



## Christmas for a Cure

### A message from Meg



Dear Friends,

The best gifts are hard to find, so are research breakthroughs. That's why this Christmas, we're asking you to give a gift of life-saving research to the **65,000 Australians diagnosed with a gastro-intestinal or a rare cancer this year.**

Our mission is to ensure that one day soon, families everywhere can celebrate Christmas without the fear of pancreatic, gastro-intestinal or rare cancers. Each gift will empower researchers to charge at warp speed. They will help fund critical research and revolutionary patient-centred clinical trials, directly benefiting individuals in need. Your support will aid the discovery and implementation of innovative and individualised treatments and therapies, improving outcomes

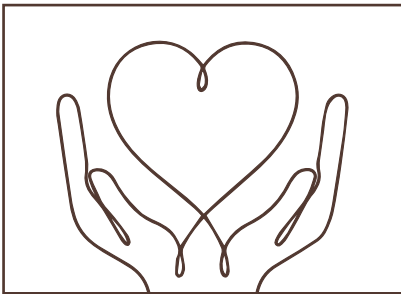
and survival rates today, and into the future.

If you are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer today, **the chance that you will still be alive in five years is just 11.5 %.** If you are diagnosed with a gastro-intestinal cancer, **there is just a 51% chance.**

Pancreatic, gastro-intestinal, and rare cancers are difficult to diagnose, and treatment options are limited —and this has not changed much for decades.

This Christmas, your gift can work to change that.

*Meg Croucher*  
WARP NINE CEO



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*"If I had believed the statistics, and some medical professionals, I wouldn't be standing here today. A wife, mother, daughter and friend."*

- Sarah Howard

## Sarah Howard's Story

I'm Sarah Howard; I'm a rare cancer survivor. In 2019, at 43 years-of-age, I was diagnosed with stage IV cervical cancer.

I didn't really have many symptoms, and it was a DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis) that first alerted me to something not being right. After a number of appointments and tests, a tumour was found on my ovary. The pathology that came back after surgery was surprising, it was cervical cancer, and it had spread.

That was three and half years ago, and if I had believed the statistics, and some medical professionals, I wouldn't be standing here today: a wife, mother, daughter and friend.

From the first meeting, my cancer treatment team treated me as curative. The approach they took saved my life. My cancer was rare and behaved differently to 'normal' cervical cancer, and because of that, they prescribed a treatment regime

that was not standard for my type of cancer and certainly not one offered routinely.

I had weekly chemo; I lost my hair, I slept for 18 hours a day, I was hospitalised for a week due to sickness and dehydration, I had numerous blood transfusions. I wanted to give up, but my treatment team were amazing and wouldn't let me. A scan six weeks into treatment showed I was in metabolic remission, giving me the strength and resolve to finish my treatment.

After 18 weeks of chemotherapy, I started immunotherapy, and I have been receiving this every two weeks since. My treatment team believed the immunotherapy was vital to ensure I remained disease free. This is not a standard treatment; most health insurance firms brand it as investigative and experimental. Therefore, available to very few.

I have been lucky enough to receive this life-saving treatment. **Today, I am present, healthy and cancer free. Without access to clinical trials and innovative thinking, I would not be.**



*Sarah Howard and her family.*



**Making a Difference**

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*"There was nothing specific for stomach cancer here in WA, until WARPINE, and very little nationally or abroad. It can be a very isolating experience.*

*I hope my story will give others the strength and hope needed to face the battle of stomach cancer."*

- Veronica King

## Veronica King's Story

Veronica King, lovingly known as Vee, was a fit and active retired nurse when she was diagnosed with stage 2 stomach cancer in 2017 at just 57 years young. After the shock of diagnosis, her cancer care team swung into action, instigating neoadjuvant chemotherapy before a total gastrectomy. The chemotherapy prescribed was, at the time, a first-line treatment for pancreatic and colon cancer, not stomach cancer. Vee's treatment team, however, believed that this course of action would give her the best chance of survival.

A total gastrectomy is a major procedure involving the complete removal of the stomach, nearby lymph nodes, parts of the oesophagus, small intestine, and other tissues near the tumour. The oesophagus is then connected directly to the small intestine. This leaves patients with a 'working digestive system' that still allows swallowing, eating and digesting food, but in a much different way.

For Vee, if the challenge of undergoing chemotherapy and life-altering surgery wasn't enough, learning how to eat again would be. Post-surgery, Vee was to continue chemotherapy, but in her weakened state, she could only endure two rounds.

A prolonged process, Vee had to change her pre-surgery eating habits completely. It was a balancing act between consistency, portion, frequency and flavour. Get the routine wrong, and the pain and discomfort would be crippling. It is only now, five years on, that Vee can eat most foods, but the journey has been anything but easy.

Thanks to Vee's treatment team and their innovative approach, Vee has not had any further cancer treatment since 2018 but is in regular consultation with dieticians and her GP to ensure her nutrition is up to scratch. She's back to her active and social lifestyle, enjoying spending time with her family and friends. "Life is busy, and my weeks are full; I have to remind myself to slow down, not be so physical and think of my body's needs."

Vee considers herself one of the 'lucky ones.' **Only 33.5% of stomach cancer patients reach the five-year survival mark.** Western Australian researchers have been pioneers in developing new and novel approaches to the treatment of gastro-intestinal cancers. This Christmas, you can help us charge at warp speed to find the cancer treatments of the future, sooner, and give hope to those in desperate need of a cure.

*"I still have to remind myself to eat slowly. I've taught myself to put down my knife and fork after every three or four mouthfuls and wait a few minutes. I have become very accustomed to eating cold food!!"*



## Arthur Livock's Story

At age 74, Arthur Livock was enjoying the important things in life. Growing older with his wife Wendy, enjoying time with their two children and four grandchildren, and having a swing of the golf club in his spare time.

Life was good. When the Red Cross was in desperate need of blood donations, Arthur rolled up his sleeves to contribute to the cause, an act of generosity that would end up saving his life.

The nurse who took his blood advised Arthur that they could not accept his donation – his haemoglobin count was too low. Concerning, but nothing too ominous one would imagine.

This innocent find triggered a series of events that led to Arthur being diagnosed with Stage 4 Pancreatic Cancer. There was a mass in his duodenum, and it had spread to his liver. It was March 2021.

After six months of a 'cocktail of chemotherapy' prescribed by his cancer care team, scans showed that the primary cancer was shrinking, but the liver lesions were still present. The next stage of the plan involved a combination of chemotherapy AND radiation. He was hospitalised several times, unable to keep food or liquids down, with dehydration becoming a significant issue. The treatment was taking its toll.

His beloved wife, Wendy, struggled to watch her husband of over 52 years take the hits required to fight pancreatic cancer. "I told Arthur that if he wanted to stop fighting, it was ok," she recalls. Arthur was not prepared to give up.

After twelve months of treatment, a PET scan revealed there was no evidence of disease (NED). No pancreatic cancer, no liver lesions. Nothing. At diagnosis, Arthur had been told his cancer was 'incurable'.

In November 2022, Arthur remains cancer free. He attributes this unbelievable outcome to the work of his cancer care team - but we think his resilience and positive mindset were very strong support acts.

When people are diagnosed with pancreatic, gastro-intestinal, or other rare cancers, hope can be hard to find. Survival rates are grim, and a short-term prognosis is what patients often face. With your support, we can change that. Donate to WARPINE to help fund advanced cancer research, trials and treatments, and give hope to others like Arthur, sooner.

*"I keep feeling like I shouldn't be here; I have been gifted another chance. I have been given time. And for that, I am forever grateful."*

- Arthur Livock

### Struggling to find the perfect gift?

How about a donation to urgently needed and life-changing research? It may not be what they're expecting, but a donation to WARPINE in your loved one's name is a gift unlike any other—a gift that will save lives.



Scan the QR Code to donate online today



*Merry Christmas*

WARPINE BOARD | 2022

On behalf of Dr Andrew Dean and the WARPINE Board, we wish you and your loved ones good health and a safe and joy filled festive season.