



Network Update

AT A GLANCE:

- Professor Joerg Lehmann and Calvary Mater Team recognised in NHMRC '10 of the Best' 2026
- NSWRCRN PhD candidate Sara Atiq recognised with a pre-clinical poster award at ANZGOG 2026
- NSWRCRN contributes to national discussions on regional cancer care at the ACCN Dubbo workshop
- Applications now open for Cancer Institute NSW Research Equipment Grants
- Upcoming statewide seminar exploring Cancer Surgery Prehabilitation
- Call for abstracts for the ACCN Innovations Showcase in Adelaide
- Webinar supporting clinical trial access for Aboriginal people in regional and remote communities
- New NHMRC Regional, Rural and Remote Capacity Building Grant to open mid-2026

CELEBRATING SUCCESS | Professor Joerg Lehmann and Calvary Mater Team Recognised in NHMRC '10 of the Best' 2026

The NSW Regional Cancer Research Network warmly congratulates **Professor Joerg Lehmann and his team** on being selected for the [National Health and Medical Research Council's 10 of the Best 2026](#). This seventeenth edition of *10 of the Best* recognises outstanding NHMRC-funded research completed in 2023 and highlights work that has made a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Australians.



Professor Joerg Lehmann

Funded by an NHMRC Project Grant and further supported through the [Network's Shovel Ready Translational Research Grant](#) scheme, the project was led by Professor Lehmann at Calvary Mater Hospital and the University of Newcastle. The team included Network members Professor Peter Greer, Mr Jose Antonio Baeza-Ortega, and Dr Jane Ludbrook, all based at Calvary Mater. Their research focuses on improving the safety and precision of breast cancer radiotherapy.

A central challenge in breast radiotherapy is minimising unintended radiation exposure to the heart, which can increase the risk of long-term cardiac complications. The team advanced the use of deep inspiration breath hold (DIBH), a technique that increases the distance between the heart and the

treatment field. Critically, they addressed a key limitation of existing approaches by developing a method to directly monitor internal anatomy in real time, rather than relying on external surrogate measures. This enables clinicians to confirm that patients maintain the correct breath-hold position throughout treatment, ensuring accurate dose delivery to the target tissue.

This innovation enhances treatment precision, reduces the risk of side effects, and supports the safe implementation of shorter treatment courses. More efficient treatment pathways also have broader system benefits, including increased service capacity and improved access for patients in rural and remote communities who often face barriers to prolonged radiotherapy schedules. The NSW Regional Cancer Research Network commends all recognised researchers for their leadership and for delivering meaningful improvements in cancer care outcomes.

👉 [Read the seventeenth edition of *10 of the Best*](#)

CELEBRATING SUCCESS | Sara Atiq Recognised at ANZGOG 2026



From left to right: A/Prof Emma Allanson (ANZGOG 2026 Chair) and NSWRCRN PhD Candidate Sara Atiq

We are also delighted to congratulate **NSWRCRN PhD Candidate Sara Atiq**, who was the recipient of the Pre-Clinical Poster Abstract Award at The Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG) 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting. Sara's award-winning poster "Identification of methylation biomarkers for the development of an ovarian cancer detection test" explored the identification of early detection methylation biomarkers for ovarian cancer, using in-silico meta-analysis of publicly available datasets to identify candidate regions that may be detectable through a blood-based assay.

Reflecting on the experience, Sara highlighted the value of attending alongside her research team, noting the supportive environment and the opportunity to engage with a broad range of translational gynaecological cancer research.

Congratulations to Sara on this outstanding achievement and for representing both the NSW Regional Cancer Research Network and the University of Newcastle.

On the Ground in Dubbo: Shaping the Future of Regional Cancer Care

The NSWRCRN team was on the ground in Dubbo on 17 March for the [Australian Comprehensive Cancer Network \(ACCN\) Regional, Rural and Remote Networked Comprehensive Cancer Care Workshop](#), joining clinicians, researchers, consumers and national leaders to focus on what better cancer care looks like outside metropolitan centres.

The workshop provided a valuable opportunity to hear directly from those delivering and experiencing care in regional settings. From lived experience to frontline clinical insights, the

conversations reinforced the importance of place-based approaches that reflect the realities of regional communities.

Key themes included culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the power of strong cross-sector partnerships, and practical models of comprehensive cancer care already making a difference across NSW and beyond.

The afternoon co-design sessions shifted the focus to action, bringing participants together to shape ideas that will inform national approaches to networked cancer care.

For NSWRCRN, the workshop was a timely reminder of the importance of staying connected to both local voices and national reform efforts as we continue to build research capacity and support translation into real-world impact across regional NSW.



From left to right: Beck Palmer, Professor Nikola Bowden, Dr Allison Boyes and Sarah Delforce.

NOW OPEN | Cancer Institute NSW | Research Equipment Grants

The **Cancer Institute NSW Research Equipment Grant (REG)** ensures that the state has world class infrastructure to accelerate cancer research and realise clinical benefits.

This scheme will support research infrastructure where there is a clearly demonstrated need and where the equipment will substantially improve research productivity. Funding is available for research platforms, core equipment and capacities to enhance the cancer research effort in NSW.

The Research Equipment Grant aims to support capability development and greater levels of collaboration across the cancer research sector.

Funding available

Between \$300,000 and \$600,000 (excl. GST) per application for a single piece of equipment. Equipment must be purchased within 12 months of the commencement of the grant. Co-contributions may be provided by the Administering Institution and/or other funders where the proposed equipment exceeds \$600,000.

Eligibility

The 2026 Research Equipment Grant round is open to NSW-based Chief Investigators who have not received a Research Equipment Grant in the past three years, from a Registered Administering Institution.

Applications

Applications must be submitted via email to CINSW-Grants@health.nsw.gov.au by **12 pm, Tuesday 28 April 2026**.

Please direct any queries to the Grants team: CINSW-Grants@health.nsw.gov.au

 [Review the supporting documents](#)

NSW Cancer Research Education

Statewide Seminar Series - 2026

Cancer Surgery Prehabilitation

Sydney Cancer Partners, in collaboration with Maridulu Budyari Gumal (SPHERE) Cancer CAG NSW and the NSW Regional Cancer Research Network, is delivering the 2026 NSW Cancer Research Education Statewide Seminar Series. These online seminars are held on the third Tuesday of each month.

The next seminar will be held on **Tuesday 21 April 2026**, 12.30 –1.30pm via [Microsoft Teams](#).

Join three clinician-researchers as they present on key aspects of cancer surgery prehabilitation:

- **Dr Jenny Mackney**, a NSWRCRN Shovel Ready Translational Research Project grant recipient, will present on the development and scaling of the C-SPRITES multimodal prehabilitation model of care, for people living with cancer in regional and rural NSW.
- **Shane McAuliffe** will then explore the critical role of nutrition as a core pillar of oncology prehabilitation, highlighting how targeted nutrition care can mitigate the adverse impacts of malnutrition and sarcopenia and optimise patient readiness prior to cancer surgery.
- **Professor Daniel Steffens** will present a comprehensive, system-level model of cancer surgery prehabilitation, spanning risk stratification (PREdiCT), personalised care models (PRIMS), and scalable digital interventions (PRIORITY-CONNECT SMS and Home) to improve outcomes and access at scale.

Presentations will be followed by a Q&A.

 [For more information and to register](#)

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS | ACCN Innovations Showcase | Cancer Australia and the South Australian Comprehensive Cancer Network

Cancer Australia and the South Australian Comprehensive Cancer Network will co-host the third ACCN Innovations Showcase on 10 September 2026 in Adelaide.

This year's Showcase theme is Networked excellence in action. It will highlight outcomes from established partnerships, cross service collaborations, and models of care that demonstrate networked comprehensive cancer care across diverse settings.

Submission of 300-word abstracts are invited by 5pm AEST Monday 20 April 2026.

Abstracts should align with the conference theme and address one or more of the Showcase categories:

- Strengthening primary care in coordinated, networked cancer care
- Strengthening cultural safety through partnerships
- Applying evidence and shared learnings to improve quality and outcomes
- Building workforce capability and scope

Abstracts are welcome that demonstrate how innovation has been adapted across settings, and how shared learnings have strengthened care and driven quality improvement.

 [To learn more and submit an abstract](#)

WEBINAR | Clinical trials for Aboriginal People | Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Program

20 May 2026, 12.30-1.30pm

Join this seminar on International Clinical Trials Day for a session with Lisa Curry Lawlor, Aboriginal Health Research Manager at Murrumbidgee Local Health District, and Kath Irish, Manager, clinicaltrialsNSW. This session is designed to support the Aboriginal health workforce to build confidence and understanding of clinical trials in NSW and the ACT, with a strong focus on improving access for rural, regional and remote communities.

 [To register](#)

COMING GRANT OPPORTUNITY | NHMRC Regional, Rural and Remote Capacity Building Grant 2026

NHMRC has announced a new grant opportunity to support health and medical researchers in regional, rural and remote (RRR) Australia. It will provide funding to help established RRR researchers lead and mentor early to mid-career researchers, support emerging researchers (including clinicians) to become future leaders, and fund high quality place-based research that benefits RRR communities.

The Regional, Rural and Remote Capacity Building grant opportunity is expected to open for applications in mid-2026. Grants of \$5 million each will be distributed over a 7-year period.

 **More information can be found on [GrantConnect](#) and on NHMRC's [news centre](#).**

For assistance, please contact help@nhmrc.gov.au.

CONNECT WITH US:



We acknowledge the many Traditional Custodians of Country throughout regional, rural and remote NSW and honour their Elders, families and descendants, past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs, and deep and continuing relationship with the land and waterways. We acknowledge that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession.

The NSW Regional Cancer Research Network is funded by the [Cancer Institute NSW](#) through a Translational Cancer Research Capacity Building Grant and established through [NSW Regional Health Partners](#).