

An Ongoing Battle

Arrow & Bone Marrow Transplants in Australia and New Zealand – A short history

As we celebrate our 20th year, the war against leukaemia and other blood cancers continues. The good news is that we're slowly winning the fight – so let's have a look at our progress.

Past

If you were diagnosed with leukaemia 20 years ago, you faced a limited chance of survival. Today, thanks to advances in medical research, survival rates are climbing with over 40% of adults, and 70% of children surviving after 5 years¹.

The first Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) was carried out at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, by Professor James Biggs and Dr Kerry Atkinson - who pioneered Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplants (HSCT) in Australia. Dr Atkinson was also a driving force in the formation of the Arrow Foundation and the Australasian Bone Marrow Transplant Recipient Registry (ABMTRR) - established in 1992.

During the 1990s medical advances included: the use of umbilical cord blood

as a cell source; the development of reduced intensity pre-transplant conditioning, and the development of a wide range of therapies to control post-transplant complications.

Present

In recent years, whilst numbers of HSCT in Australia and NZ have increased, post transplant mortality rates have decreased. In 2004, the procedural related mortality within 100 days for allogeneic transplants performed in Australia was 13%, compared to 21% in 1993².

This progress could not have been achieved without research and the generous support of donors. Since 1994, Arrow has raised almost \$3 million in funds – largely thanks to the contribution of the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC) which has contributed \$1.7 million of that amount.

Current research emphasis is on identifying abnormal genes to gain an understanding of the cause of leukaemia - thereby giving researchers an insight into

prevention and treatment. Research is making a difference.

Looking to the future...

Our aim is to increase our presence and seek new avenues of funding which will enable us to both enhance our existing programs and initiate new ones.

Research aims to find a way to ensure that donor stem cells attack only the tumour, thereby eliminating side effects. Researchers are also looking at using the more primitive stem cells of animals for transplants. We will keep you updated on various worldwide research developments as they occur.

As we celebrate our 20th year, we look towards the next 20 years with optimism and enthusiasm. Our ultimate aim for the future is to find a cure for leukaemia and related diseases. With your support, we will achieve our goal!

¹ Australia Institute of Health and Welfare and Australia Associated Cancer Registry (2003)

² ABMTRR Annual Data Summary 2004

Life starts at 40! By Glenn Forster

I was diagnosed with a rare blood cancer, Multiple Myeloma, on 7th May, 2004 – a dark day, especially for my wife's family as her uncle died from Multiple Myeloma 13 years prior. Given that only a couple of people per 100,000 are diagnosed annually, it is uncanny that two families should be brought together by marriage with this rare type of cancer. Naturally, our family feared the worst. My immediate reaction was: How do we fix this thing? I have always had a "glass half full" approach to life and this was no exception. I have never commenced a project in my personal or business life with the objective of failing. My first task was to find out as much as I could about Multiple Myeloma. So, I consulted the web and one of the first facts I uncovered was that Multiple Myeloma "is an incurable but treatable disease... its causes are unknown". With no history of cancer in the family it is still a mystery today as to what triggered it in the first place.

I wish to increase the awareness of the Bone Marrow Donor Register so there is a chance of more successful cases such as mine. It has been proven to me (given the experience, research, technology and skill of the team who carry out Bone Marrow Transplants) that whatever the complication, they have seen it before. The key message is – never give up hope. I have a rare haplotype (gene) in my blood which doctors thought would be very difficult to match, as my father has an Indian background. After a worldwide search through the Red Cross we found nine possible donors – eight in the UK and one in the USA. As the UK has the highest population of Indians outside India, it was logical to test there first. Unfortunately, this resulted in low compatibility rates. After further DNA testing we found a 28 year old male who was a compatible unrelated donor in Ohio, USA. The doctors advised me that to have a six out of six match with an unrelated donor offers a very good chance of success. After careful planning, I had a Bone Marrow Transplant at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, in December 2005 under Dr John Moore (HOAC).

Considering the average age of a Myeloma patient is approximately 68, I was more than surprised by my diagnosis given that I was a healthy (or at least I thought I was) 37 year old.

(Glenn's story continued on page 4...)



Miracles Happen!

All Aboard!

The Love Boat 'Cruise for a Cure' Ball 2007

Shake off the winter blues and sail into the sunset with Captain David Nomchong and his crew on The Love Boat – Cruise for a Cure Ball 2007!

Celebrate the event of the year with The Big Party Band to help raise funds for research. Our mission is to find a cure for leukaemia and other related diseases, and to provide support to patients and their families. So get your tickets today and come and wine, dine and dance for a cure.

Shop duty-free at the silent auction where there's something for everyone. Exquisite jewelry by Troy Langman will also be auctioned on the night. There's no gamble with lucky bags for just \$20, and every attendee gets a gift bag as a token of our appreciation. So tell your friends and family, rub on some fake tan, and come along to smell the frangipanis! The Love Boat 'Cruise for a Cure' Ball 2007 is shaping up to be the best Arrow Ball to date.

Don't miss the boat: To secure your tickets please either: go to www.arrow.org.au; email gvincent@arrow.org.au or call (02) 8382 2698. Payment must be received no later than 31st July.

Count and Armidale firms raise \$40,000 for leukaemia research!

Count member firms in Armidale NSW rallied together to support the 2006 Hawkesbury Canoe Classic, and local School Canoe Club fundraising effort raising a whopping \$40,000 for Arrow. Count Charitable Foundation agreed to match their efforts dollar for dollar up to \$15,000!



L to R: Will Warrick (Roberts & Morrow); Marianne Perkovic (Count's CEO); Heidi Fisse (EC, HCC Comm Paddler); Caroline Kessler (HCC Race Director); Dave Eden; Jack Abbott (Smith Sharpe & Abbott).

Count's Jack Abbott and Will Warrick were among the 69 students and 23 adult paddlers associated with TAS, NEGS and PLC schools – who all rowed for research. We'd like to extend a big thank you to the paddlers who each raised a minimum of \$100 in addition to the entry fee.

We sincerely thank Count member firms: Smith Sharpe & Abbott; Roberts & Morrow and Holholt Consulting for their support. We also thank Marianne Perkovic for attending the Windsor start and handing over Count's \$15,000 in front of a huge crowd.

Overall, the 2006 Hawkesbury Classic raised a record total \$252,000 of which \$222,000 went to Arrow. Our extreme fundraiser, Craig Burton (Page 1), has taken on the Amazon for Arrow and will be tackling the Hawkesbury for the HCC as part B of his fundraising endeavours this year.

For information regarding the 2007 HCC, contact: info@canoeclassic.asn.au or call 1300 853 541.

Gigs 4 Wigs

We'd like to extend a big thank you to SAGS who took to the stage at the North's Leagues Club on four evenings through April to present Gigs 4 Wigs.

The 40-strong group of entertainers – mostly from Sydney's North Shore – performed to raise funds for our Tracey Scone Wig Library. The brilliant show was devised by Margaret Fennen, who was a friend of Tracey Scone and understands the anguish of hair loss associated with chemotherapy.

The sassy show raised over \$40,000 for the Wig Library. Thanks to Gigs 4 Wigs, the ABC will be producing a story about our Wig Library – now featured on www.abc.com.au; giving more people the opportunity to utilise this wonderful service.

WELCOME ABOARD!

CRUISE FOR A CURE
ARROW BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT
FOUNDATION PRESENTS

THE
LOVE BOAT BALL

SATURDAY 18TH AUGUST 2007

The Shangri-La Hotel
176 Cumberland Street
The Rocks

7pm for drinks

Dress: Black Tie
Tickets: \$150 (tables of 10)
On Line: www.arrow.org.au

Silent Auction
Live Entertainment

arrow bone marrow transplant foundation
Enquiries: (02) 8382 2698 www.arrow.org.au

'Cruise for a Cure' Ball Raffle

You don't need to tackle the Amazon or get up on stage to make a difference. If you're anxious to help us target a cure – then get your raffle tickets today. Only 1000 will be sold!

Prizes include:

- 1st:** A travel voucher valued at \$2500, generously supported by Trailfinders Australia. Trailfinders offer the complete travel experience at low prices. Visit: www.trailfinders.com
- 2nd:** A gorgeous handmade Jason Moss freshwater pearl & black onyx necklace valued at \$500. Visit: www.jasonmoss.com.au
- 3rd:** Dinner for two at Guillaume at Bennelong to the value of \$250. Guillaume was awarded 3 chef hats in the SMH good food guide.

Tickets can be purchased for \$10 each or can be bought in books of 10 to increase your odds of winning!

To purchase tickets contact Arrow on: 02 8382 2698 or email info@arrow.org.au. The raffle will be drawn at the Ball on 18th August, 2007.