies is the focus of our funding and is particularly compelling as it explores their potential role in short- and long-term complications post-transplant, including graft dysfunction and impaired kidney function. Andrei anticipates that this research could lead to new strategies for pre-emptive treatments, improving patient outcomes. You can read more about Andrei's research on our website

WWW.LUNGITUDE.COM.AU/RESEARCH



Andrei exemplifies the importance of international collaborations in advancing lung transplant research and clinical expertise globally. He envisions establishing his own research group in Basel to continue his exploration within this field and to build upon the peer relationships he is fostering in Australia.

When asked how the field of lung transplantation is likely to evolve, Andrei predicts that AI (artificial intelligence) tools will eventually play a role in patient care. Due to the complexities of transplantation, this is likely to be a considered approach, perhaps initially used to estimate the trajectory of patients and allow for earlier interventions.

Outside his work, Andrei has embraced life in Australia, exploring Victoria and beyond, enjoying Melbourne's 'amazing' coffee, and watching the Australian Open live - a dream come true for a long-time tennis fan. He's even developed an interest in Australian football, supporting the Melbourne Demons.

Andrei holds a medical degree from Carol Davila University, Romania and a doctoral degree from the University of Basel, Switzerland. He has Swiss Federal board certifications in internal medicine, respiratory medicine, and sleep medicine.



LUNGITUDE Annual Research Presentation

We remain both proud and inspired by the groundbreaking research highlighted at our annual Lung Transplant Research Presentation in October. The new hybrid format has been a hit, providing both in-person and online access. Attendees have the opportunity to hear from leading researchers funded by your support, who present updates on their innovative projects and engage in a highly informative Q&A session. Session is free and open to all.

96%
post transplant
one year survival
(The Alfred)

37 years
first Australian
lung transplant

74%
post transplant
five year survival
(The Alfred)

JEFF GITTUS Fellowship

Jeff had two lung transplants, and alongside his wife Liz played a pivotal role in enabling the Lungitude Foundation to flourish from day one, and to continue to make an impact.

The Jeff Gittus Fellowships are generously funded by the Gittus Family and bestowed biennially, granting the successful research applicant a sum of \$20,000.





Matching Efforts Lead to Success

Thanks to your incredible support, we were thrilled to reach our Giving Day goal of \$90,000.

Although it took a few extra days, crossing the finish line is what truly matters. We are deeply grateful to all our generous donors and our fantastic 'matchers' who made this achievement possible. Your contributions are highly valued by everyone at Lungitude and the world-class researchers you are helping to fund.

This year's Lungitude Giving Day offered two exciting ways to participate. Supporters could give directly to the campaign, with every contribution appreciated, or engage in fundraising by completing personal challenges. Participants went above and beyond, from walking, running, and riding, to tackling impressive feats like 20,000 steps, 20km runs, and even 100 bench presses at 60kg in one gym session! Thank you to Apt Wealth Partners, Willis Partners and Bittn Termite + Pest for involving your teams. Congratulations to all involved, including the winners of our 'health and wellbeing' draw, with the first prize generously donated by Dancing with the Stars winner Jessica Raffa.

Thank you Hector and Ana for being our 'faces' of this year's campaign and sharing your heartfelt story.

PLEASE JOIN US IN THANKING OUR AMAZING PHILANTHROPIC 'MATCHERS' FOR THEIR GENEROSITY AND GOODWILL TO OTHERS:

-  The Gittus Family
-  Effective Freight Solutions
 efs.au
-  Ken Donovan & Wendy Futschik
-  Gordon & Wendy Jenkins
-  Generous Anonymous Trust

MAKE A DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

We're excited and thankful when our supporters choose to host their own community fundraisers for Lungitude. We're happy to assist by providing branded items, sharing tips, and even setting up a custom fundraising page for online donations. Get in touch with us to explore what is involved and how we can support your fundraising efforts. Contact Wendy at wendy@lungitude.com.au.



Clare and Leigh's Sunbury Lions Fundraiser in support of the Lungitude Foundation

LUNGITUDE FOUNDATION MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Did you know that we have a range of mental health resources on our website for both patients and their primary supporters? Visit our website to learn more.



LUNGITUDE.COM.AU



**ACKNOWLEDGING
DR HELEN WHITFORD**

Long Lunch Generosity

This year's Lungitude Long Lunch was a resounding success, surpassing our fundraising goals thanks to the incredible support of our guests.

The event took a surprising turn with performances from 'undercover' singers, who entertained us with opera and classic tunes while posing as a chef and floor manager. Comedic MC Des kept the atmosphere lively and full of laughter.

Attendees heard inspiring updates from Dr Samantha Ennis and Dr Helen Whitford from The Alfred's Lung Transplant Team, showcasing the significant difference the research funding makes. With an impressive array of auction items, lucky art deco print draws, wine wheel spins, door prizes, and charming lion mascots, the majority went home with fabulous keepsakes. It was a truly memorable day, celebrating both community spirit and remarkable generosity.

Respected clinical consultant Dr. Helen Whitford has recently relocated from The Alfred to tropical Townsville, and we would like to recognize her invaluable contributions over 25 years. As a past recipient of Lungitude funding, Helen was renowned for her expertise in managing primary hypertension pre-transplant, her efforts in pushing to expand the donor pool, and her strong advocacy for South Australian transplants and their dedicated team. We extend our best wishes to Helen in her new role and are confident that her expertise will continue to make a significant difference in her patients' lives.

Lungitude's Debut Exhibits

The Lungitude Foundation made its debut at two major events in June: the Transplant Nurses' Association Symposium, and the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand Annual Scientific Meeting. Both events took place at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

Our committee members – Kerrie, Liz, Elise, and Wendy – manned the exhibits, where they offered informative materials and giveaways about Lungitude's research, advocacy, support, and educational initiatives.

To attract attendees, we held a lucky draw featuring our Lungitude lion mascots dressed in charming handmade medical scrubs (a special thanks to Kerrie).

It was a pleasure connecting with fellow organisations and individuals who share our passion for transplantation and engage with the talented specialists and researchers in attendance.



Lungitude Key Supporters

We extend our thanks for your generosity

Gillespie Family
Foundation

The Gittus
Family

Mr Tony Pratt



MONASH
University

Apt.
WEALTH PARTNERS



Generous
Anonymous
Trust

Ken Donovan
& Wendy
Futschik

The Pardasani
Family



ATLANTIC GROUP*

bittn



Willis Partners
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & ADVISORS



theAlfred
FOUNDATION

Save the Dates

30 MARCH 2025

Lungitude Long Lunch
MELBOURNE



Spectacular exclusive location
with fabulous food and wine

5 JUNE 2025

Lungitude Giving Day
FUNDRAISER



Double your impact with your
donation matched on the day
OR Raise funds by participating
in our Virtual Challenge



OCT EACH YEAR

Annual Research
PRESENTATION



World-class researchers showcasing
their latest project outcomes

THROUGHOUT YEAR
Community Events



Organise your own fundraising
event in support

Our Team

BOARD MEMBERS

Gordon Jenkins, Lungitude Chair
Andrew Dunbar, Board Chair
Julie Ramke-Meyer, Treasurer
Wendy Jenkins, Secretary
A/Prof Bronwyn Lewvey
Matt Gittus

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Wendy Jenkins, Chair
Kerrie Coghlan
Liz Gittus
Elise Patterson
Cindy Watson

YOU CAN MAKE A VITAL DIFFERENCE

- Make a Donation
- Donate Goods & Services
- Sponsor or Attend an Event
- Sponsor the Lungitude Foundation
- Subscribe to our Online Community
- Consider including a Bequest to Lungitude in your will
- Run your own fundraiser supporting the Lungitude Foundation
- Encourage staff, colleagues, suppliers or clients to support us
- Spread the word and follow us on social media

Find out more about how you can support us
www.lungitude.com.au/get-involved/



Have you been receiving our latest emails? Please add the following
email to your address book info@lungitude.com.au
or subscribe to our database www.lungitude.com.au/our-community/



Contact us

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