



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials

Limited

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25



CONQUERING MELANOMA AND SKIN CANCER



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials

Formerly Australia and New Zealand
Melanoma Trials Group

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Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials acknowledges and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia on which our members live and work, and to their Elders, past, present, and future. We pay respect to the Wurundjeri Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our office stands. Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand.

About us

Skin cancer is known as Australia's 'national cancer', and remains one of our most preventable cancers. Yet two in three Australians will face a diagnosis of skin cancer in their lifetime.

Conquering melanoma and skin cancer

For more than 25 years, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials has been at the forefront of change, collaborating with world-leading researchers to deliver 30 practice-changing trials. Together, we've generated high-quality data that shapes treatment standards and improves patient outcomes. As the only independent, not-for-profit, cancer cooperative clinical trials group in Australia and New Zealand, our mission is bold: to eliminate melanoma and skin cancer.

Our research spans prevention, early detection and treatment of melanoma and skin cancer, from early-phase innovation to late-phase trials that set new benchmarks. We also focus on rare and aggressive cancers, such as Merkel cell carcinoma and ocular melanoma, ensuring every patient has access to better options and hope for the future.

International collaboration driving impact

Our network of 3,172 members across Australia and around the world brings together expertise from multiple disciplines, strengthening the success of every trial we run. Together, we share one goal: reducing the global burden of melanoma and skin cancer.

From concept development to publication, we work collaboratively to deliver high-quality clinical trials. Consumers are involved from the very beginning, ensuring their lived experience informs every stage of research. This approach not only improves trial design but also delivers outcomes that truly matter.

When we endorse a research concept, it signals quality and credibility, boosting its chances of funding and accelerating progress. This collaborative model has been a cornerstone of our success.

Supported by leading institutions and generous donors

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials is proud to receive ongoing support from the Australian Government through Cancer Australia, Monash University, and the generosity of our industry partners and donors.

Our academic affiliation with Monash University and its Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Centre within the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine strengthens our research capability. As one of Australia's top universities, Monash provides access to world-class facilities and leading academics. These partnerships amplify our ability to conduct research that transforms patient outcomes and drives innovation in melanoma and skin cancer care.

Our services

We support our members across all stages of clinical trials, including:

- Providing a research concept development pathway
- Access to expert development support for new trial concepts
- Mentoring and peer review opportunities for researchers via Discipline-Specific Advisories
- Quality educational and networking events
- Support for grant preparation and submission
- Biostatistics, health economics and quality of life modelling
- Facilitating active partnerships with consumer advocates and patients
- Trial budget development and management
- Trial design, protocol development and ethics submission
- Feasibility, site selection and trial implementation
- Access to national and international multicentre trial networks
- Trial and research project management
- Data and safety monitoring and protocol compliance
- Database build and data management
- Site monitoring
- Close-out and archive

Through collaboration and a shared commitment, our members drive clinical trials that deliver meaningful outcomes for patients with melanoma and skin cancer.

Vision, mission & values

Vision

Eliminate melanoma and skin cancer

Mission

We work collaboratively with world-leading researchers to deliver clinical trials that improve melanoma and skin cancer outcomes

Values

**Collaboration
Compassion
Innovation
Impact**

Conquering melanoma and skin cancer through clinical trials

National impact

This year, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials coordinated actively recruiting trials at 31 clinical trial sites throughout Australia. We're committed to expanding access to clinical trials through teletrial models and regional trial sites, ensuring Australians can benefit from the latest cancer treatments regardless of where they live.

"We're working with our networks to open trial sites in rural and regional areas, giving patients the same opportunity to participate in clinical trials as those in metropolitan centres. No one should miss out on life-changing research because of where they live."

Katja Loewe, Clinical Program Lead



Our history

1999	2000	2002	2008	2009
Australia and New Zealand Melanoma Trials Group (ANZMTG) founded	First ANZMTG trial developed with TROG	ANZMTG Executive Committee formed, based at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney	Cancer Australia core funding secured via University of Sydney First Annual Scientific Meeting	First national clinical trial grant secured
2010	2011	2014	2015	2016
ANZMTG transitions with MIA to the Poche Centre, Sydney	First international partnership 500 members reached	First project management of a medical oncology clinical trial	Recipient of National Excellence Award	1,000 members
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
First NHMRC clinical trial grant secured Formation of the Australasian Merkel Cell Carcinoma Interest Group (AMIGOs) and the Australasian Ocular Melanoma Alliance (AOMA)	Discipline-Specific Advisories (DSA) launched First MRFF clinical trial grant secured ANZMTG incorporates as Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials Limited (MASC Trials)	Research agreement formed with Monash University MASC Trials transitions to Monash University, based in Melbourne First AOMA Summit	New MASC Trials website launched 1,957 members	Virtual Annual Scientific Meeting 2,148 members Skin Cancer DSA formed Consumer Advisory Panel formed
2022	2023	2024	2025	
Foundation Club 100 launched BETTER trial initial funding SOCRATES trial opens SMARTI trial results published	2,396 members Annual Scientific Meeting alongside Australasian Melanoma Conference First Concept Development Workshop CHARLI trial results presented at ASCO	25th Anniversary 3,019 members SiroSkin trial opens RADICAL trial results presented at ASCO	BETTER trial opens EAGLE-FM trial 5-year participant follow-up completed First AOMA Focus	

2024/25 snapshot



872

Participants Recruited
in Trials



6

Recruiting Trials



3

Active Trials Closed
for Recruitment



31

Australian Trial Sites
Actively Recruiting



180

International Trials Sites
Actively Recruiting



12

Participating Countries



153

New Members



3172

Total Members



35

Countries with
Members



11

Melanoma and Skin
Cancer Trials Staff



1000+

Investigators Worldwide



17

Publications and
Conference Presentations



2

Scientific Events

2024-25 trial summary

Recruiting trials

Melanoma

BETTER

Sites: 1
Participants: 0

MelMarT-II

Sites: 186
Participants: 2,891

SOCRATES

Sites: 8
Participants: 65

Skin cancer

SiroSkin

Sites: 6
Participants: 140

Merkel cell carcinoma

GoTHAM

Sites: 10
Participants: 18

Uveal melanoma

Uveal Melanoma Registry

Sites: 8
Participants: 321

Active trials closed for recruitment

Melanoma

IMAGE

Sites: 12
Participants: 670
Closed recruitment: April 2023

MelMarT Pilot

Sites: 20
Participants: 400
Closed recruitment: August 2016

Merkel cell carcinoma

I-MAT

Sites: 20
Participants: 122
Closed recruitment: April 2025

Trials with completed follow-up

Melanoma

EAGLE FM

Sites: 15
Participants: 101
Closed recruitment: March 2020

CHARLI

Sites: 10
Participants: 52
Closed recruitment: December 2021

RTN2

Sites: 26
Participants: 50
Closed recruitment: February 2020

WBRTMeI

Sites: 24
Participants: 215
Closed recruitment: September 2017

Lentigo maligna

RADICAL

Sites: 10
Participants: 126
Closed recruitment: December 2021



Year at a glance

Date	Events
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uveal Registry surpassed 300 participants
August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA) raised almost \$30,000 for MASC Trials through a charity auction at the Queensland Young Auctioneers Cocktail Function
September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I-MAT trial presented at the 8th Nordic / 1st European Merkel Cell Carcinoma Meeting, Hamburg, Germany
October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASC Trials Scientific Meeting held as satellite meeting to 2024 Australasian Melanoma Conference (AMC), Sydney EAGLE-FM trial presented at 2024 AMC
November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASC Trials senior leadership attended the Parliamentary Friends of Melanoma & Skin Cancer Awareness Meeting at Parliament House, Canberra SiroSkin trial protocol paper was published in BioMed Central
December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASC Trials hosted screenings of <i>Conquering Skin Cancer</i> documentary in Melbourne and Geelong Melbourne Ladies Committee Inc. raised \$5,000 for MASC Trials at their Annual Christmas Luncheon SOCRATES activated Mildura Base Public Hospital in regional Victoria
January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth recruited its first patient for the GoTHAM trial
February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Australasian Ocular Melanoma Alliance Focus held in Hobart, Tasmania BETTER trial activated its first site – The Alfred Hospital, Melbourne
March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASC Trials Board convened its Strategic Planning Meeting in Melbourne
April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMAGE trial completed 24-month participant follow-up phase I-MAT trial achieved full participant recruitment – a major milestone in research for a rare cancer
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Katja Loewe presented to skin cancer practitioners at the Australasian Skin Cancer Congress, Gold Coast MelMarT-II trial recruitment reached 80% with 2,400 participants enrolled
June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avène raised nearly \$39,000 to support our clinical trial program



Message from our Chair and CEO



Leading Through Collaboration

2025 marked a year of transformation for MASC Trials—strengthening our global reach, advancing innovative research, and reaffirming our commitment to improving outcomes for people affected by melanoma and skin cancer.

It was a year of significant progress—driving new standards of care, advocating for policy change, and reinforcing governance and operational excellence. Our clinical trial program delivered meaningful benefits for patients, supported by our academic affiliation with Monash University and collaborations with leading research organisations nationally and internationally. Across six active trials, we recruited nearly 872 participants from 31 Australian sites and 180 international sites, reflecting the strength and reach of our research network.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to improving access and equity by expanding decentralised trial models and increasing teletrial capabilities across our program, ensuring patients in regional and remote areas can participate in cutting-edge research.

“This year we strengthened our global reach – building partnerships and driving innovation to transform outcomes worldwide.”

Prof Mark Shackleton
Board Chair, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials

Our leadership in the MelMarT-II trial—coordinated by Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials Ltd—has strengthened a global network spanning Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovenia, and Ireland. These partnerships underscore our commitment to driving innovation and improving outcomes for people affected by melanoma and skin cancer worldwide.

Board Leadership and Strategic Direction

In 2025, we farewelled two long-serving Board members, Professor Andrew Spillane and Dr Richard Martin, and thank them for their invaluable contributions and dedicated service over the past decade.

Andrew, Professor of Surgical Oncology at the University of Sydney and faculty member of Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA), joined the Board in April 2014 and served as Deputy Chair from 2018. He led the landmark EAGLE-FM trial, launched in 2015, a pivotal investigation into surgical approaches for advanced melanoma, and continues to contribute to the MelMarT-II trial through his site at MIA, one of the leading Australian recruitment centres. Andrew will remain an investigator as the trial moves into follow-up and analysis. His deep knowledge of melanoma care, combined with clinical expertise and strategic leadership, has been instrumental in shaping MASC Trials’ direction.

Associate Professor (Hon.) Richard Martin, a leading melanoma surgical oncologist from New Zealand, brought critical insights into national treatment and clinical management practices. His advocacy highlighted the urgent need to expand access to clinical trials for New Zealand patients and informed strategies to address these disparities. Drawing on his leadership in multidisciplinary care and experience managing more than 1,000 melanoma and skin cancer cases annually, Richard strengthened our commitment to equitable care and global collaboration.

Both Andrew and Richard were pivotal drivers of the transition of our group across 2016-18 from Australia and New Zealand Melanoma Trials Group (ANZMTG) to the thriving, non-profit, self-determining entity that serves our field today as MASC Trials Ltd. Their guidance has empowered MASC Trials to confidently advance its mission—driving innovative research and improving outcomes for patients worldwide. We wish them every success in their future endeavours.

“Every trial brings us closer to what matters most, better outcomes and renewed hope for people affected by melanoma and skin cancer.”

Gabrielle Byars
CEO, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials

Strengthening Our People and Partnerships

As MASC Trials continues to grow and diversify its clinical trial program, our commitment to advancing members’ research remains unwavering. To ensure we are well-positioned for the future, the Board convened a strategy day in March 2025 to explore forward-thinking approaches that will strengthen our capacity for innovation and sustainability.

With 3,172 members across 35 countries—including clinicians, researchers, and consumer advocates—we unite expertise and lived experience to drive progress. Supported by sound governance and international partnerships, we remain steadfast in our mission to overcome the most complex challenges in melanoma and skin cancer.

We extend our sincere thanks to our Board members and Committee Chairs for their thoughtful and strategic leadership during this period. We were proud to promote the following staff, reflecting their exceptional contributions and strengthening our culture of professionalism and operational excellence:

- Carla Duarte, Clinical Trial Manager (formerly Clinical Research Associate)
- Katja Loewe, Clinical Program Lead (formerly Research Manager)
- Madeleine Muller, Clinical Research Associate (formerly Clinical Trial Assistant)

The success of our clinical trial program is a testament to the outstanding support of our operations team, expertly led by Katja Loewe, and the dedication of our exceptional staff.

Community Support and Fundraising

Our progress is powered not only by research excellence but by the generosity of our community. The Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA) contributed \$144,014 to support our clinical trials—helping raise awareness of skin cancer prevention and treatment in regional communities, where risk is high and access to checks remains limited.

We also thank the individuals, businesses, and organisations whose generous donations over the past year fuel our research and expand our clinical program. Your commitment inspires our team every day. We look forward to welcoming more members to our Foundation Club 100 next year. Learn more at masc.org.au/support.

As we look to 2026, our focus is clear: accelerate innovation, strengthen global partnerships, and ensure equitable access to trials. This year we strengthened our global reach—building partnerships and driving innovation to transform outcomes worldwide.

Guided by our vision to eliminate melanoma and skin cancer, we are advancing trials in areas of greatest need to deliver meaningful change. Thank you to our members, partners, and supporters for your unwavering commitment. Every trial brings us closer to what matters most, better outcomes and renewed hope for people affected by melanoma and skin cancer.



Professor Mark Shackleton MBBS PhD FRACP
Chair, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials
Director of Oncology, Alfred Health
Professor of Oncology, Monash University
Co-Director, Monash Partners Comprehensive Cancer Consortium



Gabrielle Byars BSc MBioMedSci
Chief Executive Officer, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials
Head, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Centre, Monash University
Chair-Elect, Cancer Cooperative Trial Groups Executive Officers Network

A community united to support one of their own and empower research

Inspired by John Robson's tale of resilience, hope and the power of clinical trials, the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association nominated MASC Trials as its charity partner, showing what can happen when regional Australia gets behind a cause they believe in.

Four years after retired Kyneton stock and station agent John Robson was told he may only have months to live, his story continues to inspire hope, action, and life-changing support for melanoma research across regional Australia.

Today, with his latest scans clear and his health steadily improving, John is enjoying precious time with his family and looking firmly toward the future.

"When you hear a prognosis like mine, you don't think four years ahead," John says. "Every scan since has brought nerves, but also enormous gratitude. To be here now, with clear results, means everything."

A story that inspired a community

When John first shared his experience with Melanoma and Skin Cancer (MASC) Trials in 2022 – speaking openly about his diagnosis, treatment and the emotional toll of stepping away from the business he built – he hoped his story might encourage others to get checked. What he didn't expect was the extraordinary wave of support it would inspire.

In 2024, the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA) chose MASC Trials as its Charity of the Year, acknowledging the profound impact John's journey had on communities across the livestock and rural industries. Through three major auctioneering events, including the Southern Young Auctioneers Competition in Melbourne where John was honoured to attend, ALPA and its members have now raised more than \$140,000, with almost \$30,000 donated on the night in Melbourne alone.

At the event, John's close friend Rob Bolton spoke powerfully about watching John face his diagnosis and treatment, prompting what many described as one of the most emotional and generous nights in the event's history.

ALPA Chief Executive Peter Baldwin said the response reflected both the admiration for John and the urgency of supporting melanoma research in industries built outdoors.

"There wouldn't be a person in our industry who hasn't been touched by skin cancer," Mr Baldwin says. "John's courage in sharing his story brought home the reality of what melanoma can do, and our members responded with a passion and

generosity that was incredibly moving. Choosing MASC Trials was a no-brainer. This research matters deeply to our people, their families and their future."

Funding That Saves Lives

The funds raised by ALPA will support the development and delivery of clinical trials across Australia and New Zealand, helping accelerate new treatments and expand access to trials in regional locations – something that made a critical difference for John, who was able to undergo treatment close to home in Bendigo as part of the CHARLI trial.

MASC Trials Chief Executive Gabrielle Byars expressed her gratitude for ALPA's commitment and highlighted the importance of partnerships that reach communities with elevated risk.

"People living and working in regional and farming communities are often at higher risk of skin cancer, yet lower rates in screening and early detection," Ms Byars says. "This support from ALPA empowers us to expand access to trials, raise awareness, and ultimately save lives. John's story is a powerful example of the difference clinical research can make, and we are deeply grateful to the ALPA community for standing with us."

She also emphasised that government funding alone does not meet the needs of advanced research or nationwide access.

"Philanthropic support like this allows us to push boundaries. To pursue breakthroughs, build trial capacity in regional areas, and ensure Australians can access world-leading treatments regardless of postcode," Ms Byars says.





“Every scan since has brought nerves, but also enormous gratitude. To be here now, with clear results, means everything.”

John Robson
CHARLI trial participant and patient advocate

Living for today and what matters most

For John, the strength of community is just as significant as the treatment that saved his life.

“Seeing that room of auctioneers, stock agents and families dig deep was incredibly emotional,” he says. “It reminded me of the best of our industry – mateship, generosity, and the way people show up when it matters.”

He hopes the funds raised will accelerate vital research so that fewer families face the fear and uncertainty he did.

“I’m one of the lucky ones. If sharing my experience has encouraged someone to get checked, or helped raise money that leads to new treatments, then that’s something I’m immensely proud of.”

For now, John is focused on enjoying life playing – in particular, playing with his grandchildren.

“I wake up each day grateful. It might sound simple, but getting to spend more time with my family is the greatest gift of all.”

ALPA has shown what’s possible when communities unite for a cause. Your donation will directly support clinical trials that improve melanoma and skin cancer outcomes, expand access to treatment in rural areas, and help our world-leading researchers study innovative combined cancer therapies. Most importantly, you’ll be making a difference for patients across regional Australia and beyond. Donate today at: masc.org.au/donate.

Board of Directors

Yearly update

Strong governance underpins MASC Trials’ ability to deliver innovative research and sustain growth. In March 2025, the Board came together for a Strategic Planning Day to shape the future of MASC Trials—focusing on innovation, sustainability, risk management, and fundraising strategies to support the growth of our clinical trial program. These discussions ensure MASC Trials remains well-positioned to support its expanding clinical trial program and deliver value to stakeholders.

We also farewelled two long-serving Board members whose leadership and expertise have shaped MASC Trials’ growth and global impact. Professor Andrew Spillane and Associate Professor (Hon.) Richard Martin made outstanding contributions to advancing surgical research, strengthening international collaboration, and championing equitable access to clinical trials. We thank them for their decade of dedicated service.

The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC), chaired by Professor Michael Kimlin, met three times during this period to oversee financial performance, risk management, and compliance. Working closely with the CEO and Finance team, the Committee ensures robust internal controls and supports informed decision-making. We thank all FRAC members for their expertise and commitment. Looking ahead, we will identify and welcome new Board members to ensure our governance reflects the ambition and scale of our expanding clinical trial program.



Prof Mark Shackleton
MBBS PhD FRACP
Chair, Medical Oncologist



Prof Victoria Mar
MBBS PhD FACD
Dermatologist



Prof Michael Kimlin
BSc MSc GradDipEd PhD MAICD
Cancer Epidemiologist



Mary Tsouvalakis
BA LLBHons MPH
Lawyer, Patient Advocate



Sharon Van Buerle
Bec GradDipAppSci
Policy and Financial Resources
Management



Patrick Baker
Executive Director



Prof James Whisstock
MA (Cantab) PhD (Cantab)
Structural Biologist

Our team (As of 30 June 2025)



Gabrielle Byars
BSc MBioMedSci
Chief Executive Officer
Head, Melanoma and Skin Cancer
Research Centre, Monash University



Katja Loewe
MSc
Clinical Program Lead



Carla Duarte
BSc (Hons)
Clinical Trial Manager



Louise Gonzales
BAppSc
Senior Clinical Research Associate



Madeleine Muller
BBiotech MBiotech
Clinical Research Associate



Dr Elsa A. Marquez
PhD
Clinical Data Manager



Daniel Ariza Ospino
BDS MPH
Clinical Data Manager



Amelia Stapley
BBiomedSc (Hons)
Clinical Data Manager



Dr Jen Hamilton
PhD
Clinical Trial Assistant



Ella Sjodin
BNutScScholars
Administrative Officer /
Clinical Trial Assistant



Ally McGill
BSc CertIV Bookkeeping DipAcc
Finance and Administration Officer



Prof Rory Wolfe
PhD
Biostatistician (Monash University)



Dr Alan Herschtal
PhD
Biostatistician (Monash University)

Consumer engagement



Improving trials through consumer input

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials values independent patient feedback to ensure the development of relevant and accessible research meets the needs and objectives of the people most affected by melanoma and skin cancer. Engaging consumers early in the process helps shape trial design ensuring trials are conducted with the patient’s best interests in mind.

Formed in 2021, our Consumer Advisory Panel is led by Alison Button-Sloan, a passionate advocate with extensive expertise in health and consumer partnerships.

“Embedding the patient voice in every trial ensures our research is relevant, accessible, and impactful.”

Alison Button-Sloan
Chair, MASC Trials Consumer Advisory Panel

Yearly update

“Our Consumer Advisory Panel is highly respected and valued, partnering closely with researchers to embed the patient voice in every trial—from concept development through design and implementation. With members from both metropolitan and regional towns across Australia, their collaborative input ensures our studies are relevant, accessible, and impactful, ultimately improving outcomes for melanoma and skin cancer patients.” - Alison Button-Sloan, Consumer Advisory Panel Chair.

This year, we welcomed three new members: Trevor Day in July 2024, Jo Molsher in November 2024 and Nicholas Mosenthal in January 2025.

During the year, the Consumer Advisory Panel met quarterly. Members also:

- Contributed to the development of 2 new research proposals
- Shared consumer perspectives at Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials’ Scientific Meeting
- Supported investigators through Trial Management Committee meetings
- Participated in Discipline-Specific Advisory meetings
- Promoted our research achievements, and fundraising efforts via social media



Consumer Advisory Panel (As of 30 June 2025)



Alison Button-Sloan
Chair, VIC
Melanoma, basal cell carcinoma
and squamous cell carcinoma



Michelle Taylor
Deputy Chair, NSW
Uveal melanoma



Ana Ratapu
NSW
Metastatic melanoma



Gemene Heffernan-Smith
NSW
Metastatic melanoma



Trevor Day
NSW
Merkel cell carcinoma



John Mason
QLD
Merkel cell carcinoma



Jo Molsher
SA
Melanoma



Tara Fullston
WA
Metastatic melanoma



Nicholas Mosenthal
WA
Melanoma

We also thank the many consumers who regularly share their valuable insights and contribute to our work. In particular, we acknowledge:

- Susan Vine from OcuMel Australia and New Zealand Support Group for her support of the AOMA Summit.
- Deborah Butler and Ron Murray, former CAP members, for their contributions to the CAP and beyond. We especially remember Ron for his advocacy and we honour his lasting impact on our work.
- Angela Cairns and Anne Gately (pictured on page 14) for courageously sharing their personal stories at our Scientific Meeting.

Carolyn's vision: Finding a new mission after a shock diagnosis

A routine eye test changed Carolyn Alkemade's life forever. Diagnosed with rare ocular melanoma, she transformed shock into purpose — now speaking publicly to raise awareness and encourage people everywhere to prioritise eye health and early detection.

In early 2025, experienced regional nurse and East Gippsland local, Carolyn Alkemade, was looking forward to celebrating her 30th wedding anniversary and the year ahead with her husband, Mick. Health-conscious and active, the pair had just finished a gruelling, but unforgettably beautiful, 8-day South Coast Track hike through Tasmania — the latest in a tradition of anniversary adventures in the outdoors.

With the hike completed, the couple planned to treat themselves to a romantic dinner and a show in Bairnsdale. While in town, Carolyn decided to make use of some spare time and book a routine eye test. It was intended to be nothing more than a standard check-up. During the examination, Carolyn's optometrist offered her an additional Optos (ultra-wide fundus photography) imaging of the back of her eye — more to be thorough than out of any real concern. This was followed up by a dilated eye exam and additional images. Moments later, her entire world shifted.

“Stories like Carolyn's show why patient voices are essential in driving innovation and improving care, at the heart of AOMA's mission to bring ocular melanoma patients and experts together.”

Dr Rod O'Day,
Ophthalmologist, Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and AOMA Member

The optometrist detected a shadow at the back of her right eye and immediately organised an urgent referral to the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne. Within hours, Carolyn was sitting in the emergency department hearing a diagnosis she had never imagined: a tumour consistent with ocular melanoma, a rare form of eye cancer.

“In my role as a nurse, I support patients all the time as they are delivered difficult news, so I thought I understood what that moment feels like. But when it was happening to me, everything

just went silent. I remember thinking, surely this is happening to someone else. I kept looking at Mick, wondering how we were meant to make sense of any of it.”

Only a handful of Australians are diagnosed with ocular melanoma each year, meaning there is limited community awareness and few people with lived experience to turn to. For Carolyn, the sense of uncertainty and scarcity of information was overwhelming, especially while navigating rapid decisions around treatment.

“I'd never even heard of ocular melanoma before. One day I was planning anniversary celebrations, and the next I was discussing radiation therapy and risk of metastasis. I felt like the ground had disappeared beneath my feet.”

Carolyn underwent brachytherapy — a complex procedure where a small radioactive plaque is attached to the eye to target the tumour. The recovery period brought physical discomfort, emotional strain, and long stretches of time with nothing to do but wait and hope.

“I've always been someone who keeps moving, so being forced to slow down and sit with the fear was incredibly hard. Some days, just getting out of bed and choosing to stay positive felt like a major victory.” Distance from Melbourne added another layer of challenge. Living in regional Victoria meant hours of travel for tests and appointments, and navigating unfamiliar treatment pathways with limited local support.

But support did emerge, and it changed everything. Through patient groups and connecting with others who had been diagnosed with ocular melanoma, Carolyn found guidance and reassurance that information alone could not provide. “Speaking to another patient was a turning point. Hearing someone say ‘I've been where you are, and there is hope’ helped lift the fog. It reminded me that I wasn't walking this road alone.”

That turning point also sparked a realisation: if she had gained strength from someone else's story, perhaps sharing her own could help others and raise urgently needed awareness. Since then, Carolyn has spoken openly about her experience — sharing her story on ABC radio, in local newspapers, and across social media — encouraging people to prioritise eye health and request regular dilated eye exams. The impact has already been tangible, with numerous people reaching out to tell her they had never heard of ocular melanoma before and now plan to get tested regularly. Feedback from Carolyn's optometrist reinforced the importance of raising awareness: “Your advocacy has certainly made a difference and I still have numerous patients mention something they heard about ‘eye cancer’ which certainly did not happen 12 months ago.”



“I’d never even heard of ocular melanoma before. One day I was planning anniversary celebrations, and the next...I felt like the ground had disappeared beneath my feet.”

**Carolyn Alkemade,
Ocular melanoma patient**

“If sharing my experience encourages someone to request a dilated eye exam, or makes another patient feel less terrified in those first awful days, then something meaningful has come from what I went through. Early detection changed everything for me and awareness really can save lives.”

Carolyn actively promotes eye health, early screening and support for regional patients navigating rare cancers.

“I look at life very differently now. Every ordinary day feels extraordinary. I’m grateful for the care I received, for the people who lifted me up, and for the chance to turn something frightening into something that might help others.”

Carolyn’s story highlights the critical role of research, early detection and the community created through organisations like MASC Trials and its Priority Research Special Interest Group, the Australasian Ocular Melanoma Alliance (AOMA). AOMA works to advance knowledge and improve care and treatment of ocular melanoma patients, ensuring no patient faces this disease alone, no matter where they live.

Your support helps AOMA drive collaboration and life-saving research that improves outcomes for people facing this rare and aggressive cancer. Donate today: www.masc.org.au/donate-to-ocular-melanoma-research.

Melanoma trials

Melanoma (skin)



3rd most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia, and the most common in those aged 20 to 39



17,000+ Australians diagnosed with invasive melanoma each year



1,400+ Australian deaths each year, 1 death every 6 hours



Australia and New Zealand have the highest incidence of melanoma in the world



“A key milestone was reached for the BETTER trial, which has opened at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne providing a new trial option for patients with symptoms related to brain swelling from melanoma. We are excited about the prospect of this study’s transformative potential for this hard-to-treat condition.”

Dr Malaka Ameratunga
BETTER trial Study Chair

05.21 BETTER

A new treatment combination for melanoma brain metastases

Melanoma that spreads to the brain occurs in up to half of all patients with an advanced melanoma diagnosis. Once melanoma metastasises in the brain, patients often have a poor prognosis and a short life expectancy. Additionally, three in every ten patients have symptomatic melanoma brain metastasises (sMBM), with symptoms ranging from headaches and confusion, to difficulty with movement or speech, memory problems and seizures.

Current treatments – consisting of immunotherapy drugs (ipilimumab and nivolumab), surgery or focused radiation therapy to target specific tumours in the brain and steroids (like dexamethasone) to reduce brain swelling and control symptoms - have dramatically improved survival for these patients, yet they still experience poorer outcomes compared to patients with asymptomatic brain metastases. To make matters worse, people with sMBM are underrepresented in clinical trials as they are often excluded due to safety concerns. As a result, there is a significant gap in medical knowledge, its application in clinical practice, and the availability of treatment options for people with sMBM.

The BETTER trial is testing a new treatment combination that aims to improve the care, treatment, and quality of life for patients like Peter Wilson, whose melanoma has spread to the brain. It will evaluate the safety, tolerability and efficacy of combining the immunotherapy drugs nivolumab and ipilimumab with bevacizumab and targeted radiotherapy in patients with sMBM. As well as aiming to extend the patient’s life, this combination treatment may also improve quality of life by reducing the need for immune-suppressing steroids that have many side-effects. This combination may also lessen the chance of developing radionecrosis (localised areas of brain tissue damage following high dose radiation), which can be induced by high-dose radiation therapy.

This phase I/II trial, sponsored by Monash University and coordinated by MASC Research Centre will enrol up to 6 participants at two Australian sites in its phase 1, aiming to determine the safety of bevacizumab. Phase 2 will establish how well the combination treatment is working, and enrol a further 43 participants.

Phase 1 of the BETTER trial was made possible thanks to the Australian Skin Cancer Foundation’s fundraising efforts, raising \$210,000 through two Mission Melanoma campaigns. We are currently seeking further trial funding for phase 2 to enable more patients, hospital sites and investigators to join the trial.



“Research is the only way to improve the chances for others who may become victims of this cruel disease.”

Peter Wilson,
Clinical trial advocate

A funding boost will also support the trial to publish the robust evidence required to update treatment guidelines with this new treatment combination for patients with symptomatic melanoma brain metastases. “Clinical trials like this are so important to move towards eliminating the chance of other people going through what my family and I did; hearing those terrible odds, having to endure the side effects of treatment, and living with the fear it might not work.” Peter Wilson, Consumer Advocate. Photo courtesy of Australian Skin Cancer Foundation.

Yearly update

The BETTER trial opened its first site this year, The Alfred Hospital in Melbourne, and is planning to open at Westmead Hospital in Sydney in early 2026.

More information

masc.org.au/better/





“The results of the MelMarT-II trial will establish the standard of care for patients with higher risk melanomas, potentially reducing the extent of surgery resulting in fewer complications, improved patient experience, and reduced healthcare costs.”

**Prof Michael Henderson,
MelMarT-II trial Co-Study Chair**

02.18 MelMarT-II

Global melanoma trial to determine optimal surgical excision margin

Primary cutaneous melanoma, where the cancer cells have penetrated deeply into the skin but haven't spread to other parts of the body, is the most common form of melanoma. Surgery to remove the tumour is the primary treatment, however, there is uncertainty as to the optimal excision margin. For high-risk melanoma patients, their doctor's decision to use either a 1 cm or 2 cm excision margin around the melanoma could impact their quality of life and survival.

A larger melanoma excision margin can have a dramatic impact on a patient's quality of life, with potential complex surgical reconstruction, poorer



cosmetic appearance, post-operative complications, and impact on function. However, if the excision margin is too small, the melanoma could return and metastasise.

Currently there is no high-quality clinical trial evidence or consensus in the medical community about the optimal melanoma excision margin size for stage II melanoma. The evidence available suggests a 1 cm margin is reasonable. The Melanoma Margins Trial, MelMarT-II, will determine whether a 1 cm or a 2 cm margin is best, provide certainty for melanoma patients and their doctors in deciding the most effective treatment and inform international guidelines.

This phase III randomised controlled surgical trial, coordinated by MASC Trials, will enrol almost 3,000 patients across Australia, the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovenia, and Ireland. Leading this international trial together are Prof Michael Henderson in Australia and Prof Marc Moncrieff in the United Kingdom.

The MelMarT-II trial was originally awarded \$2,766,610 from the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council. Additional funding for international trial activity has been provided by national funding organisations in other countries, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canadian Cancer Society, UK National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment, US National Cancer Institute, the Swedish Cancer Society, The Swedish Research

Council, the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation, and Cancer Trials Ireland. The trial is sponsored by Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials. Its collaborative partners are Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, Canadian Cancer Trials Group, SWOG Cooperative Group, Zuyderland Medical Center, and Cancer Trials Ireland.

Yearly update

This year, 12 additional sites joined the trial, increasing the total to 186 across nine countries. In the United States, through the National Cancer Institute's National Clinical Trials Network (NCI-NCTN) and the SWOG Cooperative Group, 130 sites have now been opened nationwide.

The trial marked a major milestone in November 2024 with the recruitment of its 1,000th participant in the United States, reflecting strong engagement across NCI-NCTN and SWOG sites nationwide. MelMarT-II enrolled 708 new participants this year, bringing overall enrolment to 2,891 (including 170 from the pilot study) against a target of 2,998 participants, which is expected to be achieved in August 2025.

In February 2025, the first MelMarT-II participant reached their 10-year follow-up milestone. In March 2025, MelMarT-II investigators convened at the Society of Surgical Oncology Annual Meeting in the USA for the annual investigator meeting.

More information

masc.org.au/melmar-t-ii/





“This important trial is trying to determine how we do our best to reduce the risk of heart attacks for patients with melanoma. We are grateful for the efforts of all of our patients and study teams in trying to answer this question.”

**Prof Stephen Nicholls,
SOCRATES trial Study Chair**

14.20 SOCRATES

Preventative treatment for melanoma patients at risk of heart disease

Immunotherapy drugs are effective in treating metastatic melanoma but can cause heart-related side-effects such as increased cholesterol deposits in heart arteries which could lead to heart attacks. Although immunotherapy has dramatically improved cancer outcomes, further research is necessary to tackle the heightened risk of heart disease and its effect on patients who are living longer following treatment.

Led by the Director of the Monash Victorian Heart Institute, Prof Stephen Nicholls, the trial which commenced in 2022 is looking to understand the build-up of cholesterol deposits, also referred to as atherosclerosis or plaque in the vessels of the heart, in melanoma patients treated with immunotherapy. If successful, it could determine if statins have a positive effect on long-term outcomes and survival rates for many melanoma patients. As part of this clinical trial, images of the heart will be taken over time using computed tomography (CT) scans of heart arteries.

The SOCRATES trial represents a unique and much needed collaborative effort between oncology, dermatology, and cardiology specialities to address an emerging need in melanoma and long-term cancer survivorship care.

SOCRATES was awarded \$1,592,868 from the Federal Government’s Medical Research Future Fund. The trial is sponsored and coordinated by the Victorian Heart Institute at Monash University, with assistance from Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials.

Yearly update

The SOCRATES trial opened three additional trial sites across Victoria (Mildura Base Public Hospital team pictured), New South Wales and South Australia, contributing to a total of eight trial sites across Australia including in regional Victoria and Queensland. This year, 53 new participants joined the trial, bringing the total to 65 from a target enrolment of 130 participants.

More information

masc.org.au/socrates



Skin cancer trials

Non-melanoma skin cancers



Estimated to account for more cases diagnosed than all other cancers combined (in 2002)



Three types: Basal cell carcinoma (BCC, about 70% of all NMSCs), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC, about 30% of all NMSCs) and keratinocyte dysplasias (including solar keratosis, Bowenoid keratosis and Bowen's disease)



“With the SiroSkin trial we are hoping to reduce the burden of skin cancer in organ transplant recipients. Reducing the number of new skin cancers in patients is an essential objective to improve their quality of life and reduce morbidity and mortality post transplantation”

Prof Kiarash Khosrotehrani,
SiroSkin trial Study Chair

01.21 SiroSkin

Topical cream to reduce facial skin cancers in organ transplant recipients

Immunosuppression therapies allow many solid organ transplant recipients to live longer and healthier lives, however, they also significantly increase the risk of skin cancer in these patients. In Australia, the high incidence of basal and squamous cell carcinomas, particularly on the head and neck, can translate into numerous skin cancers for solid organ transplant recipients. These skin cancers often require excision and can lead to hundreds of surgeries in the patient's lifetime. For some patients, these skin cancers metastasise and lead to death.

Currently, patient management does not prevent new or additional skin cancers from occurring. As solid organ transplant patients are considered high risk, effective treatments to stop the onset of new cancers is yet to be implemented.

Led by Prof Kiarash Khosrotehrani, the SiroSkin trial aims to determine whether topical Sirolimus – a drug commonly used to prevent transplant rejection and with demonstrated anti-tumour effects – can reduce the number of facial squamous cell carcinomas in solid organ transplant patients. Participants will be asked to apply a cream containing either sirolimus or placebo to the face and ears once nightly for 24 weeks.

The SiroSkin trial was awarded \$2,486,489 from the Medical Research Future Fund's Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need Initiative and is sponsored by Monash University.

Yearly update

In August 2024, the final trial site was activated in New South Wales, bringing the total to six recruiting sites across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. To date, 140 participants have been recruited nearing the target of 146. In November 2024, the trial protocol was published in BioMed Central by A/Prof Lea Dousset and the lead SiroSkin Investigators, pictured here with Professor Kiarash Khosrotehrani's team from the Translational Research Institute (image sourced from Queensland Health).



Merkel cell carcinoma trials

Rare, highly aggressive neuroendocrine skin cancer



Australia's deadliest form of skin cancer



300 Australians diagnosed each year



Australia has the world's highest incidence of Merkel cell carcinoma



“The GoTHAM trial remains important to understand the impact and immunomodulatory role of radiation when administered with immunotherapy in a disease where both are effective and a significant subset of patients progress quickly. There is still a great need to improve long-term disease control and survival.”

Prof Shahneen Sandhu,
GoTHAM trial Study Chair

10.17 GoTHAM

World first trial to test new treatment combination

Australia has the highest incidence of Merkel cell carcinoma in the world, although it is still considered a rare disease compared to other skin cancers such as melanoma.

In a world first, Prof Shahneen Sandhu is leading a trial that hopes to find a novel treatment combination for patients who have developed metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma. The trial is testing the immunotherapy drug, Avelumab, in combination with external beam radiotherapy.

The high-quality evidence gathered from this clinical trial will provide assurance to oncology teams that combining Avelumab with radiotherapy for metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma patients will yield the best possible results.

The Australia-wide multicentre, phase Ib/II trial is seeking to enrol up to 19 participants and has ten trial sites open nationally.

The GoTHAM trial was funded via the Medical Research Future Fund's Rare Cancers Initiative with top-up funding from Merck Healthcare.

Yearly update

The GoTHAM trial is actively recruiting at 10 sites, including at regional sites in New South Wales. Two new participants were enrolled, bringing the total to 18. Due to the rarity of metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma, it is challenging to find the number of participants required to produce the evidence necessary for this treatment option.

More information

masc.org.au/gotham



Uveal melanoma clinical research

Rare form of melanoma in the eye



125-150 Australians diagnosed each year



Rare cancer, but most common cancer of the eye



Approximately 35 Australians die each year



25% of patients require enucleation (removal of the eye)



“OMNI, the global Uveal Melanoma registry, has now passed 1,000 patients globally and is positioning itself to be the premier real-world dataset for uveal melanoma - helping patients, regulators, governments and physicians understand the real impact of this disease.”

Prof Anthony Joshua,
Australian Uveal Melanoma
Registry Lead Investigator

07.17 Uveal Melanoma Registry

Informing research and new treatments

Uveal melanoma is a rare and aggressive form of ocular melanoma for which there are very few accepted treatments. It is clinically and biologically different from the more common skin melanoma.

The Ocular Melanoma Natural History Study (OMNi), which commenced in 2020, is a global real-world registry with contributing sites across North America, Europe and Australia. Its aim is to identify predictive clinical features, document the natural history of uveal melanoma, and collect information on clinical management. The registry was made possible through our collaboration with Pulse Infotrame, a real-world evidence generation, health informatics and insights company that supports our ecosystem across patients and researchers. Bristol Myers Squibb has also contributed funding to the Australian registry.

This multicentre Uveal Melanoma Registry will generate clinical and biomarker data to support drug development and pricing reimbursement. Patients can also provide direct feedback, offering a holistic view of the impact of uveal melanoma and its treatments.

Yearly update

Established in May 2021, eight Australian sites are currently contributing to the registry. This year, 19 participants were enrolled, bringing the total number of participants to 321 participants. Efforts are underway to expand the registry, with an additional site planned at The Alfred Hospital in Melbourne and continued collaboration with our partners in Canada.

More information

masc.org.au/uveal-melanoma-registry-omni



Network of experts

Special interest groups

Australasian Ocular Melanoma Alliance

The Australasian Ocular Melanoma Alliance (AOMA) is dedicated to improving care and treatment for patients with ocular melanoma and advancing research into this rare form of melanoma.

Founded in 2017, AOMA brings together ophthalmologists, surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, pathologists, allied health professionals, scientists, researchers, and consumer representatives from across Australia and New Zealand. The alliance is chaired by Prof Anthony Joshua, a medical oncologist based in Sydney.

Yearly update

AOMA continued to strengthen collaboration and innovation in ocular melanoma research this year. AOMA met twice to advance new clinical trial concepts. In February 2025, AOMA convened its inaugural AOMA Focus in Hobart - an educational initiative designed to support medical professionals caring for patients with ocular melanoma in Tasmania.

These efforts reflect AOMA's mission to foster multidisciplinary collaboration and improve outcomes for people affected by this rare and aggressive cancer. Plans are already underway to expand AOMA Focus and create more opportunities for clinicians to connect and share expertise.



More information

masc.org.au/aoma-summit



Australasian Merkel Cell Carcinoma Interest Group

The Australasian Merkel Cell Carcinoma Interest Group (AMIGOs) is a global network of specialists working to advance the treatment and care of patients with Merkel cell carcinoma through clinical trials, basic and translational research.

Established in 2017, AMIGOs brings together experts in medical radiation and surgical oncology, pathology, genetics, imaging and laboratory-based research, and consumer advocacy. The group is chaired by A/Prof Wen Xu, a medical oncologist from Brisbane.

Yearly update

During the year, AMIGOs met twice to develop ideas for new Merkel cell carcinoma trials, review grant opportunities, and report on Merkel cell carcinoma trials within the Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials program.

Merkel cell carcinoma also featured in our 2024 Scientific Meeting program, with a dedicated session providing an update on the I-MAT trial and a compelling consumer presentation by CAP member, Trevor Day (pictured). This session underscored the personal realities of living with Merkel cell carcinoma and the critical role of collaboration in driving better outcomes.



More information

amigos.org.au



Discipline-Specific Advisories

Collaboration is at the heart of innovation – and our Discipline-Specific Advisories are driving progress in melanoma and skin cancer research. These forums provide a platform for researchers, clinicians, and consumers to share ideas and advance the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of melanoma and other skin cancers. They strengthen engagement across Australia, ensure representation from diverse disciplines, and foster collaboration with international partners. They also encourage the development of clinical research concepts in priority areas.

We are proud to have 266 members actively contributing to our Discipline-Specific Advisories.

Yearly update

This year, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials hosted 16 advisory meetings, delivering tangible outcomes:

- Updates on our clinical trial program
- Identification of unmet research needs across multiple specialties
- Opportunities for early- and mid-career researchers to contribute to trial concepts and scientific events
- Peer review of new research proposals, with input from our Consumer Advisory Panel and Cancer Australia National Technical Services prior to endorsement

Our Discipline-Specific Advisories remain a cornerstone of our strategy to drive innovation and collaboration in melanoma and skin cancer research.

More information

masc.org.au/discipline-specific-advisories/



Dermatology	Co-Chair – Prof Pascale Guitera Co-Chair – Prof Nikolas Haass
Medical Oncology	Chair – A/Prof Wen Xu Deputy Chair – Dr Miles Andrews
Radiation Oncology	Chair – Prof Angela Hong Deputy Chair – A/Prof Tim Wang
Surgical Oncology	Chair – Prof John Spillane
Skin Cancer	Chair – Prof Kiarash Khosrotehrani Deputy Chair – A/Prof Rahul Ladwa
Nursing, Allied Health, Public Health and Primary Care	Chair – Prof David Whiteman Deputy Chair – Prof Monika Janda



Current research

Recruiting trials

Trial No.	Trial Name	Trial Official Title	Principal Investigator	Lead Site	Sponsor / Coordinating Centre	Funding
05.21	BETTER	Bevacizumab and immune checkpoint inhibitors plus hypofractionated stereotactic radiotherapy for the treatment of symptomatic melanoma brain metastases	Dr Malaka Ameratunga A/Prof Tim Wang	Alfred Hospital, VIC	Monash University / Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Skin Cancer Foundation
10.17	GoTHAM	A phase Ib/II study of combination Avelumab with peptide receptor radionuclide therapy or conventional fractionated radiotherapy in patients with metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma	Prof Shahneen Sandhu	Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, VIC	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Research Future Fund – Low Survival Cancers and Diseases Merck Healthcare
02.18	MelMarT-II	A phase III, multicentre, multinational randomised control trial investigating 1 cm v 2 cm wide excision margins for primary cutaneous melanoma	Prof Michael Henderson (Aus) Prof Marc Moncrieff (UK)	Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, VIC	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Health and Medical Research Council – Project Grant
07.17	Uveal Melanoma Registry	Uveal Melanoma Registry (A Prospective Natural History Study in Uveal Melanoma)	Prof Anthony Joshua	St Vincent's Hospital, NSW	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pulse Inframe Bristol Myers Squibb
14.20	SOCRATES	Statins and progression of Coronary atherosclerosis in melanoma patients Treated with checkpoint inhibitorS	Prof Stephen Nicholls	Monash Health, VIC	Monash University, Monash Victorian Heart Institute, and Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Research Future Fund – Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies
01.21	SiroSkin	A randomised double-blind placebo-controlled trial of topical sirolimus in chemoprevention of facial squamous cell carcinomas in solid organ transplant recipients	Prof Kiarash Khosrotehrani	Princess Alexandra Hospital, QLD	Monash University / Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Research Future Fund – Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need

Active trials closed for recruitment

Trial No.	Trial Name	Trial Official Title	Principal Investigator	Lead Site	Sponsor/Coordinating Centre	Funding
03.18	I-MAT	A randomised, placebo-controlled, phase II trial of adjuvant Avelumab in patients with stage I-III Merkel cell carcinoma	A/Prof Wen Xu	Princess Alexandra Hospital, QLD	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Research Future Fund – Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need Merck Healthcare
02.19	IMAGE	Melanoma surveillance photography to improve early detection of melanoma in very-high and high risk patients	A/Prof Victoria Mar	Alfred Hospital, VIC	Monash University / Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Research Future Fund - Targeted Health System and Community Organisation Research Grant Opportunity
03.12	MelMarT (Pilot)	A phase III, multicentre, multinational randomised control trial investigating 1 cm v 2 cm excision margins for primary cutaneous melanoma	Prof Michael Henderson (Aus) Prof Marc Moncrieff (UK)	Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, VIC	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancer Council NSW Friends of the Mater Foundation

Trials with completed follow-up

Trial No.	Trial Name	Trial Official Title	Principal Investigator	Lead Site	Sponsor/Coordinating Centre	Funding
01.12	EAGLE FM	Evaluation of groin lymphadenectomy extent for metastatic melanoma – A randomised phase III trial to evaluate survival, morbidity, and quality of life	Prof Andrew Spillane	Melanoma Institute Australia, NSW	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancer Council NSW
01.15	CHARLI	A phase Ib/II trial of Ipilimumab-Nivolumab-Denosumab and Nivolumab-Denosumab in patients with unresectable stage III and IV melanoma	Prof Shahneen Sandhu	Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, VIC	Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre / Melanoma and Skin Cancer Research Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bristol Myers Squibb Amgen
02.12	RADICAL	A randomised controlled multicentre trial of imiquimod versus radiotherapy for lentigo maligna when staged surgical excision with 5 mm margins is not possible, is refused, or fails	Prof Pascale Guitera	Melanoma Institute Australia, NSW	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancer Australia Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme Project Grant, and philanthropic funding
01.09	RTN2	A randomised trial of postoperative radiation therapy following wide excision of neurotropic melanoma of the head and neck	A/Prof Matthew Foote	Princess Alexandra Hospital, QLD	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancer Australia Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme Project Grant
01.07	WBRTMel	Whole brain radiotherapy following local treatment of intracranial metastases of melanoma – A randomised phase III trial	Prof Gerald Fogarty	St Vincent's Hospital, NSW	Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cancer Australia Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme Project Grant

Publications

Dousset, L., Chambers, D., Webster, A. et al. Trial protocol for SiroSkin: a randomised double-blind placebo-controlled trial of topical sirolimus in chemoprevention of facial squamous cell carcinomas in solid organ transplant recipients. *Trials* 25, 789 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-024-08619-3>

Mahumud RA, Law CK, Ospino DA, Wilt JHW, Leeuwen BL, Allan C, Vazquez VDL, Jones RP, Howle J, Spillane AJ, & Morton RL. Economic Evaluation of Inguinal Versus Ilio-inguinal Lymphadenectomy for Patients with Stage III Metastatic Melanoma to Groin Lymph Nodes: Evidence from the EAGLE FM Randomized Trial. *Ann Surg Oncol*; 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-025-17040-2>

Conference presentations

Xu, W. et al., 'A Randomised, Placebo-controlled, Phase II Trial of Adjuvant Avelumab in Patients with Stage I-III Merkel Cell Carcinoma', 2024 MOGA Annual Scientific Meeting, 14-16 August 2024, Sydney, NSW [Poster Presentation]

Guminski, A., 'A Randomised, Placebo-controlled, Phase II Trial of Adjuvant Avelumab in Patients with Stage I-III Merkel Cell Carcinoma', 2024 MOGA Annual Scientific Meeting, 16 August 2024, 1:30pm-1:40pm, Sydney, NSW [Oral Presentation]

Xu, W., 'A Randomised, Placebo-controlled, Phase II Trial of Adjuvant Avelumab in Patients with Stage I-III Merkel Cell Carcinoma', 8th Nordic / 1st European Merckel cell carcinoma Meeting, 20 September 2024, 10:00am-10:30am, Hamburg, Germany [Oral Presentation]

Tan, S., 'Statins and Progression of Coronary Atherosclerosis in Melanoma Patients Treated with Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors [SOCRATES]: Progress and Updates. CSANZ ASM 2024, 01-04 August 2024, Perth, Australia [Poster Presentation]

Nicholls, S., 'SOCRATES: Maintaining long term heart health in patients with melanoma treated with checkpoint inhibitors', MASC Trials 2024 Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Liu, J., 'NEOPECS: Neoadjuvant anti-PD1 and cetuximab in cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma', MASC Trials 2024 Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Guminski, A., 'The GoTHAM trial: Emerging systemic approaches for metastatic Merkel cell carcinoma', MASC Trials 2024 Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]



Khosrotehrani, K., 'SiroSkin trial: Reducing the burden of skin cancers in organ transplant recipients', MASC Trials 2024 Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Mar, V., 'Artificial intelligence implementation in skin cancer screening', MASC Trials 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Xu, W., 'I-MAT trial and Australasian Merkel Cell Carcinoma Interest Group', MASC Trials 2024 Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Lee, T. Evaluation of leg lymphoedema after inguinal and ilio-inguinal lymphadenectomy for melanoma [EAGLE FM study]. ASM 2024 Conference, 24 October 2024 [Oral presentation]

Ameratunga, M., 'BETTER trial: A new treatment combination for melanoma brain metastases', MASC Trials 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Joshua, A., 'Uveal Melanoma Registries: Seeking to collate, catalogue and curate', MASC Trials 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Guitera, P., 'Alternative treatment for lentigo maligna: review of evidence and the RADICAL trial', MASC Trials 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting, 24 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Oral Presentation]

Tan, S., 'Statins and Progression of Coronary Atherosclerosis in Melanoma Patients Treated with Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors [SOCRATES]: Progress and Updates. AMC 2024, 25-26 October 2024, Sydney, Australia [Poster Presentation]

Events

This year, MASC Trials united our community through events that fostered collaboration, education, and awareness. Highlights included our most successful Scientific Meeting, screenings of the award-winning documentary *Conquering Skin Cancer*, and the launch of AOMA Focus, each reinforcing our commitment to improving outcomes for people affected by melanoma and skin cancer.

“We’re grateful for the incredible support and feedback on our extended Scientific Meeting format, it truly reflects the value of bringing our community together.”

Prof Mark Shackleton
MASC Trials Chair

Scientific Meeting Highlights

Our 2024 Scientific Meeting, held on 24 October in Sydney as a satellite event of the Australasian Melanoma Conference, was our most successful yet – bringing together 124 attendees for a full day of collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The program featured two inspiring keynote speakers – Prof Dorothy Keefe and Prof Jacinta Elston – alongside 21 expert presenters who shared progress from our clinical trial program. Topics covered melanoma, skin cancer, Merkel cell carcinoma, uveal melanoma, primary and supportive care, research updates, and the consumer perspective.

A standout highlight was the six powerful presentations from consumers with lived cancer experience, which added a deeply personal dimension to the day. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with strong support for continuing this extended format in future meetings.

The day concluded with a networking event, providing an opportunity for attendees to connect and share insights in a relaxed setting.

We extend our sincere thanks to the sponsors who made this event possible:

Platinum – Medison

Gold – MSD

Silver – Bristol Myers Squibb and Canfield

Plans are already underway for our 2026 Scientific Meeting, which will again run as a satellite event of the Australasian Melanoma Conference at the Sofitel on Collins in Melbourne.



Parliamentary Friends of Melanoma & Skin Cancer Awareness

On 21 November, MASC Trials proudly supported the Parliamentary Friends of Melanoma & Skin Cancer Awareness – Start of Summer BBQ at Parliament House in Canberra, led by the Melanoma and Skin Cancer Advocacy Network (MSCAN).

The event brought together MPs, senators, consumers, industry representatives, and organisations to advocate for improved outcomes for people affected by melanoma and skin cancer. It was an important opportunity to strengthen collaboration, connect with members of the Australian Melanoma Skin Cancer Alliance, led by Alison Button-Sloan, and raise awareness at a national level.

We thank MSCAN Founder and Director Tamara Dawson, along with event co-chairs Federal Member for Gippsland Darren Chester and Minister for Education Jason Clare, for their leadership in making this initiative possible.

Hosting Screenings of *Conquering Skin Cancer*

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials partnered with Moonshine Agency to host two special screenings of the powerful and thought-provoking documentary *Conquering Skin Cancer*. The first screening on 8 December at Village Cinemas Geelong featured an insightful Q&A session with Dr Anna Lomax and Donna Standing from Barwon Health, alongside Prof Mark Shackleton and Gabrielle Byars. The second event, held on 11 December at Village Cinemas Rivoli in Hawthorn East, welcomed A/Prof Andrew Haydon from the Alfred Hospital for another engaging discussion.

Conquering Skin Cancer has earned glowing reviews and was honoured with an Award of Excellence, Special Mention: Documentary Feature at the Accolade Global Film Competition. This moving documentary shines a light on the fight against skin cancer and the people driving change.



AOMA Focus – Advancing Care for Ocular Melanoma

The Australasian Ocular Melanoma Alliance (AOMA) hosted its inaugural AOMA Focus in Hobart on 7 February, bringing together 29 experts from diverse disciplines—including ophthalmologists, medical and radiation oncologists, optometrists, pharmacists, medical researchers, nurses, and the MASC Trials team. Convened by A/Prof Louise Nott and AOMA Chair Prof Anthony Joshua, the event fostered collaboration and knowledge-sharing on advancements in treating this rare and aggressive cancer. The program featured presentations from Prof Mark Shackleton and Prof Anthony Joshua.

Participants praised the event for its highly valuable discussions and multidisciplinary approach. Plans are underway to create more opportunities for medical professionals to connect and drive progress in ocular melanoma care. A special thank you to Medison for sponsoring the event and supporting MASC Trials in delivering education and resources to Tasmanian clinicians caring for the ocular melanoma community.



Financial statement

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials Limited
ABN 70 626 908 512

Statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income for the period ended 30 June 2025.

	2025 \$
Revenue	176,546
Total Revenue	176,546
Administration	1,370
Events and travel	31,194
Information technology, including subscriptions	5,440
Insurance	6,925
Trial support services - CombiRT	5,020
Printing	7,150
Promotions	216
Total Expenses	57,315
ASSETS	
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	606,737
Accounts receivable	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	606,737
TOTAL ASSETS	606,737
LIABILITIES	
Accrued expense	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-
NET ASSETS	606,737
EQUITY	
Retained earnings	606,737
TOTAL EQUITY	606,737

The full Annual Financial Report and Directors Report for the year ending 30 June 2025, audited by Charterpoint, are available at www.acnc.gov.au/charity

Acknowledgments

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials recognises and thanks the many organisations that support our research. Their support has ensured our research continues to improve melanoma and skin cancer outcomes.

Academic Affiliate



Australian Funding Agencies and Institutions



Medical Research Future Fund (Department of Health, Disability and Aging)



AlfredHealth



Industry Partners



IMMUNOCORE



Pro Bono Suppliers



Jenny Dawes, Lawyer



Get involved



Become a Member

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials membership is open to anyone who has an interest in our melanoma and skin cancer clinical trials. Applying is simple and free.

As a Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials Member, you will join our network of 3,172 healthcare professionals, researchers and consumers who are committed to conquering melanoma and skin cancer through clinical trials. Your membership will also influence our Federal Government support and help us to expand our work that is improving how doctors prevent, diagnose, and treat melanoma and skin cancer.

Become a Member:

masc.org.au/membership



Become a corporate partner

Corporate support can take many forms. We work to ensure your partnership goals are met and that together, we produce an outcome that has real-world impact. Some ways in which we can work together include:

- Delivering new initiatives to improve the lives of melanoma and skin cancer patients
- Sponsorship of scientific events
- Support for a new or existing clinical trial
- Operational assistance through a pro bono service or product

Contact us to discuss partnership:

hello@masc.org.au



Participate in a clinical trial

Clinical trials are only possible thanks to the patients who agree to take part in research. Trials are essential for discovering new treatments for melanoma and skin cancer and they provide access to breakthrough medical treatments that may benefit patients with these cancers. Eligibility criteria apply.

Learn more:

www.masc.org.au/participate





Donate

Your donation will directly support our clinical trials

Help us to conquer melanoma and skin cancer

Every year, over 17,000 Australians are diagnosed with invasive melanoma and around 1,400 Australians will lose their life to this deadly cancer that can affect young and old.

Australian researchers have led the way in developing treatments for melanoma, and the last decade has seen remarkable breakthroughs. Clinical trials have played a critical part in this success.

The first wave of industry-driven innovation in melanoma and skin cancer treatments led by major pharmaceutical companies has receded. Although we now have a range of new therapies, we are still discovering how to optimally use these new treatments for patients and that is why our clinical trials are so important.

Giving Australians access to clinical trials

Thanks to the work of Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials over the past 25 years, more than 8,700 patients have accessed clinical trials that may have improved their quality of life, prevented them from undergoing debilitating treatments, and for some, given them more time with loved ones

More funding is urgently needed

High-quality clinical trials require significant and sustained financial investment to deliver real-world results. As a not-for-profit organisation, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials cannot rely on government funding alone. We need your help to improve the lives of melanoma and skin cancer patients. .

Donate to clinical trials

Your donation will directly support our clinical trials. You will be helping our world-leading researchers to improve melanoma and skin cancer outcomes, and to study innovative combined cancer treatments. Most importantly, you will be making a difference to the lives of melanoma and skin cancer patients across Australia and New Zealand.

Donate today at:

masc.org.au/donate



Donate to Ocular Melanoma Research

Ocular melanoma is a rare but often lethal form of melanoma that affects the eye. Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials commenced fundraising to support its ocular melanoma research and advocacy in late May 2024. Donations will help our world-leading researchers to improve ocular melanoma outcomes, study innovative treatments, and support clinical trials that improve the success of immunotherapy and help patients to retain vision.

Donate today at:

masc.org.au/donate-to-ocular-melanoma-research



“Knowing experts are working on this rare cancer and that your support makes it possible – gives me strength.”

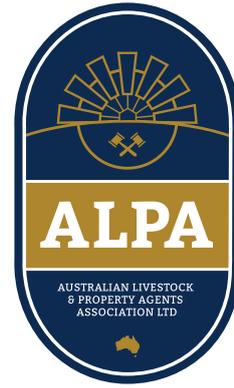
Michelle Taylor
Ocular Melanoma Patient



Our donors



**FOUNDATION
CLUB 100**



Celebrating major donors

Foundation Club 100 celebrates our first 100 major supporters who donate \$500 or above. These important donors are helping us to expand our clinical trials so that more Australians can benefit from medical advances in melanoma and skin cancer. We still have memberships available, so please consider joining Foundation Club 100 today, visit masc.org.au/foundation-club-100.

We sincerely thank the following people who have joined Foundation Club 100:

Aileen Boyd-Squires
Fiona Beale
Timothy Buckley
Gabrielle Byars
Marcelle Carr
Matthew Cook
Sandra Clark
Justin Ganly
Peter Hartnet
Noel Henderson
Mark Kalajzich
Stephen Kerr
George Kypreos
Stephen Longley
Prof Victoria Mar
Assoc Prof (Hon) Richard Martin

Anton Middendorp
David Morgan OAM
Ian Morrison
Jane Morrison
Kaitlyn and Will Nesbitt
John and Jackie Robson
Prof Mark Shackleton
Prof Andrew Spillane
Michelle Taylor
Dr Robert Teunisse
Craig and Heather Thomas
Mary Tsouvalakis
Sharon Van Buerle
Margaret Welton
Heidi Wieland

Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials was chosen as the 2024 charity by the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA), the national peak body representing over 1,200 agency businesses and handling more than 97% of rural agency business across Australia.

Two spirited charity auctions were held this year at ALPA events in Brisbane and Warrnambool:

Queensland Young Auctioneers Competition – 4 September 2024

Southern Young Auctioneers Competition – 13 October 2024

John Robson, an ALPA member and stock and station agent from Kyneton, Victoria, brought a deeply personal perspective to these events as he shared his experience with stage IV melanoma and the opportunity to participate in one of our immunotherapy trials. His story highlighted the importance of research and early detection.

With \$61,350 raised at the National and NSW Young Auctioneers' Dinner in Sydney on 21 March 2024, as noted in our last report, and a further \$82,664 raised this year through spirited charity auctions and donations from John's network, the ALPA community has brought their total support for MASC Trials to an incredible \$144,014, showcasing their unwavering generosity.

“This partnership not only raises vital funds but also shines a light on melanoma and skin cancer risks in regional communities – where awareness and early detection are critical.”

Peter Baldwin
ALPA CEO





Avène

Avène combined sun safety awareness with action, raising \$38,659 this year to support our clinical trials program. During November and December 2024, Avène donated \$1 from every Avène SunSitive® Sunscreen sold at Chemist Warehouse stores.

With one Australian diagnosed with melanoma every 30 minutes, this support is more important than ever. These funds will help advance world-leading research to improve prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of melanoma and skin cancer. Avène’s campaign not only raised vital funds but also reinforced key sun safety practices, including an SPF 50+ sunscreen application every two hours along with seeking shade, wearing sunglasses, sun-protective clothing and a broad-brimmed hat.

Melbourne Ladies Committee Inc.

The Melbourne Ladies Committee (MLC) Inc. is a passionate group dedicated to supporting charitable causes through fundraising and community events.

On 4 December 2024, MLC hosted its Annual Christmas Luncheon at the RACV City Club. The event was led by Chair Barbara Duff and supported by Kenneth Park as MC. Through generous donations and a spirited charity auction, the committee raised \$5,000 to support our clinical trials.

We extend our sincere thanks to Barbara, Kenneth, and the entire committee for their commitment, which helps ensure our research continues to improve outcomes for people affected by melanoma and skin cancer.

“We are deeply grateful to Avène for their generous support of our clinical trials program. Their support not only funds vital research but also helps raise awareness about the importance of sun safety in preventing melanoma and skin cancer.”

Gabrielle Byars,
CEO, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials

Formerly Australia and New Zealand Melanoma Trials Group

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