



St Vincent's Clinic  
*Research Foundation*

# Annual Impact Report 2025



# Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, including the Gadigal and Bidjigal of the Eora nation, upon whose lands St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation and St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct are situated. We honour their enduring connection to the land, water, and culture, paying our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.



**Artist: Anthony Cain**

This painting represents the St Vincent's Private Hospital working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve access to appropriate healthcare by providing a culturally inclusive environment that engages and values the community and creates opportunities for employment and further education and training with the aim at strengthening partnerships and closing the gap in health.



## Who We Are

Established in 1992, the St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to advancing patient care through cutting-edge medical research.

As the research arm of St Vincent's Clinic, we are an integral part of a multidisciplinary centre of excellence, facilitating a direct connection between research and patient care. Our two-way bench-to-bedside approach empowers top doctors and researchers within St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct to shape the future of medicine, creating a real-world impact on patient care.

## Our Vision

Our grants are critical in advancing research projects in their infancy that require support to flourish. In turn, they enable researchers to establish a track record, allowing access to larger government and NFP grants. With over 30 years of expertise, we offer a unique perspective to identify research projects with strong potential. This vital research continues to unravel medical mysteries and prevention practices, improves patient care and treatments, and unlocks possible cures.

Dedicated to defeating tomorrow's illness and disease today.



van Institute  
Medical Research

Institute  
of Research

# Message From Our President

**St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation continues to play an important role in supporting research across the St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct.**

On behalf of the Advisory Board, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the work of the Foundation in 2025. Our researchers, clinicians and allied health professionals continue to demonstrate extraordinary dedication to improving patient care through research.

*For more than three decades, the Foundation has supported innovative projects that help translate discoveries from bench to bedside. By providing early-stage funding, we enable researchers to explore new ideas that have the potential to improve diagnosis, treatment and patient outcomes.*

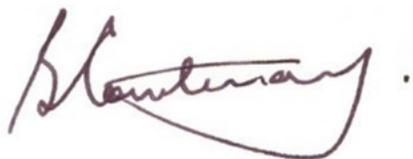
It is particularly encouraging to see the increasing number of multidisciplinary collaborations emerging across the St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Associate Professor Venessa Chin, Chair of the Scientific Committee, and thank the members of the independent Scientific Committee for their continued commitment to maintaining a rigorous and fair evaluation process.

My sincere thanks also go to our Advisory Board and to the many donors and partners whose generosity makes this work possible.

This Impact Report highlights the outcomes of that support and the progress being made across the precinct.

Warmest regards,



**A/Prof Brett Courtenay OAM  
President**



# Message From Our CEO

**St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation is proud to support research across the St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct in Darlinghurst - one of Australia's leading environments for healthcare, research and innovation.**

Each day St Vincent's Clinic supports the care of thousands of patients, with more than 340 accredited doctors across over 20 specialties consulting within the Clinic and working across St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals.

Many of the specialists consulting at St Vincent's Clinic are closely connected with the clinical and research programs of the Precinct, contributing to a strong culture of innovation and collaboration.

Through its grant programs, the St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation supports innovative research that advances clinical practice and improves patient outcomes. Our grants fund projects across a wide range of disciplines, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, medical imaging, ageing well and emerging approaches to chronic illness.

A defining strength of the Foundation is its support for early-stage research and emerging researchers. By backing promising ideas at an early stage, the Foundation helps clinicians and researchers generate the evidence needed to develop new treatments, attract further funding and ultimately improve care for patients.

*A 25% increase in grant applications this year highlights both the depth of research talent across the Precinct and the growing need for philanthropic support to help promising ideas move forward.*

*Philanthropic support continues to play a vital role in enabling early-stage research and supporting the next generation of clinician-researchers.*

This work reflects the long tradition of compassion, care and service that has shaped St Vincent's for more than 165 years.

We are deeply grateful to our donors whose generosity enables this work. Together, we are helping to drive discovery and improve the future of healthcare.

Regards,



**Ms Katie Viviers**  
CEO



# Our Advisory Board



A/Prof Brett Courtenay OAM  
(President, SVCRF)



Mr Russell Aboud



Mr Leigh Birtles



Mr Michael Coombes



Ms Gail Hamblly  
(Chair, SVC & SVCRF)



Mr Ted Harris AC



Ms Mim Haysom



Mrs Elizabeth Lewin



Dr Alan Meagher



Dr Matthew Miles



Mrs Ros Packer AC



Ms Katie Viviers  
(CEO, SVC & SVCRF)

Our Advisory Board provides strategic advice and recommendations to the SVC Research Foundation Board. At the time of publication, its members are:

- Ms Gail Hamblly
- Ms Suzanne Holden
- Mr Joseph Portelli
- Ms Jocelyne Mansour
- Ms Katie Viviers
- Mr Matthew Wall





Bridging the gap  
from bench to  
bedside through  
translational  
research.



500+

grants awarded

33

years of breaking  
boundaries

\$22m

funding medical  
breakthroughs

A-Z

supporting uncharted  
research of all kinds

# Projects You Have Helped Fund in 2025

## Dr Ross Penglase

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

Elevating Cell Therapy for Safer Treatment of Severe Autoimmune and Inflammatory Diseases Through Amplifying Patient-Derived Immunomodulatory T Regulatory Cells

## Dr Brooke Pereira

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Therapeutic targeting of thrombospondin-1 (THBS-1) to enhance chemotherapy response in pancreatic cancer using intravital imaging approaches

## Dr Shona Ritchie

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Repurposing FDA/TGA-approved PCSK9 inhibitor Repatha® (evolocumab) to improve immunotherapy efficacy in pancreatic cancer

## A/Prof Sean Mungovan

St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney

Cellular and Molecular Drivers of Osteoarthritis: from Bedside to Bench

## A/Prof Priya Nair

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

Randomised controlled trial of cytokine haemadsorption therapy to modulate the vasoplegic response following heart transplant surgery

## Dr Jennifer Snaith

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

A phase II study, examining the effects of adjunctive tirzepatide on weight, metabolism and cardiovascular risk in adults with type 1 diabetes and obesity (the TIRTLE1 study)

## A/Prof Lucette Cysique

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

Biomarkers of Long COVID-associated cognitive impairment

## Prof Reginald V Lord

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

DNA methylation and proteomic profiling to improve tumour staging, estimates of prognosis, and clinical decision making for patients with oesophageal adenocarcinoma

## Prof Anthony D Kelleher

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

Untangling the Inherited and Acquired Host Determinants Predicting Progression and Persistence of HPVDriven Anal Disease

## Dr Andrew Yam

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Developing novel microbial immune therapy to treat triple negative breast cancer

## Dr Drew Neavin

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Revealing the genetic underpinnings cancer therapy-induced cardiotoxicity

## Dr Elyn Montgomery

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

Frailty in amyloidosis – a multidisciplinary approach

## Mrs Gabriela Abrahamson

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

Use of continuous glucose monitoring as a non-invasive, cost effective method to simplify and enhance the diagnosis of diabetes following heart and/or lung transplantation

## Prof Sandy Middleton

St Vincent's Health Network Sydney

Improving End-of-Life Care for Patients in Australian Cardiology Wards



As donations grow, so too does our ability to  
**fund a greater number of high-quality  
 research projects each year.**

**\$27.8M**

Net assets  
 as at 30 June 2025

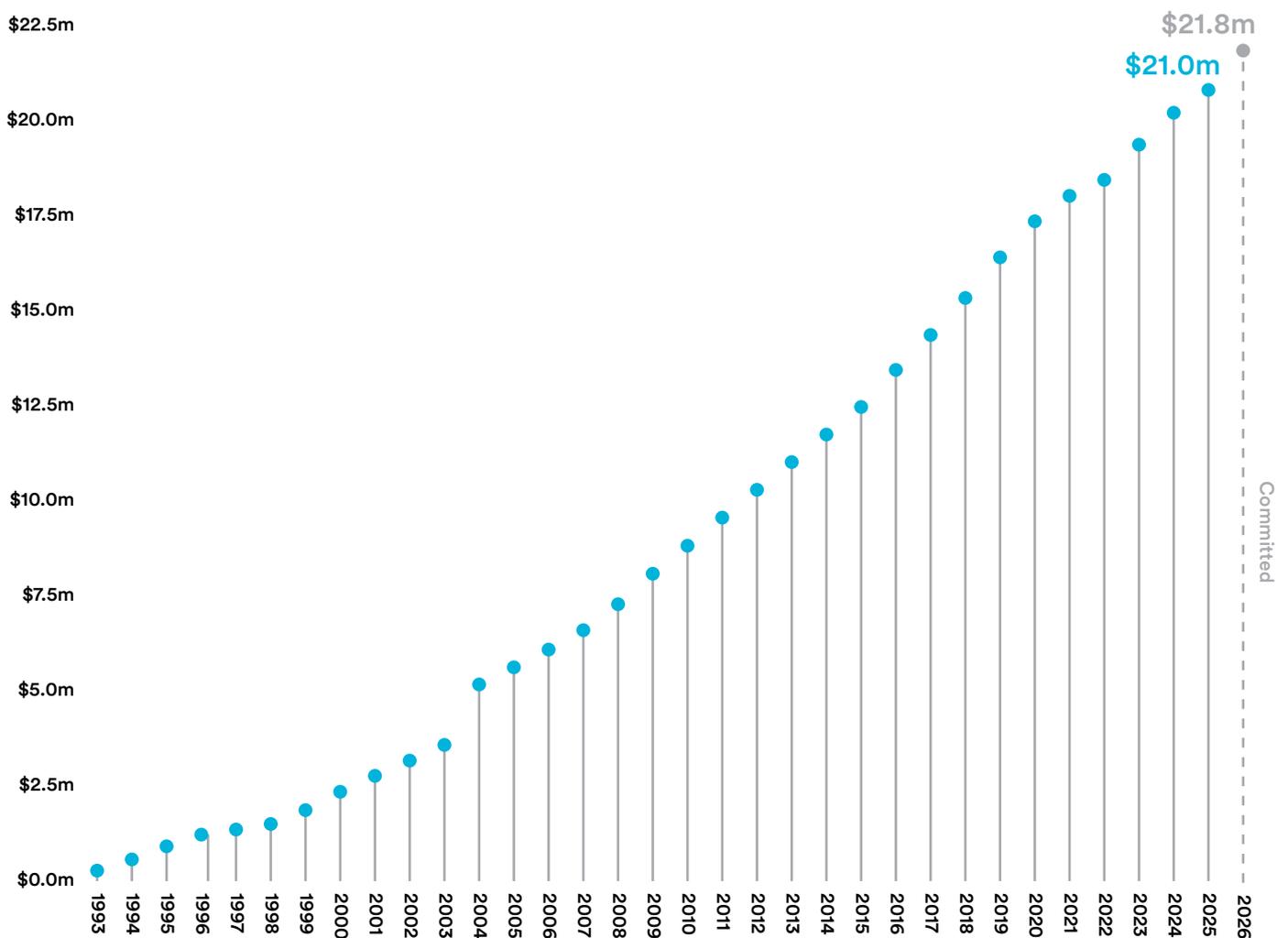
**\$750K**

Grants awarded  
 FY 2025

**\$308K**

Operating expenses  
 FY 2025

## Cululative Grant Distribution Since 1993



For more information on our financials, please see the audited reports available on the ACNC website.

# Breakthrough Findings from the TIRTLE1 Study Offers New Hope for People with Type 1 Diabetes

A St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation-funded clinical trial has delivered world-first insights into how a once-weekly medication may improve health outcomes for adults living with type 1 diabetes.

Led by Dr Jennifer Snaith at the Garvan Institute, the TIRTLE1 Study explored whether tirzepatide – a medication already used for type 2 diabetes – could also support people with type 1 diabetes who are managing weight gain and insulin resistance linked to lifelong insulin therapy. These challenges, often referred to as “double diabetes”, significantly increase cardiovascular risk.

The 12-week trial involved 24 adults with type 1 diabetes and obesity who received either tirzepatide or a placebo. Researchers monitored weight, glucose control, insulin requirements and overall metabolic health. The results exceeded expectations. Participants receiving tirzepatide lost an average of 8.7 kg, reduced their insulin requirements by 35%, and experienced improvements in glucose levels, with no episodes of severe hypoglycaemia or dangerous acid build-up which can be caused by low insulin.

Researchers were particularly struck by how quickly insulin needs dropped – an effect that appeared to occur even before significant weight loss. This suggests tirzepatide may improve insulin sensitivity in new and important ways. As the first clinical trial of its kind anywhere in the world, TIRTLE1 provides early but compelling evidence that tirzepatide could become a valuable adjunct to insulin therapy, helping people better manage their weight, reduce cardiovascular risk and improve daily quality of life.

The success of this project has also sparked major scientific momentum. Dr Snaith and her team have secured \$1.86 million AUD from Breakthrough T1D to launch a larger follow-on study, TIRTLE2, and received additional support from Somalogic to further investigate underlying metabolic pathways. Dr Snaith was also recognised with the Australian Diabetes Society's Rising Star Award for her leadership in type 1 diabetes research.

Reflecting on the impact of the Foundation's support, Dr Snaith shared:

*“This grant has been highly formative in my development as an early career researcher. The Foundation's support allowed us to generate new scientific questions, build collaborations, and secure significant national and international funding. Our goal is to deliver world-class research that meaningfully improves the lives of people living with type 1 diabetes.”*

The St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation is proud to support early-stage, high-impact projects like the TIRTLE1 Study. This work demonstrates how seed funding can unlock breakthrough discoveries, strengthen research careers, and drive advances that improve patient care across the St Vincent's Darlinghurst Health Innovation Precinct.



Dr Jennifer Snaith  
SVCRF Grant Recipient  
Garvan Institute of Medical Research

**“This grant enabled me to integrate high-quality, practice-changing research into my work as a transitional nurse practitioner. Diabetes places a significant burden on transplant recipients, and I hope these findings will help raise awareness and attract further funding to advance research that improves their health and quality of life.”**

Gabriela Abrahamson  
SVCRF Grant Recipient  
St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney



Dr Nicola Straiton (left), who led the study across three NSW hospitals, with Professor Sandy Middleton (right), SVCRF Grant Recipient and Director of the Nursing Research Institute.



# Improving End-of-Life Care for People with Heart Disease

Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of death worldwide, claiming over 42,000 lives in Australia each year. For patients with advanced heart disease, the final stage of life often occurs in hospital, yet the quality of care during this critical time can vary significantly. This research project, led by Dr Nicola Straiton and Professor Sandy Middleton, set out to examine end-of-life care practices in cardiology wards across three major hospitals in New South Wales and to assess how well these practices align with Australian National Standards.

Using a nationally recognised audit tool developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, the team conducted a comprehensive review of medical records for 150 patients who died in cardiology wards. This multi-site approach provided a unique opportunity to capture real-world practices in dynamic, high-pressure hospital environments. The project involved strong collaboration across hospitals, clinicians, researchers, and consumer representatives, ensuring that patient and family perspectives were considered throughout.

The insights gained from this research will inform hospital policies and procedures, guiding improvements in communication, care planning, and resource use. These changes have the potential to enhance patient experiences and outcomes not only in cardiology wards but across broader healthcare settings. The project also lays the foundation for future interventions aimed at improving end-of-life care for people with heart disease, ensuring care that is compassionate, evidence-based, and aligned with national standards.

*“Our study highlights the need for earlier recognition of dying and better communication with patients and families to deliver end-of-life care for people with heart disease in cardiology wards that is evidence-based, compassionate and aligned with national standards”*  
Dr Nicola Straiton



ESC Congress 2025 Together with World Congress of Cardiology (Madrid), SVHS researchers: Tessa Holman (NRI, Research Officer) and Dr Nicola Straiton (NRI, Senior Research Fellow)



ST VINCENT'S  
HOSPITAL  
SYDNEY



## Dr Fiona Tudehope 2024–2025 SVCRF Travelling Fellow

Our travelling fellowships support early-career clinicians to gain global experience.

Fiona's training at the Wingate Institute for Neurogastroenterology in London has brought new expertise and strengthened international collaboration at St Vincent's.

# Understanding the Drivers of Osteoarthritis Pain

Osteoarthritis is one of the most common causes of joint pain and disability, yet patients can experience vastly different levels of pain, stiffness and loss of mobility. With support from the St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation, Professor Sean Mungovan and his collaborators are working to understand why.

This research program is building one of the most comprehensive osteoarthritis research platforms in Australia, linking clinical care at St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney with advanced molecular analysis at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research.

During 2025, the team significantly expanded the St Vincent's–Garvan Osteoarthritis Tissue Biobank, collecting biological samples and detailed clinical data from 105 patients undergoing hip or knee replacement surgery. These samples, including blood, synovial tissue and joint fluid, are paired with detailed measures of pain, joint stiffness, mobility and imaging results.

Using cutting-edge single-cell technologies, researchers are now examining the immune cells and molecular pathways inside arthritic joints to understand why some people experience far more severe symptoms than others.

*“By combining clinical care with advanced molecular research, we are beginning to understand why some people experience far more pain from osteoarthritis than others.”* Professor Sean Mungovan

The Foundation's support has enabled this program to grow from an early collaboration into a structured precision-medicine platform embedded within routine orthopaedic care at St Vincent's.

By linking patient symptoms with molecular insights, the research aims to identify new biomarkers and guide more personalised treatments for people living with osteoarthritis.



Prof Sean Mungovan  
SVCRF Grant Recipient  
St Vincent's Private Hospital, Sydney



**“The De Angeli  
Cancer Research  
Grant enabled us to  
advance personalised  
pancreatic cancer  
treatments towards  
clinical testing and  
helped secure  
\$4.2 million to  
launch new clinical  
trials in Australia.”**

Prof Marina Pajic  
SVCRF Grant Recipient  
Garvan Institute of Medical  
Research





## Bench to Bedside Panel Discussion

Our annual event at The Mint is a highlight in the calendar as we hear from current researchers and the incredible impact they are having today on patient outcomes.

This year's event featured Dr Etienne Masle-Farquhar and A/Prof Sean Mungovan, who shared new insights into osteoarthritis research and its impact on patient care.



# Our Research Partners

St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct is defined by our shared values and heritage. The Sisters of Charity originally founded the core Precinct bodies because they saw the power of bringing together health care, research and education to break through complex health issues, and their vision continues today.

We leverage our flexibility in funding the best projects across the Precinct.



**Garvan Institute**  
of Medical Research



**ST VINCENT'S**  
**HOSPITAL**  
SYDNEY



**ST VINCENT'S**  
**HEALTH NETWORK**  
SYDNEY



**ST VINCENT'S**  
**PRIVATE HOSPITAL**  
SYDNEY



**Victor Chang**  
Cardiac Research Institute

**Philanthropy support ensures that we continue to champion healthcare trailblazers whose research projects are improving the health outcomes of individuals and communities worldwide.**

Thank you to the individuals, organisations and trusts for their generous contributions towards medical research in 2025.



St Vincent's Clinic  
*Research Foundation*

St Vincent's Clinic Research Foundation is a registered charity  
with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Item 1 status.  
All donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.



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