



# Network Update

## AT A GLANCE:

- NSWRCRN members featured in national initiatives
- Member achievements and recognition
- Funding opportunities for regional researchers
- Webinar, survey and sector opportunities
- New regional podcast series

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## NSWRCRN Clinician Research Fellow featured in Partyline

We are delighted to share that NSW Regional Cancer Research Network Clinician Research Fellow **Felicity Bates** has been featured in *Partyline*, [the National Rural Health Alliance](#) magazine that highlights people and initiatives improving health in rural, regional and remote communities.

Felicity is a Senior Palliative Care Pharmacist with Mid North Coast Local Health District. Her NSWRCRN Clinician Research Fellowship is supporting research into existential distress among people with advanced cancer receiving palliative care in rural communities. Through this work, Felicity has been implementing and evaluating the Death and Dying Distress Scale (DADDS) to help clinicians recognise emotional and spiritual suffering alongside physical symptoms. Her research is helping ensure that people affected by cancer in regional NSW receive more holistic and responsive care at the end of life.

 [Read the full story](#)

This national feature is a wonderful example of how locally led research by regional clinicians is driving meaningful improvements in cancer and palliative care across NSW.

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## Cancer Institute NSW celebrates women driving cancer research in NSW

The NSW Regional Cancer Research Network is proud to support the [Cancer Institute NSW](#) in marking the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, celebrating the many women whose work is shaping better cancer outcomes across the state.

Through its statewide campaign, the Cancer Institute NSW highlights the depth and diversity of women's contributions across the cancer research continuum, from discovery and technology

innovation to clinical collaboration and patient-centred care. The accompanying video brings together leading cancer researchers who share their experiences, insights and commitment to improving outcomes for people affected by cancer in NSW.

The campaign reflects the Cancer Institute NSW's ongoing leadership in building and supporting a strong, inclusive cancer research community. Through sustained investment in people, infrastructure and collaboration, the Institute continues to champion women at all career stages who are advancing cancer research and translating discoveries into real-world impact.

We are pleased to see NSW Regional Cancer Research Network Lead, Professor Nikola Bowden, featured among the researchers in this important initiative, representing regional cancer research leadership within the statewide community.

 [Watch the Cancer Institute NSW video and LinkedIn post](#)

We thank the Cancer Institute NSW for its continued commitment to supporting women in cancer research and for fostering a collaborative research ecosystem that works to reduce the burden of cancer for all people in NSW.

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## NSWRCRN member Professor Nikki Verrills awarded Cancer Institute NSW Research Equipment Grant

Congratulations to NSW Regional Cancer Research Network member **Professor Nikki Verrills** (University of Newcastle) on being awarded a [2025 Cancer Institute NSW Research Equipment Grant](#) to strengthen cancer research capability in NSW.

Professor Verrills has received almost \$600,000 to acquire a **CellenONE** instrument, a cutting-edge technology that enables researchers to isolate and study individual living cancer cells with exceptional precision. This capability will support advanced single-cell analysis of treatment-resistant cancer cells and the tumour microenvironment across several hard-to-treat cancers, including acute myeloid leukaemia, metastatic breast cancer and brain tumours.

Understanding why some cancer cells survive therapy and drive relapse remains one of the greatest challenges in improving cancer outcomes. By enabling detailed study of these resistant cells, the new platform will help uncover mechanisms of treatment resistance and inform the development of more personalised therapies for patients.

The Cancer Institute NSW Research Equipment Grants provide up to \$600,000 to support world-class research infrastructure that accelerates cancer research and delivers clinical benefit across the state.

 [Read the Cancer Institute NSW announcement](#)

 [View funded projects](#)

This important investment recognises Professor Verrills' leadership in translational cancer research and will strengthen advanced cancer research capability in regional NSW and beyond.



## THE INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN **CARDIO-ONCOLOGY RESEARCH & EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM**

14 – 15 Mar  
Chris O'Brien Lifehouse

### **NSWRCRN supporting regional researchers to attend ACORES 2026**

The NSW Regional Cancer Research Network is pleased to support member participation in key national conferences such as ACORES 2026 through our Conference Travel Grants for Regional Researchers. These grants enable regional cancer researchers and clinicians to share knowledge, build collaborations and bring new skills and best-practice approaches back to cancer care in regional NSW.

ACORES 2026, the Australian Cardio-Oncology Research and Education Symposium, will bring together national and international leaders in cardio-oncology to advance research and clinical practice at the intersection of cancer and cardiovascular care. We are delighted to see several NSW Regional Cancer Research Network members contributing to the scientific program, including **Professor Aaron Sverdlov**, **Professor Doan Ngo** and **Professor Jarad Martin**.

Supporting attendance at conferences such as ACORES is a key way the Network strengthens regional research capacity and ensures that clinicians and researchers working in regional settings remain connected to emerging evidence, innovation and collaborative opportunities. Knowledge gained through these experiences directly informs improvements in regional cancer services and patient outcomes.

[!\[\]\(e474458956c9a37fbf9586ddb60a7fa1\_img.jpg\) \*\*Apply for an ACORES 2026 travel grant\*\*](#)

[!\[\]\(3e2231b1ad3ca8da8658228c00dd08e0\_img.jpg\) \*\*Learn more about the ACORES 2026 symposium\*\*](#)

We encourage eligible Network members to consider applying and joining colleagues at this important national event.

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### **Supporting regional cancer research through conference and publication funding**

In addition to targeted opportunities such as the ACORES 2026 travel grants, the NSW Regional Cancer Research Network offers ongoing funding schemes that support regional researchers to share their work, build collaborations and increase the visibility of regional cancer research.

Our **Conference Travel Grants for Regional Researchers** support eligible Network members to attend national and international conferences, present their research and develop professional networks that strengthen cancer research capacity in regional NSW. Participation in scientific meetings enables regional clinicians and researchers to remain connected to emerging evidence and innovation, and to bring new knowledge and best-practice approaches back to their local services.

### [Conference Travel Grants for Regional Researchers](#)

The Network also offers **Regional Open Access Publication Fee Grants**, which assist members to publish their research in open access journals. By removing publication cost barriers, this scheme helps ensure that research led in regional settings is widely accessible, discoverable and able to inform cancer care, policy and future research. Open access publication increases the reach and impact of regional cancer research both nationally and internationally.

### [Regional Open Access Publication Fee Grants](#)

Together, these funding opportunities help regional cancer researchers share knowledge, strengthen collaborations and translate research into improved cancer outcomes for regional communities across NSW.

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## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS | Rural Innovations Changing Healthcare 2026

Rural Innovations Changing Healthcare (RICH) is an online forum linking rural health service providers, consumers and stakeholders to share experiences and explore innovative, rural models of care which have potential for broader implementation.

The theme for RICH 2026 is Innovation with purpose: Transforming rural health for lasting value and impact.

Attendees can join us online for the full day or for individual sessions. The full program will be available soon.

Do you have a local rural health innovation to share? Abstract submissions are now open. Please review the Abstract and ePoster [Submission Guidelines](#) before [submitting your abstract](#) by **27 February 2026**.

### **Location and cost**

This online forum is free to attend. Attendees can join us via videoconference or live streaming.

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## Webinar | NSW Cancer Research Education - Opportunities for Proteomics in Cancer Research

**Tuesday 17 February 12.30-1.30pm**

This one-hour statewide virtual seminar will explore mass spectrometry-based proteomics as a cutting-edge frontier in cancer research. Participants will learn how proteomic data can transform patient care by enabling more precise risk stratification, treatment selection, and improved disease

classification. Led by leading experts in translational cancer proteomics, the session is designed to be accessible and relevant to clinicians, researchers, and allied health professionals.

 [Register here](#)

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## SURVEY OPEN | 2-year evaluation of the Australian Cancer Plan | Cancer Australia

Cancer Australia is currently undertaking the 2-year evaluation of the Australian Cancer Plan (the Plan) and is seeking your valuable insights on implementation progress across the sector.

 [Complete the survey here](#)

The survey will inform the 2-year evaluation and help identify what is working well, emerging gaps, and opportunities to strengthen delivery of the Plan over the next phase.

**The survey is open until 5pm AEDT Tuesday 3 March 2026.**

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## PODCAST | New Regional Podcast Series: The RECAP Journal Club

The **RECAP (Regional Evidence, Collaboration and Practice) Journal Club** series is now live on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.

The RECAP Journal Club Podcast showcases peer-reviewed articles that reflect international best practice, led by regional and rural hosts and paper authors across Australia.

 [Spotify](#)

 [Apple Podcasts](#)

In the first episode, join "Author in the Room" Professor Jeanne Tie, with our hosts Dr. Sam Harris and A/Professor Craig Underhill, as they discuss the regional and rural implications of the DYNAMIC Trial.

The RECAP (Regional Evidence, Collaboration and Practice) Journal Club is a quarterly initiative supported by the Cancer Patient Support Program (CPSP) Grant, showcasing peer-reviewed articles that reflect international best practice, led by regional hosts and paper authors.

Find out more [here](#).

**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](#).**