

# Alfred Cancer Strategy 2020-25



# Alfred Cancer

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Working together to provide comprehensive patient centred, quality care through investment, research and innovation.



**Team effort:** Registered nurse Chloe Jo and Clinical Nurse Specialist Georgina Lea

**Cover photo:** Radiation therapist Kim Huynh

# Background and context

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## Alfred Health

Our purpose is to improve the lives of our patients and their families, our communities and humanity. We provide treatment, care and compassion to the people of Melbourne and Victoria. Our research and education programs advance the science of medicine and health and contribute to innovations in treatment and care.

Through partnerships we build our knowledge and share it with the world.

## Alfred Cancer

Alfred Cancer was established in July 2018 as part of an Alfred Health organisational restructure to strategically build on recent investments and clinical academic recruitments by Alfred Health in cancer care, blood diseases and palliative care, in partnership with Monash University.

The Alfred Cancer program comprises service units providing clinical and research excellence in the fields of medical oncology, radiation oncology, haematology, bone marrow transplant, haemophilia, melanoma and palliative care. Alfred Cancer governs the delivery of comprehensive cancer care across the organisation, providing clinical

care for patients affected by cancer, blood disorders and at the end of life. Alfred Cancer provides quality clinical care for our local catchment, and to all Victorians through our statewide melanoma, haematology and haemophilia services. The Alfred Cancer program also has a large focus on clinical trials with a research component embedded in each medical unit within the Alfred Cancer program. In addition, Alfred Cancer partner with many rural and regional centres, collaborating in the delivery of clinical trial and research activity across Victoria.

Alfred Cancer has strong clinical relationships with other programs, including:

- Alfred Brain (neuro-oncology)
- Alfred Heart and Lung, Surgical Services (Cancer Surgery)
- Emergency and Acute Medicine (Acute Care, Emergency Department, Hospital in the Home program)
- Medical Imaging.

This ensures that the highest level of clinical care is provided for the patient.

# Alfred Cancer today

## Our patients




**44%**  
RESIDE WITHIN  
OUR COMMUNITY



RURAL AND REGIONAL PATIENTS ARE  
SUPPORTED TO RECEIVE THEIR CARE  
AT THEIR LOCAL HEALTH SERVICE

**60 years old**  
AVERAGE AGE

## Our services<sup>1</sup>



**8,200+**  
INDIVIDUAL  
PATIENTS PER YEAR<sup>2</sup>



**45,000+**  
PATIENT  
ENCOUNTERS



**6%**  
GROWTH  
PER YEAR

## Our people



**400+**  
STAFF ACROSS THE  
PROGRAM

**3**  
NURSE  
PRACTITIONERS

**11**  
NURSE  
CONSULTANTS

**5**  
FELLOWS

## Admitted services



**11,000+**  
EPISODES  
OF CARE



**64%**  
NEW PATIENTS  
TO THE SERVICE  
EACH YEAR



**29,793**  
DEMAND FOR BED  
DAYS IN 2018/19  
18 CHAIRS PER DAY  
57 BEDS PER DAY



**65%**  
EMERGENCY  
ADMISSIONS  
**35%**  
PLANNED  
ADMISSIONS

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Health, CPU Data 18/19 FY

<sup>2</sup> Includes Radiation Oncology patient at La Trobe, excludes Palliative Care consultations



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## Outpatient services

31,000+

APPOINTMENTS  
IN 2018/19

46%

NEW PATIENTS  
TO THE SERVICE  
EACH YEAR

## Palliative care

1200+

PATIENTS AND  
THEIR FAMILIES  
CARED FOR

6293

PALLIATIVE CARE  
CONSULTATIONS

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## Our research

Alfred Cancer has strong research foundations, with a commitment to clinical trials and basic science research. The program maintains robust links with the Central Clinical School at Monash University, and have made significant commitments to recruiting senior clinician-scientists and research support staff to further invest in research.

All Units within Alfred Cancer participate in clinical trials, accounting for more than 50% of all clinical trials undertaken at The Alfred. Many trials are Investigator Initiated with a focus on early phase research. These trials

provide our patients with access to novel therapeutics, providing essential conduits from scientific discovery to improved health outcomes for our patients, and the broader community.

Alfred Cancer is also home to the Australian Centre for Blood Disorders (ACBD), the largest blood disorder specific research institute in Australia that is integrated with a clinical team, creating new opportunities for collaboration and patient interface, and enhancing translation of research into practice.

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## Our achievements

- Improved access to clinical care, minimising wait times for treatment
- Development of partnerships with rural and regional facilities, supporting local cancer care
- First centre in Australia to offer completely skin mark free radiotherapy
- Development of the Velcade in the Home program, minimising patient travel
- Lead Victorian site for the Australian Centre of Excellence for Melanoma Imaging and Diagnosis and MRFF (Medical Research Future Fund) grant recipient for melanoma surveillance photography for high risk individuals
- Commencement of palliative care outreach program

157

ACTIVE CLINICAL TRIALS

87

TRIALS OPENED TO RECRUITMENT

## Our partners

We collaborate with our rural and regional partners, enhancing their capability to provide patient care, close to the patient's home.

BASS COAST HEALTH  
BAIRNSDALE REGIONAL HEALTH  
LATROBE REGIONAL HOSPITAL  
MILDURA BASE HOSPITAL  
MONASH HEALTH SERVICE  
PENINSULA HEALTH

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# Strategic context

Across Victoria, public health services are seeing a rise in the number of admissions for cancer, driven by population growth (1.6% pa<sup>3</sup>), an aging population, increasing cancer incidence<sup>4</sup> and declining private insurance rates<sup>5</sup>. Alfred Cancer Program is experiencing significant growth, with the number of patients in contact with the service growing at 6% per year<sup>6</sup>. Incidence of Melanoma and Haematological cancer is increasing faster than most other cancer types<sup>7</sup>, driving growth in demand for our statewide services.

The Victorian Government is committed to establishing new models of care to enable the provision of clinical care for rural and regional patients, closer to home. We are collaborating with our partners to achieve this.

Research and Clinical Trials embedded into clinical units drive the transition of medical science into benefits for patients and their communities. As new treatments are developed and treatment efficacy improves, survival will continue to increase, increasing the necessity for survivorship programs and longer term follow up.

- 3 Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victoria in Future 2019
- 4 AIHW, Cancer in Australia 2019
- 5 APRA, Quarterly Private Health Insurance Statistics September 2019
- 6 Alfred Health, CPU Data 2016/17-2018/19
- 7 AIHW, Cancer in Australia 2019



**Working together:** Haematology Registrar Dr Kaithlyn Wiltshire and Dietitian Natalie Shalit.

# Our focus

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We continue to treat all cancers within our service capability, to achieve optimal outcomes for our patients and community.

Alfred Health is focussing on building service capacity and capability in melanoma and skin cancer, haematological cancer, brain cancer, lung cancer, blood disorders and supportive care to meet Alfred Health, regional and statewide demand.

Alfred Health will continue to lead treatment and research in these tumour groups statewide. In addition, our capacity in breast cancer and prostate cancer will continue to grow. Through partnerships, we also aim to strengthen the service capabilities within rural and regional partner facilities, ensuring patients have access to assessment, treatment and clinical trials close to their home.



**Strong support:** Patient Allan Cooper with wife Julie Cooper and nurse Mikayla Hart.

# Alfred Health goals and Alfred Cancer strategic pillars

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With this in focus, Alfred Cancer has developed four key pillars, goals and objectives, which are aligned with Alfred Health's strategic goals. They consist of:



*Patient care*



*Health and wellness*



*Innovation and research*



*Dynamic teams*



**Providing quality care:** Registered Nurse Annabelle Jones and Haematology HMO Dr Eli Ivey.



# Alfred Health goals and aligned Alfred Cancer strategic pillars

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**1**

Provide high quality patient-centred care

***Patient care***

**2**

Lead innovative specialist care nationally and internationally

***Patient care***

**3**

Engage with our diverse community to promote mental health and physical wellbeing

***Health and wellness***

**4**

Promote a healthy, respectful and safe workplace and a skilled, engaged and compassionate workforce

***Dynamic teams***

**5**

Lead excellent, innovative and collaborative health research

***Innovation and research***

**6**

Modern, technologically enabled work and hospital environment

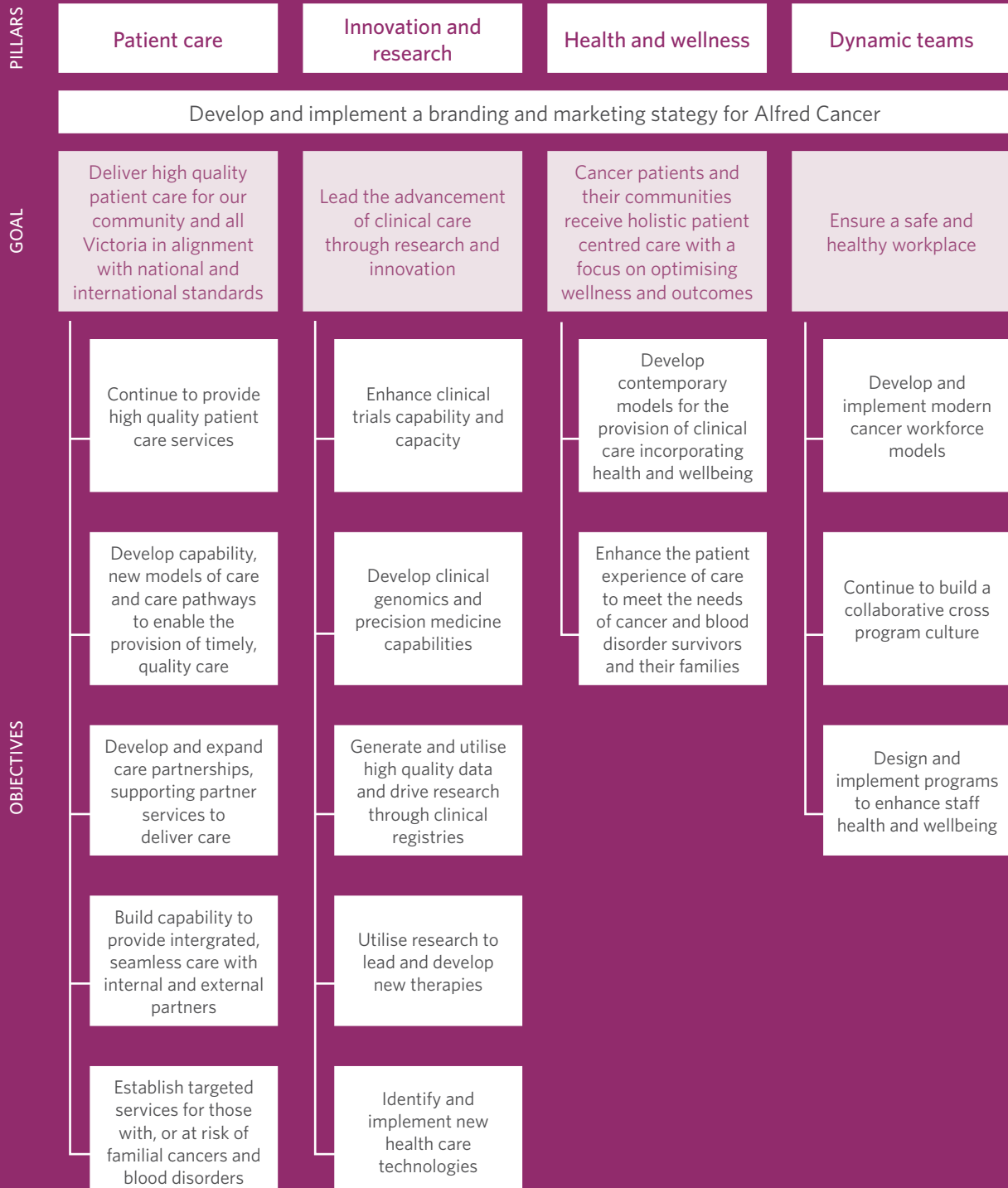
***Innovation and research***

**7**

Manage our resources and environment sustainably

***Patient care***

# Alfred Cancer strategy



# Pillars

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## Patient care

*"My first thought was, at a large city hospital I would be just a number – but that was never the case. I can understand how much pride you must have for the work of the Victorian Melanoma Service."*

Consumer

*"A chemotherapy care bundle was developed and introduced to all patients on admission along with chemotherapy education. The bundle helped increase patient awareness and empowered them to be actively involved in managing their own care during chemotherapy and overall improved patient outcomes. Understanding the patient experience and evaluating practice on the unit, led to a change in practice and improved patient experience."*

Eugenie Johnson,  
Clinical Support and Development Nurse

## Innovation and research

*"My experience in HOC and (clinical) trials at the Alfred was all positive. The staff were amazing and I can't speak highly enough of my time at the Alfred."*

Consumer

*"Patients with metastatic melanoma are often treated with dual agent immunotherapy, however elderly patients ( $\geq 65$  years) are thought to suffer higher rates of toxicity and have poorer outcomes than younger patients. A recent collaborative project between Alfred Cancer and Cabrini Health, demonstrated that dual agent immunotherapy is a viable treatment option in appropriately selected elderly patients with melanoma."*

Dr Prachi Bhawe,  
Medical Oncology Fellow

## Health and wellness

*"My experience with the team at radiotherapy was excellent, nothing was a problem. I always felt safe and questions were answered. If they weren't sure they would find a doctor that could answer my question. I praise the professionals and duty of care I had. A very caring and friendly team. I was also asked if I needed extra help at home and offered a social worker."*

Consumer

*"Acknowledging that cancer affects people of all ages, a co-designed room for patients and families has been built with a focus on providing additional activities enjoyed by adolescent and young adults. The benefits to patients who have long term admissions is a space away from conventional hospital environments in order to re-engage with activities they may enjoy in their life outside of hospital, such as playing PlayStation or watching Netflix, in a safe environment."*

Sue Collings, NUM 7 East

## Dynamic teams

*"I have never encountered a large organisation with such a consistently amazing culture across the board before. I'm not sure what your magic sauce is, bottle it and sell it for a million dollars a litre!"*

Consumer

*"We incorporate wellness into our current practices, processes and systems to promote and support a balanced and healthy work-life culture. We work with staff to further build values and respect within and across the department."*

John Coutsouvelis,  
Senior Clinical Pharmacist,  
Oncology and Haematology



# Priorities for action – the next 18 months

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## Develop capability, new models of care and care pathways to enable the provision of timely quality care:

- Embed optimal care pathways across our cancer streams.
- Expand chemotherapy at home model to include more treatment options, enabling the provision of cancer care at home.
- Develop rapid response pathways.
- Enhance telemedicine capability and consultations.

## Enhance the patient experience of care through improved support services:

- Improve access to Allied Health services in the ambulatory setting.
- Increase screening to identify and support our patients' supportive care needs.
- Utilise patient feedback to drive improvement.

## Develop and implement modern cancer workforce models:

- Review Alfred Cancer workforce alignment to patient care pathway.
- Optimise and develop new workforce models and governance structures to meet patient care needs.

## Enhance clinical trials capability:

- Develop rural and regional clinical trials capability through the clinical Trials Hub.
- Develop comprehensive cellular therapy plan.

# Staff profiles

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## Hany Elsaleh

Hany Elsaleh is Head of Radiation Oncology at Alfred Health and an Associate Professor at Monash and the Australian National University.

He gained his PhD in molecular biology at University of Western Australia's Department of Surgery during Radiation Oncology fellowship training for his investigations into DNA Repair and Chromosomal Instability.

He had a faculty position at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, working with Rodney Withers as a Radiation Oncologist specialising in gastrointestinal malignancies. In the US he established and chaired the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group Gastrointestinal Translational Research Program Committee. His subsequent pharmacogenomics research resulted in drug development and an international Phase III randomised trial.

As Director of Radiation Oncology at Canberra Hospital his focus was medical management. He established a cancer research laboratory program investigating clonogenic radiation sensitisation, in-vivo tissue damage and repair. Collaborating with a biotech company he conducted novel translational clinical studies in radiation reactions and targeted tissue recovery. With the advent of stereotactic radiosurgery and dose escalation treatments in radiation oncology he focussed on irradiation immunity interactions.

He partnered with the John Curtin School of Medical Research at Australian National University and collaborated with the radiation oncology department's radiation immunity laboratory at The Burnett Institute in Melbourne. He is also developing partnerships with Victorian public providers in the south eastern regional health services corridor.



## Michelle Gold

Michelle Gold is a Palliative Care Physician and Director of Palliative Care at Alfred Health. She has broad experience caring for patients with malignant and non-malignant diseases, including burns, respiratory disease and trauma. She oversees a team of specialist nurses, allied health and medical and staff, including junior doctors. Michelle is part of the Improving End of Life Care Committee and the Voluntary Assisted Dying Working Group. Michelle has roles in teaching at both Alfred Health and Monash University, mentors junior medical staff and participates in research.

She has spoken widely to community groups on topics related to Palliative Care and Voluntary Assisted Dying. Michelle is currently President of the Chapter of Palliative Medicine, RACP and chairs the Spirituality Training Working Party.



### Associate Professor Victoria Mar

Associate Professor Victoria Mar graduated as a Fellow of the Australasian College of Dermatologists (FACD; 2011). She completed her PhD at Monash University entitled, '*Clinical and molecular characteristics of aggressive melanoma*' (2014), for which she was awarded the departmental award for thesis excellence. She was appointed Director of the Victorian Melanoma Service (VMS) in March 2018 and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University. Associate Professor Mar was awarded an NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) Early Career Fellowship commencing January 2019 entitled, '*Melanoma diagnosis and early management: evaluating and improving patient outcomes through a clinical quality registry*'. She is a Board member of the Skin Health Institute and the national collaborative Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials Group.



### Professor Harshal Nandurkar

Professor Harshal Nandurkar is the Director of the Alfred Cancer Program and of the Clinical Haematology Service at Alfred Health. He is also the Head of the Australian Centre for Blood Diseases, Monash University, supervising a basic science and translational research program in the areas of haemostasis, thrombosis, vascular biology and the development of novel antithrombotic therapeutics.

He is a clinician-scientist trained at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and Department of Biochemistry, Monash University. His clinical interests cover all areas of haematology including blood malignancies and bleeding and clotting disorders. Prof Nandurkar is a past president of the Thrombosis and Haemostasis Society of Australia and New Zealand.



### Professor Mark Shackleton

Professor Mark Shackleton is Director of Oncology at Alfred Health and Professor of Oncology in the Department of Medicine, Monash University. After training in medical oncology and at the Ludwig Institute in Melbourne, Prof Shackleton undertook PhD studies at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research and post-doctoral work at the University of Michigan, USA. He has been widely recognised for his work, including the 2012 Australian Science Minister's Prize for Life Scientist of the Year.

Prof Shackleton's clinical interests encompasses patients diagnosed with skin cancer, including melanoma. His research interests include cancer biology, developmental biology, oncogenic signaling pathways and clinical trials.

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the**Alfred**



**Caulfield**  
HOSPITAL



**Sandringham**  
HOSPITAL



**MSHC**  
MELBOURNE SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE