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## Media release

### Vital support for world-leading ovarian cancer research

An estimated 1,400 Australian women will be diagnosed this year with ovarian cancer<sup>1</sup>. Less than half (43%) of these women survive more than five years beyond their diagnosis.<sup>2</sup> Research is vital to improving the survival rate, and fast-tracking efforts to find new and improved treatments.

To this end, Ovarian Cancer Australia today toured Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre's new state-of-the-art research facilities at the VCCC building and handed over more than \$180,000, as part of a three-year funding commitment of \$1 million including matched funding.

The funding is to support ongoing national and international research projects led by Professor David Bowtell, who is Peter Mac's Head of Cancer Genetics and Genomics Laboratory.

"When we look for research to support our emphasis is always on high-impact with a track record of making significant discoveries," says Ovarian Cancer Australia CEO Jane Hill.

"Professor Bowtell is truly a world leader in ovarian cancer research so we are proud to be ongoing enablers of his work and of Peter Mac.

"We are most appreciative of all our donors and supporters across Australia whose contributions make this cutting edge research possible."

The funding is for the ongoing Australian Ovarian Cancer Study (AOCS) and its related OCELIS Project. Both provide researchers with easier access to the tools they need to develop the next generation of ovarian cancer treatments.

"The AOCS study is the largest single study of its type in the world, both in terms of the 3,000 women who are taking part and the rich array of data and other biospecimen resources that it allows us to compile," says Prof Bowtell.

"There is also a tremendous collaborative spirit among the participating research organisations as we work together in support of our goal of new and improved treatments.

"Australia is a world leader in this space and I thank Ovarian Cancer Australia for their ongoing support."

OCA is providing a total \$450,000 for AOCS over three years (FY14/15-FY16/17).

This amount is matched dollar-for-dollar (\$450,000) by the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, from funding raised by the Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation.



OCA is also providing a total \$100,000 for OCELIS over two years (FY15/16-FY16/17).

### **About the Australian Ovarian Cancer Study (AOCS)**

The Australian Ovarian Cancer Study is a collaborative research program between clinicians, scientists, patients and advocacy groups aimed at improving the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of ovarian cancer. Initiated in 2001 by researchers at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, University of Melbourne, Queensland Institute of Medical Research and Westmead Institute for Medical Research, the first goal of the study was to create a uniquely powerful resource for ovarian cancer research comprised of biospecimens, clinical outcome, and epidemiological data. More than 3,000 women from all Australian states have consented to take part in the study. The AOCS Biobank provides researchers access to DNA, RNA, plasma, serum, fresh frozen tissue, FFPE blocks, tissue microarrays (TMAs), as well as matched clinical and epidemiological data. To date we have approved more than 100 national and international projects.

### **About the OCELIS project**

The OCELIS project is an international consortium led by the AOCS which is developing new cell models reflective of the range of ovarian cancer disease subtypes. The cell line suite will be available to researchers to enable research on new, targeted treatments and companion diagnostics. Consortium members include the Peter Mac, Westmead and WEHI in Australia as well as international members including Harvard Medical School and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre in the USA, and other prestigious medical research institutes in the UK, Netherlands and Canada.

<sup>1,2</sup> <https://ovarian-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/statistics>

### **For more information:**

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