

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Medical Research



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VICTORIA LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILDHOOD CANCER

The Allan Labor Government will transform research into childhood cancer through targeted investment, earlier diagnosis and better treatments with the establishment of the Victorian Paediatric Cancer Consortium.

Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll this week made the announcement of the world-class research consortium, taking us one step closer to making lifesaving breakthroughs to fight, treat and cure childhood cancer. This continues Victoria's reputation as a global leader in paediatric cancer research.

The establishment of the Victorian Paediatric Cancer Consortium Limited (VPCC Ltd) is made possible by a \$35 million commitment from the Labor Government and \$10 million from the Children's Cancer Foundation.

The Consortium will be led by the inaugural CEO Dr Udani Reets and its new six Board of Directors. As a former executive of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Dr Reets brings a wealth of experience to her role and will be joined by former Federal Government Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy AC as Chair of the Board.

Since 2021, the Consortium has brought together the best and brightest minds from leading children's hospitals, research institutes and universities to undertake cutting-edge research to tackle childhood cancer. Every year more than 1,000 children in Australia are diagnosed with cancer and more than 100 children tragically lose the battle.

These partners include the Hudson Institute, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the Monash Children's Hospital, the Royal Children's Hospital, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and the Children's Cancer Foundation.

As part of the Labor Government investment, \$2.2 million will ensure launch the Consortium's initial program of work. This work includes 'biobanking' valuable biological specimens at the Monash Children's and Royal Children's Hospitals, critical to research, clinical trials and the development of innovative therapies.

It will also fund a Next Generation Precision Medicine Program at the Hudson Institute, using cutting-edge artificial intelligence to discover new treatments for paediatric cancer.

This investment continues Victoria's record of leading the way when it comes to cancer research, with the recently opened \$152 million Paula Fox Melanoma and Cancer Centre recently opening at the Alfred Hospital, and the Brain Cancer Centre's Brain Perioperative Clinical Trial Program boosting critical trial options for brain cancer patients.

These world-class cancer research centres are part of the Labor Government's record investment of more than \$1 billion in medical research over the last decade – establishing Victoria as a global hub for medical research, with a workforce of more than 30,000 driving incredible breakthroughs in treatment and patient care.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll

"Kids should be enjoying their childhood, not confined to a hospital bed – this new Consortium will revolutionise cancer research and treatment to give them the best chance to grow up happy, healthy and cancer-free."

"We're leading the way in paediatric cancer research – this commitment will ensure our world-class researchers can deliver lifesaving treatments and potentially cures to improve the lives of children around the world."

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Quote attributable to Victorian Paediatric Cancer Consortium CEO Dr Udani Reets

"By driving advancements in care, we will not only position Victoria as a global powerhouse in paediatric oncology, but also improve outcomes for children affected by cancer worldwide."

Quote attributable to Children Cancer Foundation CEO Ms Margaret Fitzherbert

"This is a very special moment for us, as parents and supporters of people impacted by childhood cancer. We are humbled by the extraordinary leaders and scientists that have joined us in the quest for better, kinder treatments and by the generous support of the Victorian Government."