

TRANSPLANT TALK

Arrow marks 30 special years with a new look



Welcome to the very first issue of Arrow's new look Transplant Talk newsletter. For 30 years, Arrow has assisted patients and carers through a range of vital support services, and contributed to many promising medical research projects – and we are pleased to mark this special milestone with the introduction of Arrow's brand-new look.

Arrow's new logo was launched by Arrow Director, Neil Pennock, at Arrow's 30th anniversary celebration in September. Neil said:

"A lot has changed in the last 30 years. The advancement of medical procedures has found that bone marrow, or stem cell transplants can be an effective treatment for a whole range of blood cancers and bone marrow disorders, and increasingly for autoimmune diseases like Multiple Sclerosis (MS). And a lot has changed for Arrow in that time too, so we have updated our mission statement, logo and website to better represent what we do."

Arrow's new mission statement: Improve the survival and quality

of life for patients with blood diseases treatable by bone marrow and blood stem cell transplants and provide support for their carers in Australia

- **by** – funding research projects
- **by** – providing vital support to patients, their carers and families
- **by** – improving patient care through specialised education and skills development for nurses and other health staff

To view our new website visit: www.arrow.org.au

Donations in memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge donations received in memory of:

- Katherine Robertson
- Marion Ceccato
- Roy Baldock

Events

- Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC)
Saturday 28th – Sunday 29th October, 2017
- Arrow AGM
Friday 17th November, 2017



Support the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC)

On Saturday 28th – Sunday 29th October this year, up to 600 committed paddlers will take on the 111km paddle from Windsor to Brooklyn to raise vital funds for Arrow.

Arrow Chairman, Mark O'Hara will paddle his 17th Classic this year in memory of his good mate, Greg Neate. To sponsor Mark visit:

1. www.canoeclassic.net.au
2. Click on sponsor your paddler on the homepage



Charles Curran (pictured right) at Arrow's 30th anniversary celebration

New transplant ward fundraising target achieved!

We are excited to report that with your help, Arrow has raised the \$300,000 needed to fund a room in the new bone marrow transplant ward at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. Fundraising kicked off with an appeal letter in June 2015, and we remained committed to reaching our goal until the target was reached in June 2017. It was

a huge commitment for a small charity like Arrow, and a testament to what can be achieved with the generosity of our supporters.

The new transplant ward will place patients in negative pressure rooms to reduce transmission of disease via the airborne route. This is particularly important for reducing the risk of micro-organisms being spread by airborne transmission from one patient to another, and from other persons in the hospital including visitors. Charles P. Curran AC, St Vincent's Curran Foundation Board of Trustees Chairman, said "Arrow's support of the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit over the last thirty years has been of very significant benefit and all of those who have been involved should feel pleased and proud at what has been achieved. We now look forward to the early undertaking of work on the new bone marrow transplant ward and we thank Arrow for the assistance it is providing for this project."

Work started on the new ward in October.



MAKE A DONATION TODAY!

VISIT WWW.ARROW.ORG.AU

OR COMPLETE THE FORM OVERLEAF

PERSONAL STORY

Reflections from Arrow's small beginnings



Merri Sheppard

By Meredith Ashby (now known as Merri Sheppard) – Arrow's first Honorary Secretary.

Each year, a Christmas party was held for bone marrow patients and the staff at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. Bone marrow transplants were still in their infancy and it was a great way for the staff to get to know the patients whose names they knew so well. It was also a great way for families to interact outside the ward and outpatient clinic.

I joined St Vincent's in early 1982 as a data collector for the BMT Unit, and it was fascinating to be on the "other" side having been a patient's wife from 1979 to 1981 and only seeing that side of haematology.

Over a couple of years, I could see that funding for research was hard to come by and even harder to sustain. My own job was in jeopardy a couple of times. Added to this, there was a new ward

being built where extra funding would have been helpful to give patients greater comfort. Not much seemed to be done for the families, many of whom came from outside Sydney, and that was of great concern to the Cell Separator nurses, particularly Julie Jones.

Julie and I had many discussions about how we could help. After badgering Professor James Biggs, then Head of Haematology, we were able to announce our intentions of setting up a foundation at the Christmas party in 1986.

So, on the 25th February 1987 an inaugural meeting was held at my home to formalise a working committee to establish this new Foundation. Vic Jacob, Julie Jones, Prof James Biggs and I were the working committee. We met several times during the year and, with the help of Coopers and Lybrand and others we co-opted, we formalised the Foundation, naming it the Australian Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation (ABMTF) to reflect that we wished it to be national, rather than just for local needs.

We gave the Foundation five objectives: To establish and run a non-profit fundraising organisation to help persons and families of persons suffering from leukaemia and other bone marrow diseases; to ensure that families of patients suffering from leukaemia or bone marrow diseases have all available information to assist them; to provide assistance and support to families of patients of patients suffering from leukaemia and bone marrow diseases; to foster research into the cause, extend and prevention

of leukaemia and bone marrow diseases; to foster research into the cure of leukaemia and bone marrow diseases, particularly by the use of bone marrow transplantation.

Our first annual general meeting was held in late 1987 with Vic Jacob as President; Bob Warren as Vice President; myself as Secretary; Julie Jones Treasurer. The committee of six included Roger Whitfield, Barbara Crouch, Peter Grant, Barrie Beck, Professor James Biggs and Professor Kerry Atkinson.

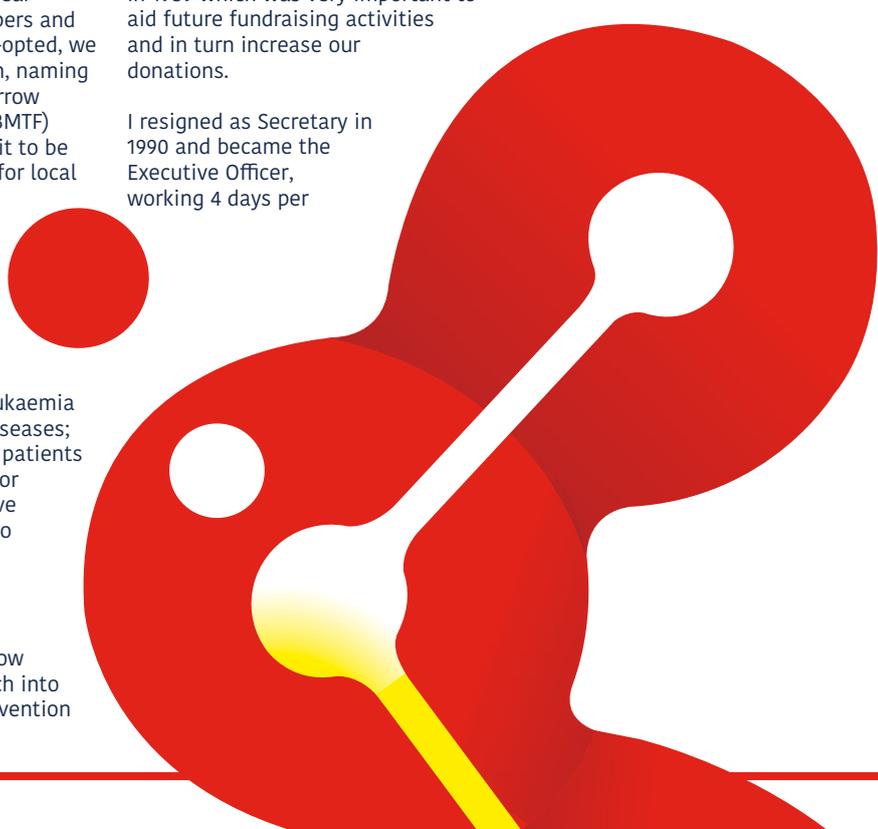
Fundraising commenced before we were even formalised and we had raised some \$80,000 by the inaugural meeting, the bulk of which was used to support research.

We gained tax deductibility status in 1989 which was very important to aid future fundraising activities and in turn increase our donations.

I resigned as Secretary in 1990 and became the Executive Officer, working 4 days per

week until I resigned in 1999. At that stage, I felt I needed to work in a larger charity to gain experience in fundraising with the view of one day returning. Incidentally, a friend from childhood days who I had not seen for years took over from me. That was Mim Merrick.

Harold Smart (a leukaemia patient) spoke to me about the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC) at the annual Christmas party. Lyndal Jacob and I visited the race to see what it was about, and after that we made an approach to the committee. After agreeing to provide volunteers for the race for the next year the HCC decided to support the ABMTF. The rest is history! Many millions of dollars having been raised for the Foundation.



Enhancing patient care through the **Professor Geoffrey Driscoll Scholarship for Haematology and Related Nursing**



Professor Geoffrey Driscoll OAM

Written by Mrs. Jan Driscoll.

Professor Geoffrey Driscoll OAM, born 13 March 1947, died at St Vincent's Hospital on 5 October 2016.

Having been immobilised by polio for three years as a young boy, he was no stranger to illness, but fortunately on that occasion, he made a "miraculous" recovery. This exposure to hospitals and doctors led him to make the decision, very early in life, to become a doctor.

With great dedication and years of study, he became an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, a Micro-Surgeon, an Infertility Specialist and was made a Life Member of the Fertility Society of Australia in recognition of his pioneering role in the fertility field. Although he retired in 2005, after 33 years of clinical practice, he was Conjoint Professor of Reproductive Medicine at UNSW when he died, having written and introduced the first online Masters Course in that discipline in the world. For his contribution to education and infertility technology, he was awarded an OAM in 2015.

Geoff was first diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2006, and following radiotherapy and chemotherapy, was in and out of remission for his remaining years.

Sadly, in May 2016, he developed Acute Myeloid Leukaemia. Following months of gruelling chemotherapy and an unsuccessful stem cell transplant, Geoff succumbed to the disease in October 2016.

During the last five months of his life, as a close-knit family, we spent our days together on St Vincent's level 9, or at the Kinghorn Cancer Centre, supporting him with all the love and compassion he so richly deserved.

There was however, in the Haematology ward at St Vincent's, a degree of support from the nursing staff that was quite unexpectedly remarkable. Not only as a patient but as a doctor, Geoff knew that his chance of recovery was slim. He depended on the expertise of the medical practitioners who treated him, but it was the professional and consistently high level of nursing care that made his day-to-day existence, under such trying circumstances, tolerable.

As his family, we wanted to mark our very special man's life by establishing a scholarship. The Professor Geoffrey Driscoll Scholarship for Haematology and Related Nursing is not only our way of saying "Thank you" to all those specialist, caring nurses but to also encourage more to take up the study of haematology and related blood disorders, so they too can continue to make an indelible impact on other patients' medical journeys.

The first Professor Geoffrey Driscoll Scholarship for Haematology and Related Nursing was awarded in August 2017 to Louise Christopherson for two Australian College of Nursing courses including Haematology Nursing and Chemotherapy and other Systemic Treatments in Cancer Care.

When a carer becomes a life saving donor

Sarah Clarke was just 23 years old when diagnosed with grade 3 Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 1988. Diagnosed with Myelodysplasia just over a decade later, Sarah underwent a stem cell transplant at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, in 1999.

Following her own transplant, Sarah encouraged her husband and carer, Michael, to register as a bone marrow donor in the hope that he could help with another patient as she had been helped. Sadly, Sarah passed away in April 2016 following complications.

In an email to Arrow, Michael wrote, "At the same time I received a phone call from the QLD Bone Marrow Registry saying I'd been matched as a donor for a 60-year-old USA citizen. I went through my work up in November 2016 and had bone marrow harvested from my hips in December 2016. The recipient has survived and is now out of hospital recovering well. If it hadn't been for my dear Sarah pestering me to go on the registry back in 2002, that USA citizen would never have received my bone marrow."

