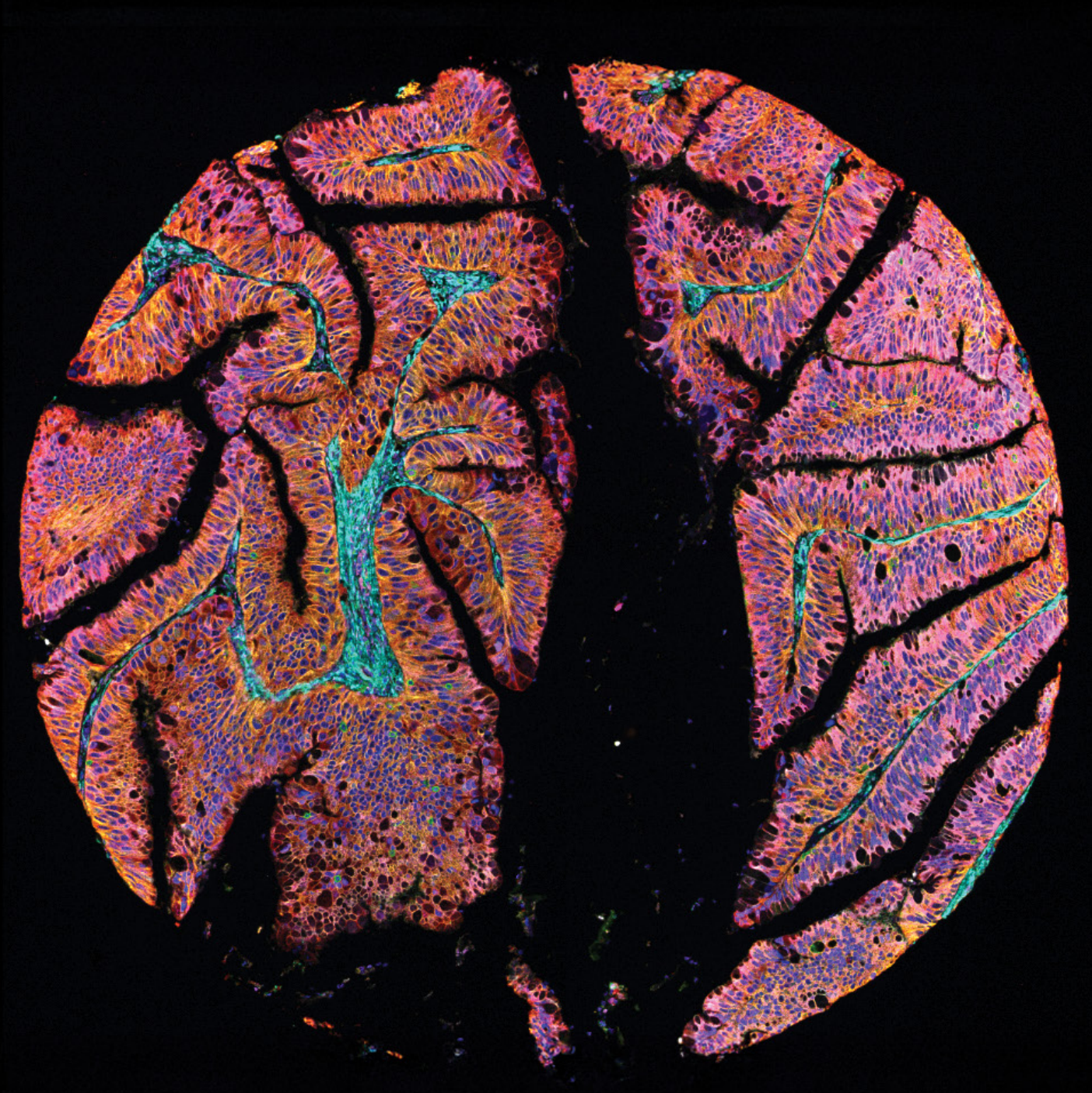
Garvan Institute
of Medical Research



Annual Report 2024

The Garvan Institute of Medical Research brings together world-leading researchers and clinicians, collaborating locally and globally, to advance our understanding of disease, particularly cancer, immune diseases and genetic disorders.

We see a future where all diseases can be prevented, treated or cured. Building on our scientific strengths in genomics, cancer and immunology, enabled by cutting-edge technology and world-class facilities, we will drive more of our discoveries to clinical and societal impact.

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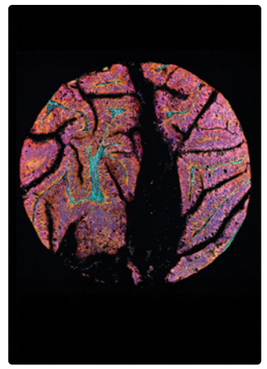


COVER IMAGE: Sample of an early-stage pancreatic cancer derived from precancerous intraductal papillary mucinous neoplasms

Photo credit: Henry Barraclough-Franks

Message from the Chair and Executive Director of the Garvan Institute

In 2024, Garvan launched a bold new strategic plan.

This strategy, building on the foresight of generations of researchers at Garvan, sharpens our focus on cancer, genomics and immunology. Alongside the fundamentals of breakthrough science, we are embarking on a wide-ranging programme of investment in key people and capabilities to translate that research into greater clinical impact. This will lead to novel therapeutic approaches and new medicines that have their origin in Garvan science.

Garvan's physical location and strategic partnerships as part of the St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct coupled with our affiliation with UNSW Sydney are important competitive advantages. Our research and translational ambitions dovetail neatly with those of the hospital and university, and we continue to build on these relationships.

The momentum of our science was reflected during the year by our outperformance in the awards of national medical research grants. Our researchers were recognised with the NSW Premier's Prize for Excellence in Medical Biological Sciences and the UNSW Eureka Prize awarded to Professor Stuart Tangye, and the Early Career Researcher of the Year in the NSW Premier's Prizes awarded to Dr Ira Deveson.

Garvan's future success, more than any other factor, will be determined by our team of more than 700 scientists, clinicians, students and support staff – united by a passion for discovery and a deep commitment to improving health for all.

Their work is enabled by a generous community of donors, partners and volunteers. Your passion and support remain vital to our mission, especially as financial sustainability continues to challenge independent institutes. We are especially grateful to our *Partners for the Future* whose investment will ensure a bright future for this great institution.

We welcomed Professor Merlin Crossley AM to our Institute Board, leading cancer biologist Dr Ankur Sharma to Garvan's Faculty, and Dr Rachel Galimidi as Head of the new Development and Biologics Platforms, strengthening our technological and translational capabilities. We extend our thanks to retiring Directors Ms Jillian Segal AO, Dr Helen Nugent AC and Professor Philip Cunningham OAM.

To all Garvan staff, students and community – our Garvan family – in what has been a watershed year, we recognise your continued focus and determination. At Garvan, we see a future where all diseases can be prevented, treated or cured. With your enduring support, it's within reach.

Scott Perkins
Chair

Professor Benjamin Kile
Executive Director

> **Together, we are pushing the boundaries of medical research.**

Message from the Chair and Director of the Garvan Research Foundation

The Garvan Research Foundation was founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1981 with a dedicated purpose to support the Institute and communicate the importance of its work. Fully integrated within the Institute, and performing the function of marketing, fundraising and public engagement, every dollar raised is transferred to the Institute.

2024 was a year that demonstrated the immense generosity and vision of the Garvan family with record-breaking contributions of $57 million to accelerate Garvan's critical medical research. This philanthropic investment is vital to Garvan's ability to attract and retain brilliant scientific talent, to establish and develop globally competitive technological capabilities, and to make the discoveries today that will see a future where all diseases can be prevented, treated or cured.

The launch of Garvan's new strategic plan provides an exciting opportunity to galvanise our remarkable community of supporters around our strengths in cancer, genomics and immunology, as well as the expansion of Garvan's capabilities in biologics and data science, which will accelerate scientific discoveries into real world impacts. Support for Garvan Faculty in the form of philanthropic fellowships and programmatic funding remains a firm priority.

Through our public engagement program, we were thrilled to welcome more than 5,000 visitors to public tours, seminars and events. These occasions provided valuable opportunities to showcase the extraordinary work happening inside our laboratories and foster meaningful discussions about medical research and the future of health. We also launched the second season of Garvan's podcast series, Medical Minds.

As we look ahead, we're energised by the opportunity to expand our reach and impact, guided by our Foundation Board of Directors' expertise and passion. To every member of the Garvan family – thank you for believing in the power of medical research. We are privileged to have your enduring support and advocacy, and excited for Garvan's bright future.

Dr Russell Scrimshaw AM
Chair

Mara-Jean Tilley
Director

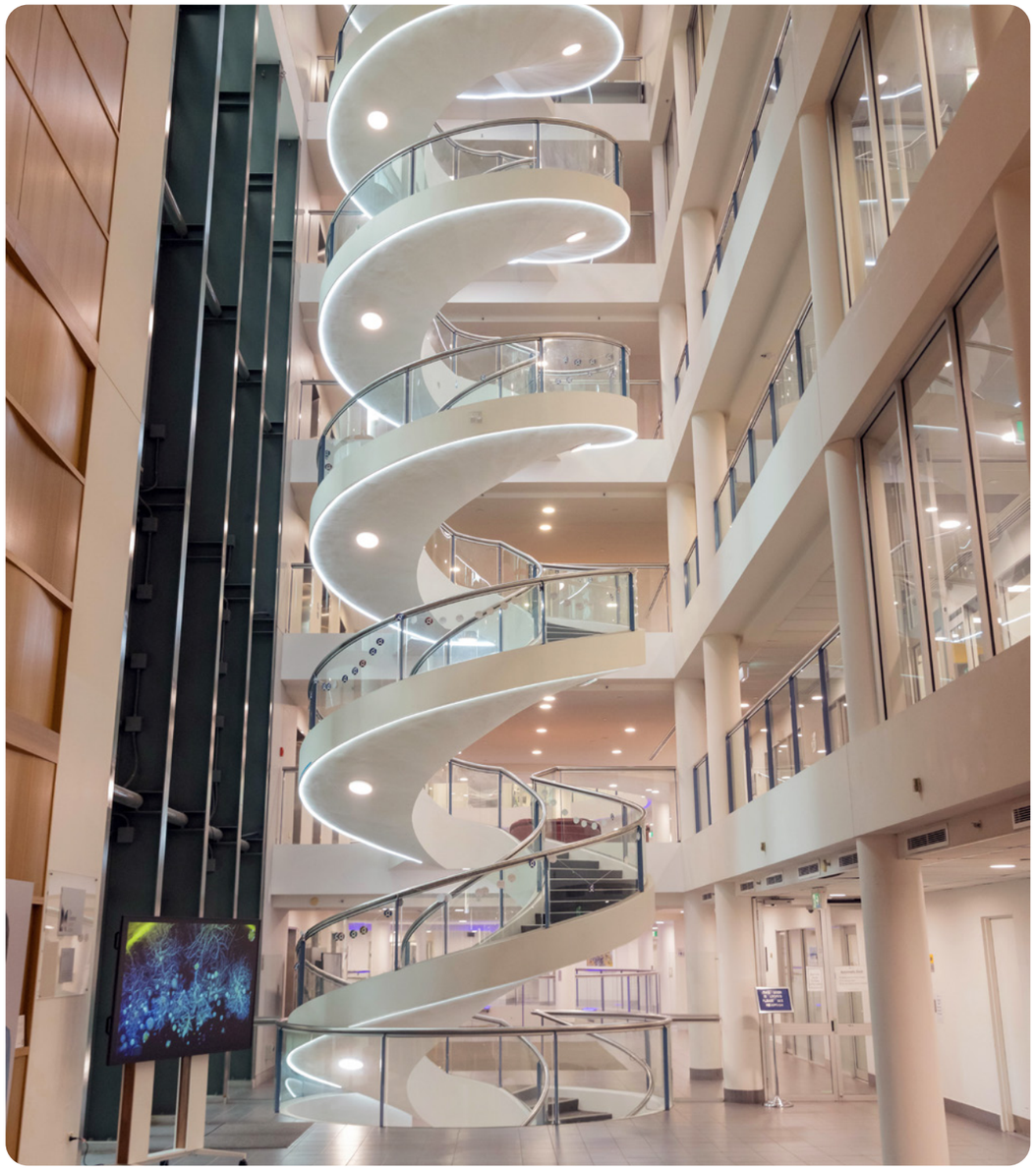
> **To every member of the Garvan family – thank you for making our critical work possible.**

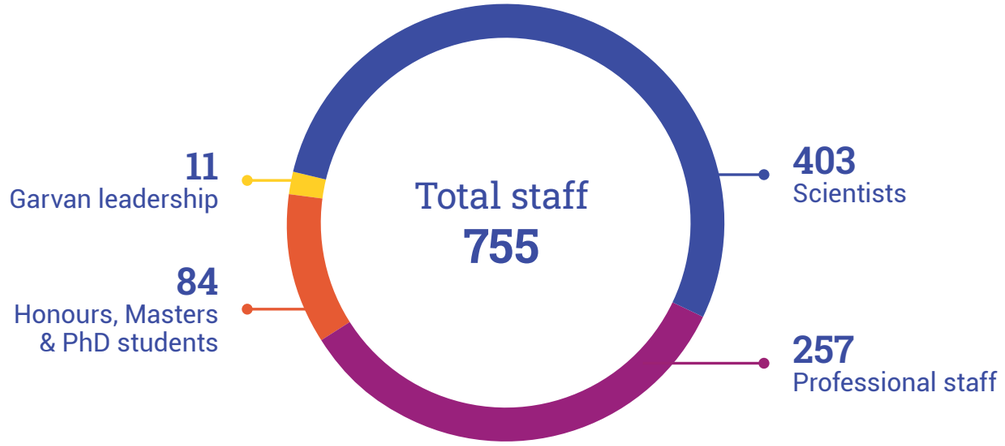
2024 at a Glance

At Garvan, we see a future where all diseases can be prevented, treated or cured.

Garvan is one of Australia's largest independent medical research institutes, built on a foundation of more than 60 years of pioneering research. We bring together world-leading scientists and clinicians, all driven by a passion – to make discoveries and translate them into impact for patients.

In 2024, our researchers made breakthroughs in pancreatic and breast cancers, cancer immunotherapy and autoimmune disease, and in how structural and epigenetic changes to DNA are linked to disease. We launched and progressed clinical trials and studies in cancer, cardiovascular and neurodegenerative disease and metabolic disorders.





412
scientific papers published

20
clinical trials launched or progressed

22
PhD completions

58
academic promotions

$67M
peer-reviewed research grants, fellowships and scholarships awarded

$57M
in philanthropic funding

7300+
media mentions across print, radio, TV and online

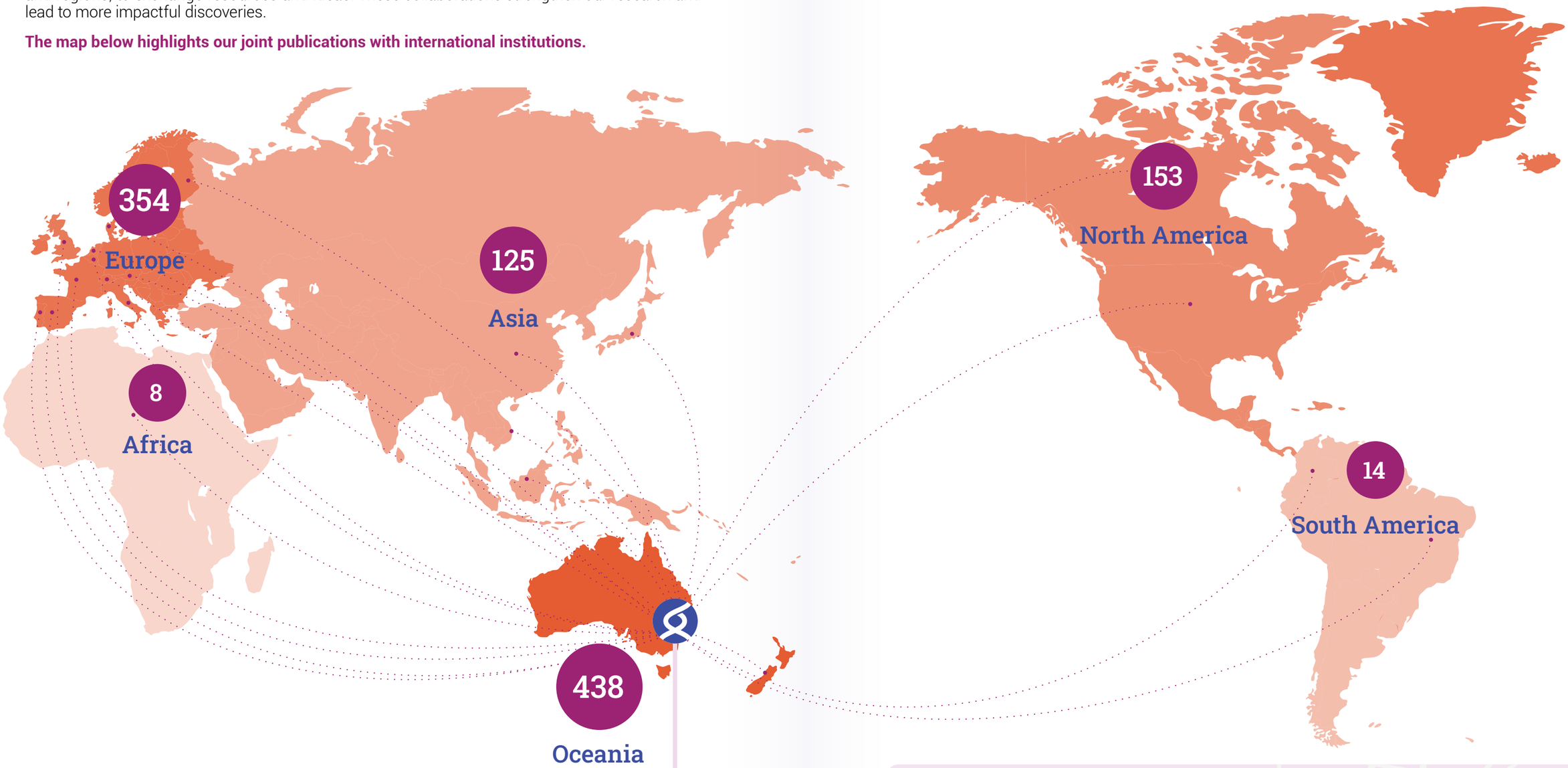
5100+
attended our public seminars and tours

Collaborations

Our global reach

Collaboration is essential for driving groundbreaking science that transforms our understanding of disease. At Garvan, we collaborate globally with experts from diverse disciplines, institutions and regions, to exchange resources and ideas. These collaborations strengthen our research and lead to more impactful discoveries.

The map below highlights our joint publications with international institutions.



Garvan is a cornerstone member of the St Vincent's Sydney Health Innovation Precinct, Australia's oldest and most established health partnership, and is proudly affiliated with UNSW Sydney.

Accelerating Discovery, Empowering Translation

2025-2028 Strategic Plan

In November 2024, Garvan unveiled its bold vision for the future with the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan *'Accelerating Discovery, Empowering Translation'*.

The strategy is centred around our scientific strengths in cancer, genomics and immunology and focuses on five key priorities.

Our Five Key Priorities

- Discovery
- Translation
- Development
- Engagement
- Institutional Sustainability

> **Our Strategic Plan is designed to empower our greatest asset – our people – by fostering a world-class culture of ambition, creativity, rigour and excellence.**

Professor Benjamin Kile, Garvan Executive Director

Discovery

We conduct medical research that turns public support into public knowledge.

Without new knowledge, progress in combating disease is impossible. Garvan's great strength is fundamental biomedical science, beginning with the human genome. As an institute, we embrace creativity and rigour to drive discovery and innovation. We seek to understand essentials, to question paradigms and to generate new understanding of human development and disease.

Our clear and ambitious research vision will advance our three core areas of scientific focus: cancer, genomics and immunology. We will cultivate depth and breadth in our research to ensure it has impact. We will strengthen and enhance the culture and environment that enables us to attract, develop and retain an exceptional research workforce. Our cutting-edge technologies and systems will empower our researchers to achieve transformative scientific breakthroughs.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

Dr Ankur Sharma was appointed to Garvan's Faculty, **bringing world-class expertise in cancer biology** and a well-established clinical translation program in liver cancer.

We established the Biologics Platform to accelerate the **discovery and development of next-generation protein-based therapies,** and the Development Platform to drive translation and commercialisation projects from concept to clinical application.

Dr Rachel Galimidi, an internationally-renowned scientist and biotechnology leader with extensive expertise in **antibody-based therapies,** was announced as Head of the Biologics and Development Platforms.

Translation

We will translate knowledge into improved prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease.

Collaborations are critical to advancing bold ideas. As part of our strategy, we will develop the framework, capability, policies and governance to drive more effective business development and commercialisation of Garvan research. This will include building constructive industry partnerships to drive translation and help us realise impact from our scientific discoveries. We will continue to evaluate and prioritise our intellectual property and patent portfolios to ensure we engage industry partners around our highest-potential discoveries.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

In May 2024, Garvan and Illumina, a global genomics and human health company, partnered on the TenK10K project, a $27m endeavour to help **transform the treatment of complex diseases, including autoimmune diseases, heart diseases and cancer.**

The Biologics Platform synthesised and produced the first antibodies for Garvan researchers, **advancing new therapeutic approaches for cancers and autoimmune disease,** as well as supporting basic research projects.

Development

We will educate, train and develop world-class researchers and professionals who will become the leaders of the future.

Garvan's diverse group of staff, students and volunteers have a remarkably broad range of skills and expertise, all of which are required to enable our research and translation efforts. We take pride in the meaningful nature of our work and are committed to excellence in everything we do. We value and respect every individual and seek to unite researchers and professionals in pursuit of our mission. As part of our strategy, we will nurture a positive and inclusive culture providing every member of the Garvan community with the opportunity to flourish. We are committed to creating an enabling environment that values and supports training and development, ensuring our team members have the resources and encouragement they need to grow and succeed.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

We achieved **reductions in both our average total remuneration gender pay gap** to 14.4% (from 18.6% in 2023) **and in our median total remuneration pay gap** to 5.8% (from 13.1% in 2023), which were significantly below our industry comparison group figures.

Reflecting our commitment to gender equality, two out of three Faculty appointments in 2024 were women. We also **strengthened female representation in leadership**, achieving 50% women in our leadership team.

We **established new promotion pathways** for early- and mid-career researchers, providing clearer processes to support their career progression.

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Engagement

We will engage, inspire and educate the community to deepen the understanding and impact of Garvan's work and medical research more broadly.

Garvan is fortunate to have a deep, longstanding and authentic relationship with the community. We will build and expand on this vibrant community support base to strengthen our initiatives and deliver on our mission of health impact.

We will actively engage with the medical research sector and government to ensure collaboration, growth and impact in health research.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

More than **5,100 visitors** attended Garvan's public seminars and tours.

Garvan continued its engagement with government, through meeting with policymakers and formal submissions to state and federal entities, **advocating for the advancement of the medical research sector.**

Institutional sustainability

We will strengthen and enhance the systems that support our mission and enable a high-performing, ever-evolving research culture that drives extraordinary science.

Medical research is a challenging and often unpredictable quest. As part of our strategy, we will establish a robust financial model that can navigate the inevitable peaks and troughs of medical research funding to provide our researchers with an environment that facilitates discovery and ensures they can pursue major scientific problems over the long term.

We will develop a long-term vision for Garvan's premises, centred on an understanding of our current and future workforce, that will ensure that our research can grow and thrive for the decades to come.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

We launched the IT transformation project to **streamline ways of working, fostering greater collaboration and more efficient use of IT resources.**

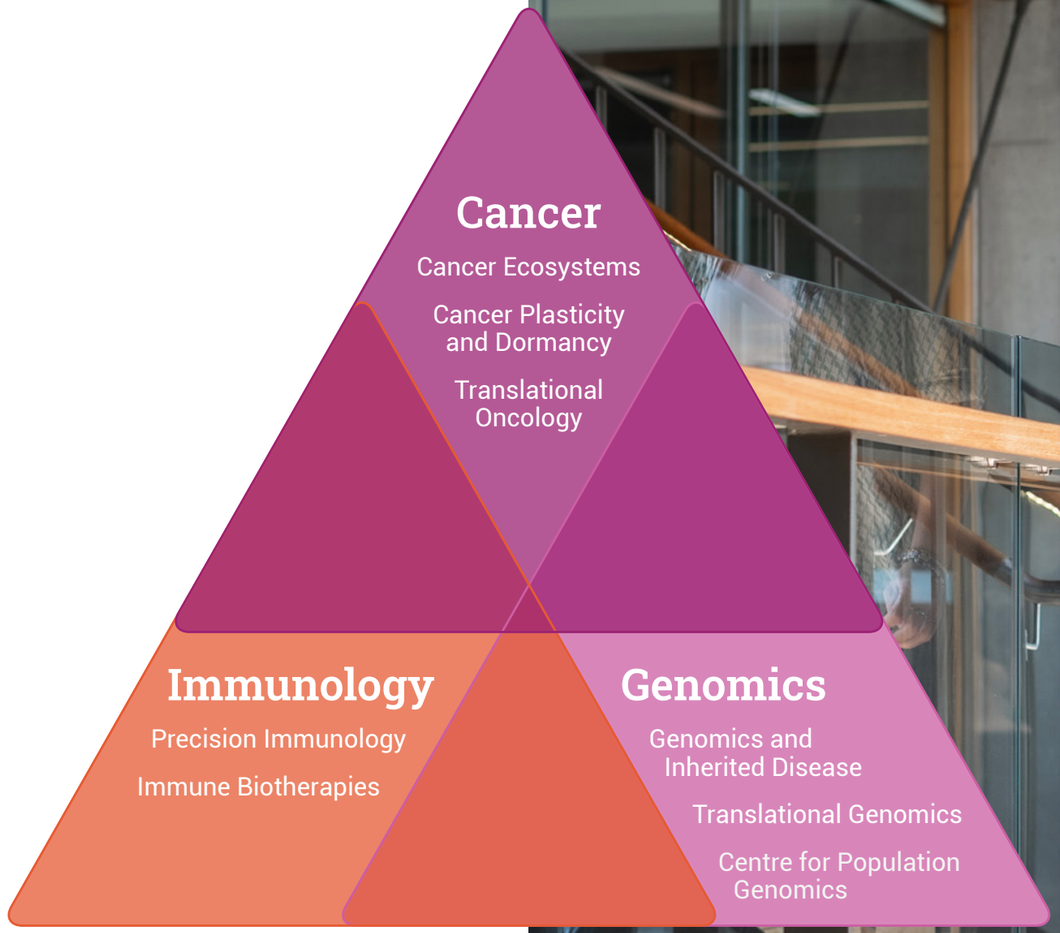
We implemented **revised risk reporting protocols** for the Institute to improve how we assess, manage and monitor risks to the Institute's standing or financial sustainability.

Read more about our vision in our Strategic Plan – *Accelerating Discovery, Empowering Translation.*

garvan.org.au/strategic-plan

Our Research Focus

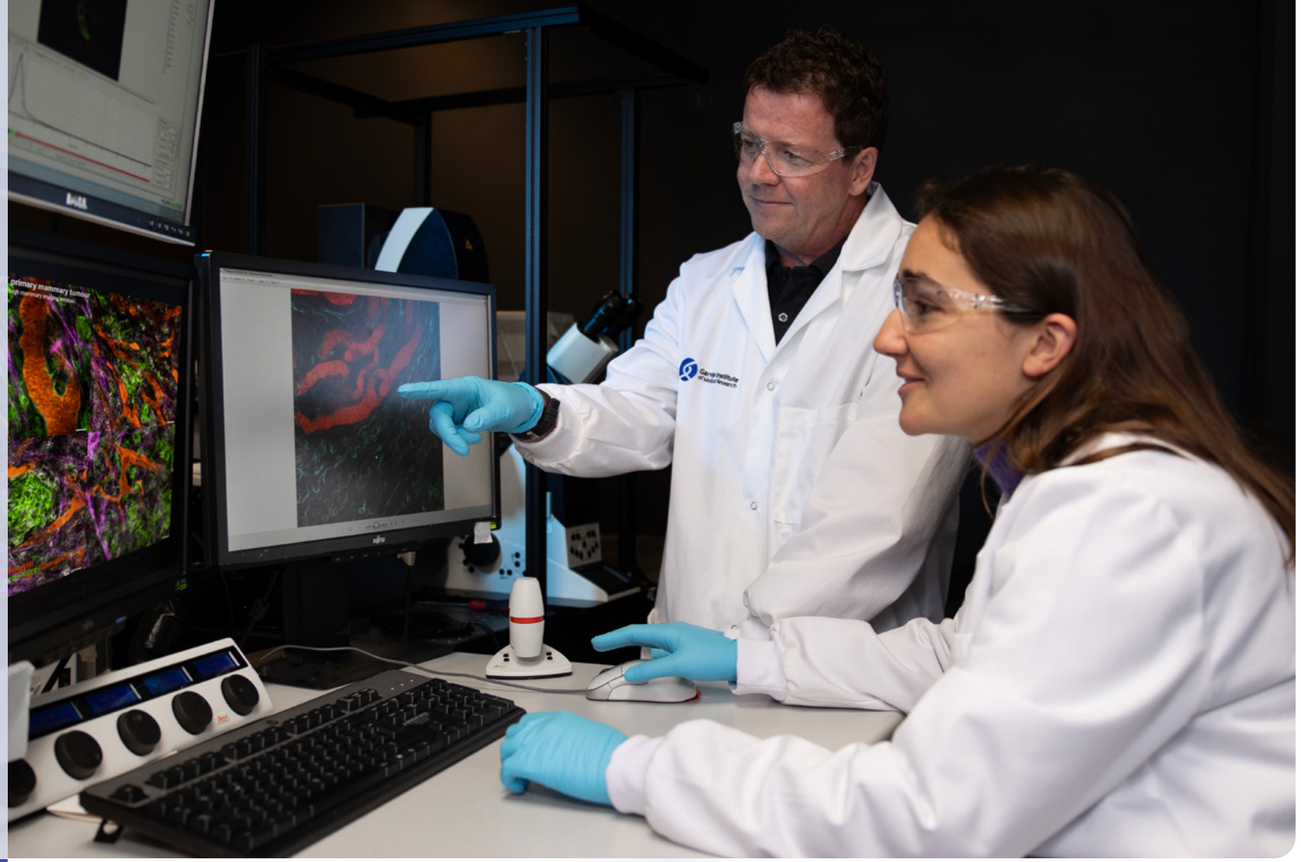
Our research strategy drives extraordinary science with a transformative impact on health.



Cancer

Our mission is to enable a future where all cancers can be effectively treated, controlled or prevented.

In 2024, Garvan's cancer researchers investigated multiple cancer types, predominantly focusing on breast, pancreatic, multiple myeloma, liver, uveal melanoma and prostate cancer.



The Kinghorn Cancer Centre

The Kinghorn Cancer Centre (TKCC) is a landmark partnership between Garvan and St Vincent's Hospital Sydney and represents a cornerstone of the St Vincent's Health Innovation Precinct. By uniting researchers, clinicians and patients under one roof, TKCC accelerates the translation of cutting-edge discoveries into personalised cancer treatments. TKCC houses one of the busiest Phase 1 clinical trials units in the country and is the head of the New South Wales Phase 1 clinical trials consortium, known as NECTA.

With a strong focus on genomics, clinical trials and compassionate care, TKCC is reshaping cancer outcomes across New South Wales and beyond. The Centre is poised to expand its impact and capabilities and strengthen its position as a world-class research hub for innovation, collaboration and next-generation cancer care.

Garvan acknowledges the unparalleled support of The Kinghorn Foundation in the establishment of TKCC and we extend our gratitude to the family for their significant investment in breakthrough medical research.

305
staff and students

23
labs and groups

119
research papers published

$13.5M+
secured in new peer-reviewed grants

57
active clinical trial collaborations

Our Research Programs

Cancer Ecosystems

Co-Directors
Professor Alexander Swarbrick and Professor Paul Timpson

Cancers develop within a complex ecosystem of cells that can determine how a tumour grows and responds to therapy. The Cancer Ecosystems Program is using advanced genomic, proteomic, imaging and epigenomic technologies to understand cellular relationships and build high resolution molecular 'maps'. This is allowing researchers to discover and develop new diagnostic tests and cancer treatments targeting this ecosystem, including fibrosis, which is a major barrier to current therapies. The program's primary focus areas are breast, prostate and pancreatic cancers.

IN 2024

The researchers investigated the composition of cells and tissue in and around cancers, making breakthrough discoveries in how changes in the supporting tissue of cancers influence therapeutic resistance and the activity of immune cells. These findings have given rise to multiple potential biomarkers, treatment strategies and new drug targets, which the team are in the process of testing.

Cancer Plasticity and Dormancy

Co-Directors
Associate Professor Christine Chaffer and Professor Peter Croucher

The spread of cancer to distant sites throughout the body is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths. The focus of the Cancer Plasticity and Dormancy Program is to study cancer cells that have disseminated around the body, which are the seeds of relapse and the origin of metastatic disease. By investigating the intricate relationship between cancer cells, the bone microenvironment and the immune system, the researchers aim to solve the clinical challenge posed by cancer metastasis.

IN 2024

We used the most sophisticated technology to isolate and study disseminated cancer cells in the bone of breast and multiple myeloma cancer patients. We discovered potential therapeutic vulnerabilities that are currently being tested in the laboratory. Through our close clinical and consumer collaborations, our goal now is to translate these preclinical discoveries into curative treatments for cancer patients.

Translational Oncology

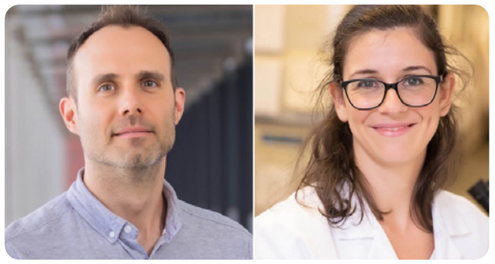
Co-Directors
Professor Anthony Joshua and Professor Marina Pajic

The focus of the Translational Oncology Program is to transform the future of cancer care using a precision medicine approach. Enabled by a vast clinical collaboration network, the researchers are using sophisticated analytical technologies to drive a deeper understanding of how cancers evolve and how they evade destruction. The team is exploiting this understanding to develop new treatments for cancer, with an initial focus on diseases with the poorest prognoses, including pancreatic, breast, prostate cancers and ocular melanoma.

IN 2024

We generated a new understanding of the mechanisms behind clinical treatment failure, identified new targets and built effective systems for translation of Garvan-led advances from 'bench to bedside'. Our integrated team of leading cancer researchers and clinical oncologists advanced pre-clinical findings into clinical trials to improve outcomes for patients and their families.

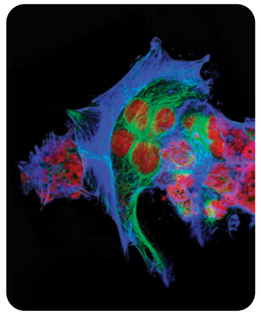
Research highlights



ABOVE: Professor Thomas Cox and Dr Elysse Filipe

Softer tumours fuel more aggressive spread of triple-negative breast cancer

Why do some breast cancers spread more aggressively than others? Research led by Professor Thomas Cox has shown that the physical softness of triple-negative breast tumours can prime cancer cells to survive and spread more easily. Using biomaterials that mimic tumour stiffness, his team found that cells from softer environments were up to 11.8 times more likely to metastasise in mouse models than those from stiffer tumours.



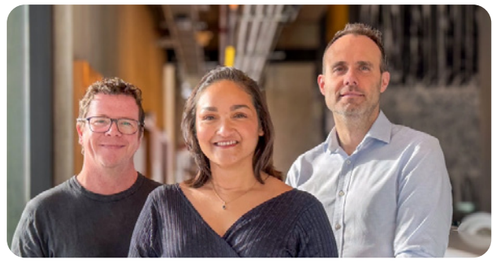
ABOVE: Triple-negative breast cancer cell

Triple-negative breast cancer is aggressive and difficult to treat due to the absence of hormone and HER2 receptors. The study, published in *Advanced Science*, revealed that cells in soft tumours undergo a metabolic shift, stockpiling lipids for energy and activating both glucose and lipid metabolic pathways. This metabolic flexibility allows cells to better survive the stress of detaching from the primary tumour, travelling through the bloodstream and forming new tumours in distant organs.

Inhibiting lipid metabolism in these 'primed' cells meant they were less able to metastasise. The findings suggest that targeting metabolic adaptations could improve treatment for the 2,500 Australians diagnosed each year with this cancer type.

Future work will explore combining metabolism-targeting drugs with existing therapies. The study highlighted how tumour mechanics can influence disease progression and may lead to more tailored treatment strategies for metastatic triple-negative breast cancer.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/breast-cancer



ABOVE: Professor Paul Timpson, Dr Brooke Pereira and Professor Thomas Cox

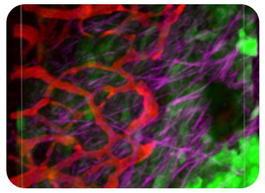
Nidogen-2 identified as treatment target in pancreatic cancer

A molecule called nidogen-2 has been identified as a potential driver of pancreatic cancer progression and spread, offering a promising new therapeutic target. In a study led by Dr Brooke Pereira, Professor Thomas Cox and Professor Paul Timpson, the molecule was found to be elevated in highly metastatic tumours and a contributor to the dense tumour matrix that hinders treatment. Using CRISPR gene editing, the team reduced nidogen-2 levels in mouse models, which led to smaller tumours, improved blood vessel function and enhanced drug delivery.

Pancreatic cancer has a low five-year survival rate and is often diagnosed at an advanced stage. The tumour's dense extracellular matrix limits the effectiveness of chemotherapy. The research team used a technique called tissue decellularisation to isolate tumour scaffolding and identify molecules influencing disease progression.

In models with reduced nidogen-2, chemotherapy was more effective and metastatic spread to the liver was significantly reduced. The findings suggest that targeting nidogen-2 could enhance current treatments and potentially improve survival outcomes.

Development of clinical tools such as antibodies against nidogen-2 is underway. These could be combined with chemotherapy or immunotherapy to address pancreatic cancer's treatment resistance.



ABOVE: Microscopic view inside mouse model of pancreatic cancer tumour

This work, published in *Science Advances*, was recognised with the Matrix Biology Society of Australia and New Zealand (MBSANZ) MCR Paper of the Year 2024.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/new-target

ABOVE: Dr Joanna Achinger-Kawecka

Epigenetic therapy shows promise for endocrine-resistant breast cancer

Researchers demonstrated how a specific epigenetic change drives resistance to hormone therapy in breast cancer – and how it might be reversed using an existing drug.

Endocrine resistance is a major reason why oestrogen receptor-positive (ER+) breast cancers stop responding to treatment. In 2020, Garvan researchers linked this resistance to DNA methylation – a process that alters the 3D structure of DNA, silencing oestrogen receptor genes and allowing tumours to grow without the hormone.

Now, the same team has shown that this methylation can be reversed using the epigenetic therapy drug decitabine. In mouse models, decitabine removed methyl groups from key regulatory regions, restored DNA structure, reactivated oestrogen receptor and tumour suppressor genes and reduced tumour growth – increasing survival time by 90%.

Led by Associate Professor Clare Stirzaker, Dr Joanna Achinger-Kawecka and Professor Susan Clark, and published in *Nature Structural & Molecular Biology*, the study offers a potential new treatment for the 4,000 Australians diagnosed each year with endocrine-resistant breast cancer.

RIGHT: Associate Professor Clare Stirzaker

Decitabine is already approved for certain blood cancers. The researchers plan to test it in combination with hormone therapy in a future Phase 1 clinical trial – a step they hope could change the outlook for patients with this hard-to-treat cancer.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/epigenetic-therapy

AI uncovers cancer-driving mutations in non-coding DNA

What if the key to treating cancer lies in the 98% of our DNA we once dismissed as 'junk' because it doesn't contain instructions for making protein? A study led by Dr Amanda Khoury and Professor Susan Clark has used artificial intelligence to uncover mutations in 'non-coding' DNA that may drive at least 12 cancers, including prostate, breast and colorectal – revealing a potential universal approach to diagnosis and treatment.

The study, published in *Nucleic Acids Research*, focused on mutations affecting binding sites for a protein called CTCF, which helps fold DNA into specific shapes. Researchers found that certain CTCF binding sites act as 'persistent anchors' in the genome across different cell types, and disruption of these anchors could contribute to cancer development.

Using a new machine learning tool called CTCF-INSITE, the team analysed over 3,000 tumour samples and found that every cancer sample had at least one mutation in a persistent CTCF binding site. This suggests these mutations give cancer cells a survival advantage.

Because these CTCF anchors are mutated across multiple different cancer types, the findings could open possibilities for developing a more universal approach to cancer diagnosis and treatment. Researchers are now planning further experiments using CRISPR gene editing to investigate how these anchor mutations disrupt the 3D genome.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/junk-dna

BELOW: Dr Amanda Khoury and Professor Susan Clark

Osteoporosis drug trial to rebuild myeloma-damaged bone

ABOVE: Professor Peter Croucher

A clinical trial is investigating whether romosozumab – a drug approved for osteoporosis – can help repair bone damage caused by multiple myeloma, not just prevent it. Led by Dr Georgia McCaughan, Professor Peter Croucher and Professor Tri Phan, the study is exploring the drug's potential to restore bone health in the around 80% of patients whose bones have been weakened by this incurable blood cancer.

Romosozumab works by inhibiting sclerostin, a protein that blocks bone formation and is elevated in myeloma. Previous preclinical studies in mouse models showed that blocking sclerostin increased bone density and regeneration. The trial's aim is to determine whether these effects can be replicated in humans.

The study is enrolling patients with bone damage despite receiving bone-preserving treatments such as bisphosphonates or denosumab. Participants will receive monthly doses of romosozumab along with calcium and vitamin D supplements, with outcomes monitored over a two-year period.

Researchers are also using single-cell sequencing to observe how the bone marrow environment responds to treatment. These insights could help tailor future bone-targeted therapies for myeloma patients.

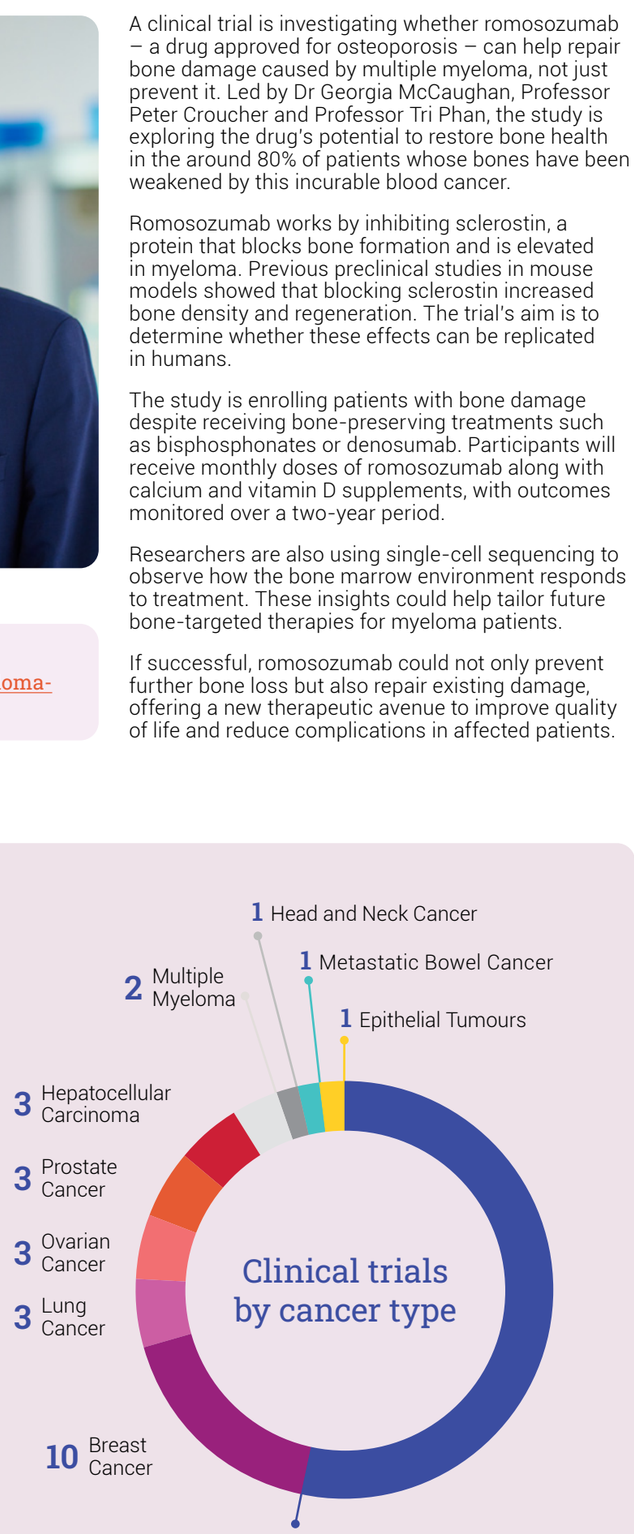
If successful, romosozumab could not only prevent further bone loss but also repair existing damage, offering a new therapeutic avenue to improve quality of life and reduce complications in affected patients.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/myeloma-bone-disease

Collaborating on clinical trials

Enabled by Garvan's extensive clinical collaboration network across St Vincent's Hospital Sydney and others, our researchers contributed to more than 50 clinical trials in 2024 to advance their research from bench to beside.

These trials spanned new treatment approaches for several cancers, including cancers of the pancreas, breast, liver, lung, ovary and prostate.



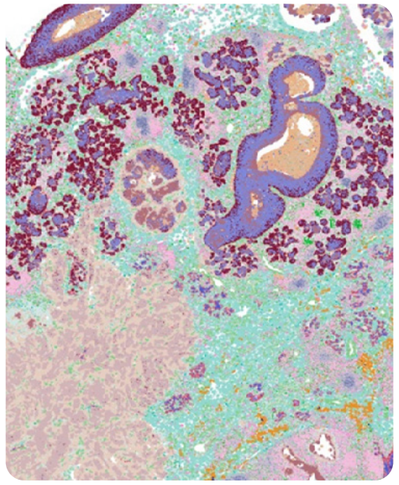
ABOVE: Professor Alexander Swarbrick

Breast Cancer Cellular Atlas

A global initiative led by Professor Alexander Swarbrick at Garvan, the Breast Cancer Atlas Consortium is creating the world's most detailed single-cell and multi-omic map of breast cancer and its surrounding ecosystem. In 2024, researchers completed the key milestone of single-cell RNA sequencing more than one million cells from more than 200 breast cancer patients who donated tissue to our research. The project also received a major four-year international grant, significantly expanding its scope and accelerating efforts to understand the disease at a cellular level – with the ultimate goal of improving the diagnosis, treatment and outcomes of breast cancer.

BELOW: Spatial transcriptomic analysis of breast cancer tissue reveals tumour heterogeneity.

Credit: Sophie van der Leij, PhD student in the Swarbrick Lab



Read more
garvan.org.au/breast-cancer-cell-atlas

Paspaley and Garvan partner to advance cancer research

Paspaley is more than a creator of exquisite jewellery – since 2016, it has been a critical partner in the pursuit of Garvan's groundbreaking cancer research, generously contributing 20% of the proceeds from each sale of its elegant Kimberley bracelet.

In 2024, this partnership reached a remarkable milestone, with donations nearing $3 million. Paspaley's continued generosity has played a crucial role in advancing cancer research and has helped identify treatment recommendations for more than 4,000 cancer patients.

By supporting Garvan's cutting-edge work, Paspaley is helping Garvan researchers unravel the complex cellular mechanisms driving different cancers and fast-track the development of more effective, targeted treatments that are tailored to the DNA of individual tumours or patients.

The exclusive Kimberley bracelet collection combines hand-selected Australian South Sea pearls with regional, aromatic sandalwood for a wearable, timeless style.

PASPALEY

BELOW: Professor Benjamin Kile with the Executive Director of Paspaley Jewellery, Chris Paspaley

Genomics

Our mission is to accelerate the diagnosis and treatment of inherited disease and develop innovative new therapies for some of the most prevalent conditions facing society today.

In 2024, we developed research pipelines that connect genomic discovery to clinical application, advancing diagnoses and treatments for cancer and immune disease, and laying the foundation for more equity in genomics research.

156
staff and students

17
labs and groups

142
research papers published

$27M+
secured in new peer-reviewed grants

Our Research Programs

Genomics and Inherited Disease

Co-Directors
Associate Professor Jodie Ingles and Associate Professor Owen Siggs

The Genomics and Inherited Disease Program is paving the way for a precision medicine approach to patient care, by identifying the genetic causes of disease. Using state-of-the-art genomic sequencing and analysis approaches, we are identifying genetic drivers in rare diseases of the immune system, heart, eyes, kidney and brain.

IN 2024

We developed a research pipeline that leverages key strengths across Garvan to maximise the likelihood of making new genetic diagnoses and improve access to research opportunities, with the aim to lead to better patient care.

This is evident through the Genomics of Rare Disease Registry, where we have successfully recruited 300 participants across Australia, hoping to expand our reach to connect participants to new research, potential therapeutics and clinical trials. Enabled by our key scientific strengths in data, genomics, cellular, translational and clinical science, we are now working to translate research from fundamental discovery to clinical impact.

Translational Genomics

Director
Professor Joseph Powell

While our DNA acts in individual cells, it does not act the same way in every cell. The Translational Genomics Program is using cellular genomics to reveal new cell subtypes and genetic elements that underpin disease. By profiling single cells from thousands of people, we are uncovering new knowledge on the genetic causes of complex diseases, such as brain, liver and colorectal cancer, autoimmune disease and neurodegenerative disorders.

IN 2024

We established a coherent translational pipeline connecting single-cell discovery, multi-omics biomarker development and drug testing – positioning Garvan at the forefront of precision immunology and oncology.

We deep-sequenced thousands of patients and paired the data with stem cell models to create a drug testing platform that is already steering target optimisation for rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease and multiple cancers. Capitalising on these datasets and a biobank at St Vincent's Hospital, we revealed cellular and microbial signatures in inflammatory bowel disease that have pinpointed early biomarkers for colorectal cancer and checkpoint-inhibitor colitis, to stratify patients and personalise therapy. We also identified 'oncofoetal' cell populations in lung, colon and brain tumours – a discovery that is set to transform the design of immunotherapies.

Centre for Population Genomics

Director
Professor Daniel MacArthur

The Centre for Population Genomics (CPG), established by the Garvan Institute and Murdoch Children's Research Institute, is a national initiative focused on delivering rapid and equitable health benefits through genomic medicine in Australia.

IN 2024

In collaboration with the Genomics and Inherited Disease Program and more than 30 other partners, we assembled Australia's largest genomic dataset from families affected by severe genetic disease, resulting in over 450 new diagnoses, many of which have led to meaningful changes in health outcomes. Through a partnership with Microsoft Research, we developed AI approaches to enhance rare disease detection and accelerate their integration into clinical practice.

The CPG leads the OurDNA program, which is partnering with Australian communities to establish the most diverse genomic cohort in the southern hemisphere, with the goal of understanding the impact of genetic variation in Australian communities and aiding genetic diagnosis. To date, more than 1,250 participants have been recruited from Filipino and Vietnamese communities.

Research highlights

International cell-mapping partnership targets complex diseases

Garvan partnered with genomics company Illumina to launch the TenK10K project, a $27 million initiative to map 50 million human cells from 10,000 people using single-cell sequencing. The goal is to identify disease-linked immune cell 'fingerprints' that could improve diagnosis and treatment for conditions including autoimmune diseases, cancer and heart disease.

The project, led by Professor Joseph Powell, builds on the OneK1K trial, which analysed over one million cells from 1,000 individuals. That study identified genetic markers associated with autoimmune disease and informed a clinical trial for Crohn's disease. Early results suggested that genomic profiles could help match patients with the most effective therapies.

TenK10K aims to scale this approach, enabling more accurate prediction of disease risk and treatment response. Data from the study will support development of commercial diagnostic tests, identification of early therapeutic targets and tracking of disease progression, including in long COVID and post-heart attack recovery.

By generating one of the world's largest single-cell genomics datasets, the project is expected to accelerate personalised medicine, guide RNA-based therapies, and improve care for people with hard-to-treat conditions such as multiple sclerosis, lupus, type 1 diabetes and inflammatory bowel disease.

ABOVE RIGHT: Professor Joseph Powell

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/genetic-fingerprint

Clinical trial aims to slow progression of Parkinson's disease

A clinical trial, part of the Australian Parkinson's Mission (APM), is investigating whether two existing medications could slow the progression of Parkinson's disease and whether genetics can guide personalised treatment strategies.

Led by researchers at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Macquarie University and the University of Sydney, the APM002 trial is recruiting 240 participants across eight sites in Australia. It will test whether a respiratory medication and a widely used antibiotic – alone or in combination – can protect nerve cells from the damage caused by Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's affects over 150,000 Australians and currently has no treatment to halt its progression. This trial uniquely combines clinical trials with genomics research and biomarker analysis to identify whether specific genetic profiles can predict a patient's response to treatment – bringing a precision medicine approach to a condition where causes remain largely unknown.

Research participants across eight sites around Australia will receive one of three possible treatments, or placebo, while they continue their usual Parkinson's medication.

If successful, APM002 could lay the groundwork for personalised Parkinson's therapies that could be transformative for patient outcomes.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/clinical-trial-parkinsons

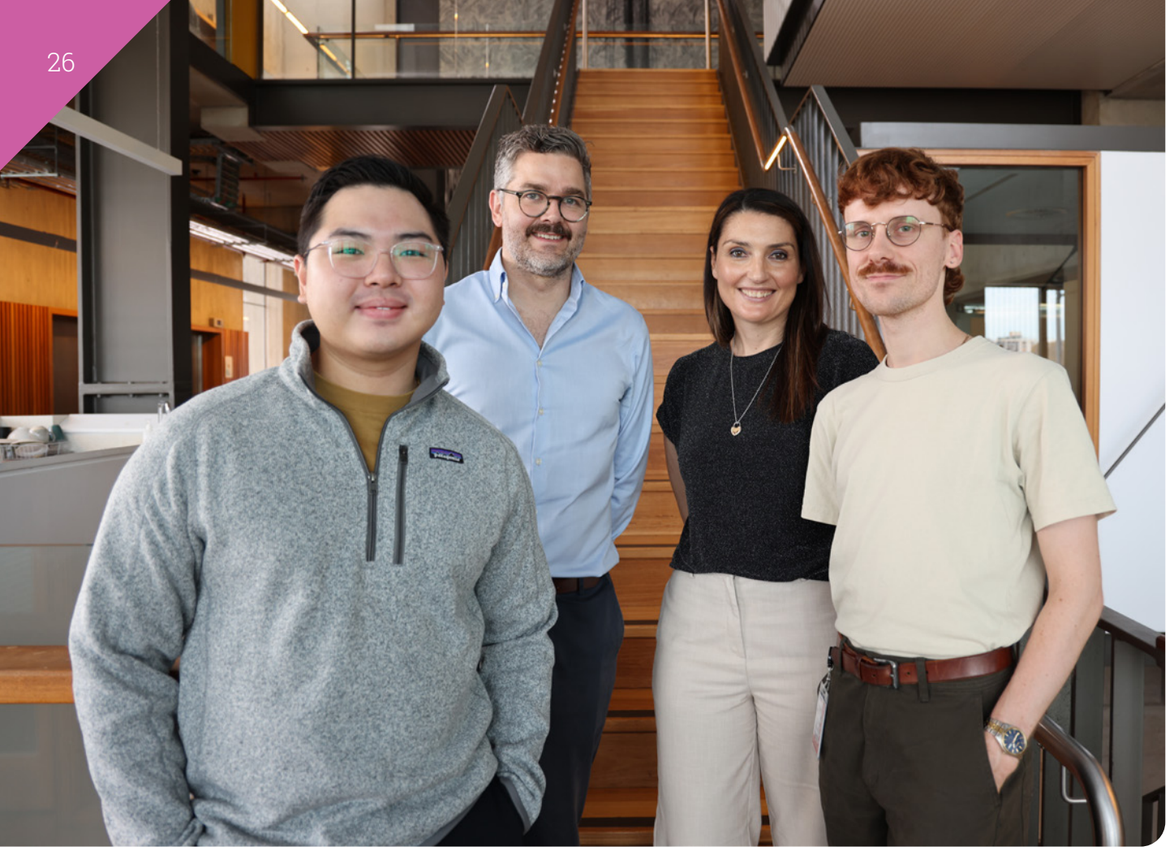
Rare disease discovery: RNU4-2 and ReNU syndrome

In March 2024, Professor Nicky Whiffin from Oxford's Centre for Human Genetics contacted CPG about a potential novel rare disease gene, RNU4-2. Within 30 minutes, CPG's rare disease team had identified six previously undiagnosed individuals in four Australian cohorts with likely causal mutations in the same gene. This rapid response led to a landmark *Nature* publication in July 2024, marking the first description of ReNU syndrome.

Since then, CPG's automated reanalysis platform, Talos, has identified four additional ReNU diagnoses in clinical cohorts, all now returned to families. ReNU syndrome is estimated to cause ~1 in 200 neurodevelopmental disorders globally, representing around 100,000 individuals living with this condition, and is already the focus of multiple therapeutic development programs.

ReNU syndrome is a powerful example of how CPG's rare disease research platform enables rapid, cross-cohort discovery, accelerates diagnoses and drives translational research at global scale.

RIGHT: Professor Daniel McArthur



ABOVE: Program Manager Jonathan Nguyen, Associate Professors Owen Siggs and Jodie Ingles, and PhD Candidate Lucas Mitchell

A national registry aiming to understand rare inherited diseases and connect families with new research opportunities

The Genomics of Rare Disease Registry, led by Associate Professors Jodie Ingles and Owen Siggs at Garvan, is aiming to uncover the genetic causes of rare and inherited diseases – conditions that affect nearly two million Australians but often remain overlooked and under-researched. By collecting clinical and genetic data, the registry connects participants to future research studies, clinical trials and one another.

Offering hope through discovery

For Rosie, who inherited polycystic kidney disease (PKD) from her father, attending a Garvan seminar offered something she hadn't had before: hope. "They said that in the future they might be able to slow down my disease or turn off the gene," she says. "I have hope that my son has a life that is not limited by PKD, even if he has inherited my kidneys."

The registry's findings could offer families like Rosie's a chance to accelerate diagnosis and discover targeted therapies that could change lives – now and for future generations.

RIGHT: Rosie and her husband the day before their son was born

Read more
garvan.org.au/rare-disease-registry

ABOVE: Professor Stuart Tangye

Study reveals cause of common immunotherapy side effect

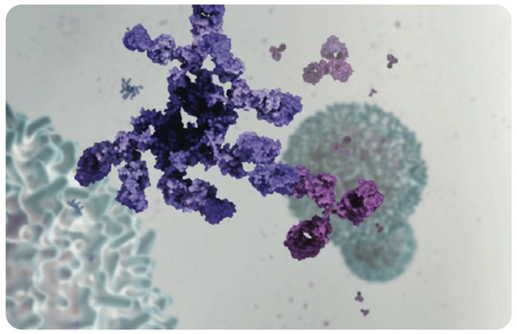
Checkpoint inhibitors have transformed cancer care by boosting T cell responses against tumours, but around 20% of patients experience increased susceptibility to infections. A study co-led by Professor Stuart Tangye at Garvan provided new insight into this side effect, highlighting a trade-off between anti-tumour immunity and broader immune defence.

The research, published in *Immunity*, examined rare genetic deficiencies in the PD-1 and PD-L1 immune pathways, as well as animal models with disrupted PD-1 function. The findings showed that while PD-1 inhibition boosts T cell activity, it simultaneously impairs B cells – the antibody-producing cells crucial for protecting against infection.

Specifically, the study found reduced diversity and quality of antibodies in individuals with PD-1/PD-L1 deficiencies, suggesting that checkpoint inhibition can weaken memory B cell responses. This reduced immune memory could explain the increased infection rates observed in patients undergoing checkpoint inhibitor therapy.

The research points to possible interventions, such as monitoring B cell function or using immunoglobulin replacement therapy in high-risk individuals. These findings help refine immunotherapy protocols to preserve protective immunity while maintaining cancer-fighting effectiveness.

BELOW: Illustration of an antibody.
Photo credit: Dr Ofir Shein-Lumbroso, Biomedical Animator through the Garvan-Weizmann Partnership.



Advancing Genomic Medicine with a Snow Fellowship

In 2021, thanks to the incredible support of the Snow Medical Research Foundation, Associate Professor Owen Siggs brought his world-leading expertise to the Garvan Institute of Medical Research. He now leads the Genomic Medicine Lab and co-directs the Genomics and Inherited Disease Program.

The prestigious $8 million, eight-year Snow Fellowship is enabling Associate Professor Siggs and his team to pursue a bold, long-term research vision, using genomics to better diagnose, predict and treat diseases of inflammation, ageing and blindness. The researchers are collaborating with the Centre for Population Genomics to diagnose severe genetic diseases, and with the Translational Genomics Program to understand the genetic links between inflammation and cardiovascular disease.

The Snow Fellowship gives Associate Professor Siggs the independence, flexibility and time to build a world-class research team and conduct innovative, pioneering science. We are deeply grateful to the Snow Medical Research Foundation and the Snow family for their generosity and investment in groundbreaking medical research.

BELOW: Associate Professor Owen Siggs

Immunology

Our mission is to improve the management of immune conditions and to harness the immune system to develop treatments personalised to individual patients.

In 2024, our focus was on forming strong cross-disciplinary relationships, collaborating with clinical immunologists, and ensuring translational outcomes via a bench-to-bedside approach in designing our research questions.

124
staff and students

13
labs and groups

34
research papers published

$9.6M+
secured in new peer-reviewed grants

Our Research Programs

Immune Biotherapies

Director
Professor Robert Brink

The Immune Biotherapies Program is leveraging the vast therapeutic potential of the immune system to develop a curative method of reversing pathogenic mutations in bone marrow stem cells in patients. Building on a decade of experience using CRISPR gene editing, we are also leading the design and testing of new targeting strategies for mRNA vaccines, cancer vaccines and immunotherapies.

IN 2024

We advanced the development of virus-like particle technology designed to cure monogenic diseases of the immune system, and of lipid nanoparticles supporting a new generation of mRNA vaccines to fight infectious disease and cancer.

We leveraged our expertise in structural biology to design antibody therapeutics and developed animal models that will progress our research to improve treatments for a rare inflammatory bowel disease.

Precision Immunology

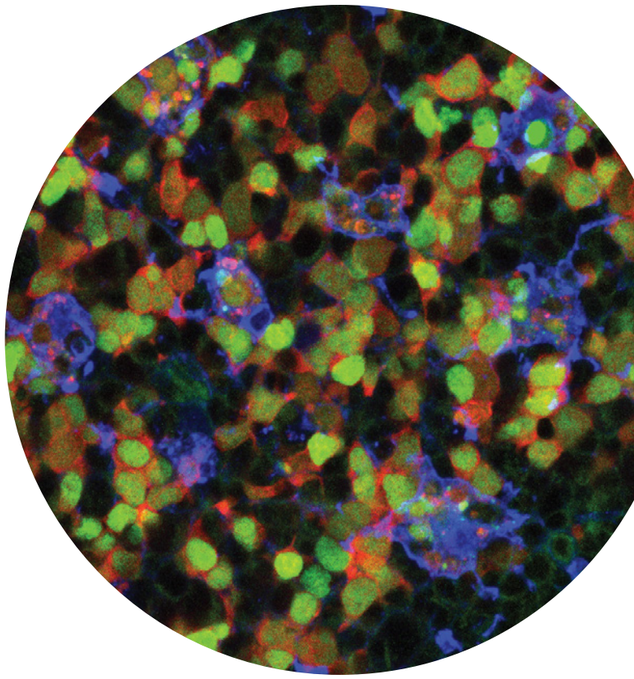
Co-Directors
Associate Professor Elissa Deenick and Professor Tri Phan

The Precision Immunology Program's focus is to improve the diagnosis and treatment of autoimmune and immune deficient diseases, supercharge the immune response to vaccination and transform the management of allergic diseases including anaphylaxis. By investigating the molecular mechanisms that underpin immune conditions, we aim to personalise treatments to precisely target the drivers of disease.

IN 2024

We used cutting-edge techniques such as cellular immune phenotyping and fluorescence intravital imaging to solve specific clinical cases and answer long-standing research questions about the mechanisms of immune cell function and disease. We made progress towards better understanding how immune-mediated lung damage is controlled, how immune cells respond to infection and vaccination, the role of the immune microenvironment in development of melanoma, secondary immunodeficiencies in lupus patients, and the mechanisms that drive allergy. This work is uncovering new therapeutic targets, biomarkers for tracking treatment responses, and innovative ideas to optimise the immune system for cancer therapy.

BELOW: Tingible body macrophages (blue) clearing germinal centre B cells inside a lymph node after vaccination.
Credit: Dr Abigail Grootveld



Research highlights

ABOVE: Julia Ritchie and Ruth Ritchie from the Bill and Patricia Ritchie Foundation, along with Ruth's sons Patrick and Bill Blampied.

A legacy of HOPE: The Bill and Patricia Ritchie Foundation

At the heart of some of Garvan's most groundbreaking autoimmune research is a story of extraordinary generosity and vision. The HOPE Research Program – dedicated to understanding and treating autoimmune disease – was made possible through the generous philanthropic leadership of The Bill and Patricia Ritchie Foundation. The Ritchie family's remarkable contributions towards advancing immunology at Garvan began more than 25 years ago. Their support notably includes the establishment of the Bill and Patricia Ritchie Foundation Chair for internationally renowned immunologist Professor Chris Goodnow in 2015, a pivotal step that brought him to Garvan.

The Foundation's visionary support has profoundly advanced autoimmune disease research, accelerating breakthroughs that were unimaginable just a few years ago. Their leadership and belief in Garvan's scientists have also inspired broader community engagement, helping to attract critical additional funding to realise the Program's bold ambitions.

T cell 'off-switch' reveals drug targets for cancer and autoimmune disease

A newly discovered genomic signature controls whether specialised 'killer' T cells activate or stand down, with major implications for cancer and autoimmune disease, including 100 potential drug targets.

Killer T cells are crucial for eliminating infected or cancerous cells, but if misdirected, they can attack healthy tissue and cause autoimmune disease. To prevent this, the immune system applies a tolerance mechanism that suppresses inappropriate activation. This same mechanism can be exploited by cancer cells to avoid immune attack.

The study, led by Professor Chris Goodnow and Dr Tim Peters and published in *Immunity*, used advanced sequencing techniques to pinpoint genomic regions that differ between T cells activated by infection and those rendered tolerant. These previously uncharacterised sites show how immune tolerance is established and regulated at the molecular level.

The findings suggest that many cancers may resist immunotherapy by engaging this tolerance mechanism early, before immune responses are fully activated. By targeting genes involved in this pathway, future therapies could either lift this suppression in cancer, or increase it in autoimmune disease.

BELOW: Professor Christopher Goodnow and Dr Tim Peters

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/drug-targets

New hope for multiple sclerosis

The national Open Coast to Coast Australian Multiple Sclerosis (OCCAMS) consortium, led by Professor Tri Phan and Dr Seyhan Yazar at Garvan and Dr Jennifer Massey at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney, is investigating the genetic and immune profiles of people experiencing the first symptoms of nerve damage that lead to multiple sclerosis (MS) and those of their first-degree relatives. The researchers aim to better understand the risk of developing multiple sclerosis after exposure to the Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV). Their findings could lead to early detection of MS risk, earlier intervention and ultimately preventative therapies.

In 2024, the researchers began recruiting participants and reached nearly half the study target for the first stage of the project, comparing EBV-positive and EBV-negative individuals with and without MS. The project also involves the establishment of a national biobank of blood samples.

BELOW: Dr Seyhan Yazar and Professor Tri Phan

Advancing earlier diagnosis and treatment

As an active 24-year-old who loved playing soccer, Mark's MS diagnosis changed the course of his life. Eleven years on, Mark's symptoms mean he relies on a wheelchair to maintain his mobility, but he remains steadfast in his mission to contribute to MS research.

ABOVE: Mark, MS lived experience advisor

As a lived experience advisor to OCCAMS, Mark offers guidance on research into MS and asks questions that clinicians and researchers may not have otherwise considered. By bringing up symptoms that may go unspoken in clinical settings, Mark also helps uncover insights and allows MS patients to find common ground. Using state-of-the-art genomic technologies, OCCAMS aims to identify biomarkers in those, like Mark, with MS that could lead to early detection and preventative therapies.

> **"I want to be involved in any sort of research that progresses the movement towards finding a cure, and OCCAMS is right at the cutting edge of MS research."**
>
> Mark, MS lived experience advisor

Read more
garvan.org.au/collaboration/occams

Mapping 50,000 of DNA's mysterious 'knots' in the human genome

Garvan researchers mapped more than 50,000 i-motifs – unusual knot-like DNA structures – in the human genome, revealing their likely role in controlling gene activity and their potential link to diseases such as cancer.

DNA is best known for its double helix structure, but less conventional forms like i-motifs can form under specific conditions. These four-stranded structures are formed by cytosine-rich regions folding back on themselves and protruding from the DNA strand.

Using a custom-developed antibody that binds specifically to i-motifs, researchers led by Professor Daniel Christ and Professor Sarah Kummerfeld identified their locations across the genome. The structures were found near highly active genes and in regulatory regions that control gene expression, including near oncogenes such as MYC.

The presence of i-motifs in gene promoters suggests they may serve as functional switches during the cell cycle. Their enrichment in regions linked to hard-to-treat cancers presents new opportunities for drug development targeting these structures.

ABOVE: Cristian David Pena Martinez, Professor Sarah Kummerfeld and Professor Daniel Christ

The findings provide a foundation for exploring i-motifs as diagnostic markers or therapeutic targets, drawing on Garvan's expertise in antibody development and genomics.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/dna-knots

Recognising research excellence in 2024

This year saw our researchers honoured with major awards for their work, reflecting the depth of talent at the Institute and recognising excellence in scientific discovery to improve human health.

Australian Museum Eureka Prize

In a remarkable year of recognition, Professor Tangye was awarded the 2024 UNSW Eureka Prize for Scientific Research. This second major honour acknowledged his team's breakthroughs in understanding rare immune diseases. Their research has contributed to the discovery of 28 previously unknown genes that cause immune disorders, and described the first cases of 13 newly described conditions in Australasia. "Each case we investigate gives us valuable insights into how the immune system functions," explains Professor Tangye. "By studying these rare conditions, we're not only helping affected individuals but also gaining knowledge that could benefit the broader population."

LEFT: Professor Stuart Tangye

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/eureka-prize

NSW Premier's Prizes for Science & Engineering

Two of our researchers were honoured with 2024 NSW Premier's Prizes, recognising their valuable contributions to medical science. Professor Stuart Tangye received the Prize for Excellence in Medical Biological Sciences for his work in understanding the human immune system and rare immune disorders. His leadership has brought together experts from across Australia and beyond through the Clinical Immunogenomics Research Consortium Australasia (CIRCA), helping patients receive faster diagnoses and better treatments for complex genetic immune conditions.

Dr Ira Deveson was named Early Career Researcher of the Year for his innovative work in genomics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, his team developed new methods to track variants of the virus, while also advancing techniques to diagnose genetic diseases. His collaboration with the National Centre for Indigenous Genomics shows his commitment to making sure new medical technologies benefit all communities equally. "Genomics is evolving so rapidly, and we're riding that wave to tackle some of medicine's most persistent challenges," said Dr Deveson.

RIGHT: Professor Stuart Tangye and Dr Ira Deveson

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/nsw-premier-prize

ABOVE: Professor Peter Croucher accepting the Sally Crossing AM Award

Sally Crossing AM Award

Professor Peter Croucher received the 2024 Sally Crossing AM Award from Cancer Council NSW for his pioneering research on the mechanisms that allow metastatic cancers to lie dormant in bone before reawakening. His work has changed how we treat multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer that affects bone, after his team discovered that a drug called zoledronic acid could protect bones from damage and significantly improve survival rates. This finding led to changes in treatment worldwide, with the drug now included in standard of care guidelines.

Building on this success, Professor Croucher's team has made breakthrough discoveries about how cancer cells 'sleep' in bones and what wakes them up. They've identified key genes involved in this process, opening up possibilities for new treatments.

Read more
garvan.org.au/news/sally-crossing-am-award

ABOVE: Dr Seyhan Yazar

Inaugural Jacqueline Goodnow and Barbara Hartley Prize

The Jacqueline Goodnow and Barbara Hartley Prize, established in 2024 by Professor Christopher Goodnow and Dr Suzanne Hartley in honour of their mothers, celebrates and enables bold women in science at Garvan.

Dr Seyhan Yazar, its first recipient, works at the intersection of biology and computer science, breaking new ground in medical research by generating a library of genetic markers to precisely target and treat autoimmune diseases. The selection committee was impressed by her innovative approach and determination to overcome challenges.

Other awards in 2024

Professor Susan Clark

Professor Susan Clark's contributions to epigenetics research were recognised by the Australasian Epigenetics Alliance (AEpiA) through the establishment of a new award in her name **"The Susan Clark Medal"**

Dr Venessa Chin

Garvan's **NextGen Emerging Leaders Prize**

Dr Jennifer Snaith and Allegra Angeloni

UNSW Dean's Award for **Outstanding PhD Thesis**

Dr Marcia Munoz

2025 Dan Kastner Award from the International Society for Systemic Autoinflammatory Disease

Abigail Grootveld

the Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology's **2024 Pfizer New Investigator Prize, and Garvan's best PhD thesis prize**

Dr Etienne Masle-Farquhar

the Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology's **2024 Breakthrough Award** to support his osteoarthritis research program

Christopher Jara

the Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology's **2024 Best Overall Student Poster Prize** and **Workshop Best Oral Award**

Lachlan Gray

the Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology's **Workshop Best Oral Award**

Dr Hasindu Gamaarachchi

2024 'Torsten Seemann' Outstanding Bioinformatics Software Developer Award from the Australian Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Society, recognising an outstanding early or mid-career bioinformatics software developer

Lilly Hatwell

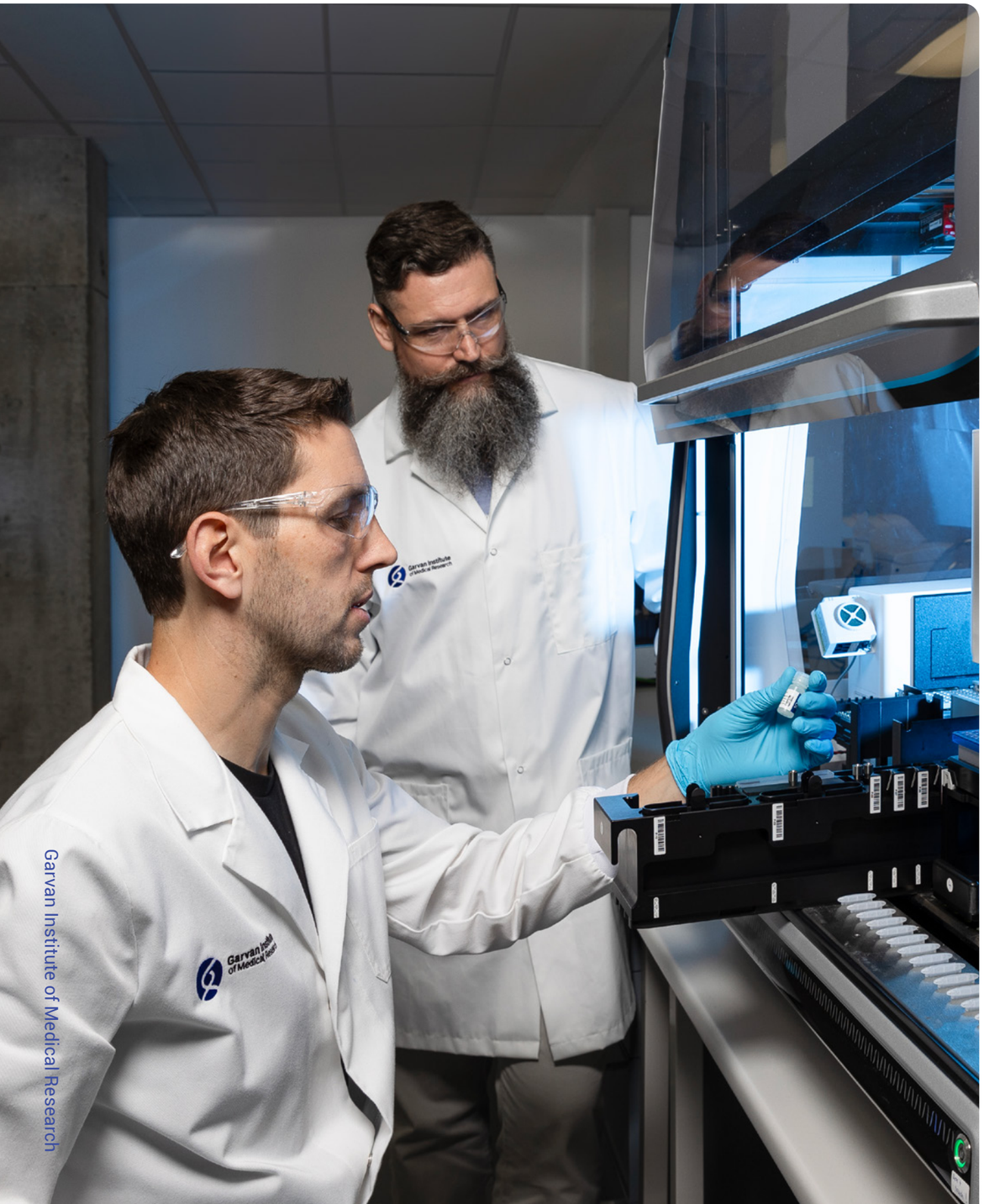
won the **UNSW 3 Minute Thesis competition** and inaugural **UNSW Founders Award**

Dr Jennifer Snaith

2024 ADS Rising Star Award in Type 1 Diabetes Research from the Australian Diabetes Society

Scientific Platforms

Our research is empowered by our Scientific Platforms, which position Garvan at the cutting edge of technology and continually push the boundaries of what can be achieved.



Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Genomics

Following a strategic review in early 2024, the Cellular Genomics Platform and the Garvan Sequencing Platform were merged to form the Garvan Genomics Platform. Combining the strengths of both its predecessors, the new Platform leads in providing cutting-edge genomic sequencing, the latest single-cell and spatial technologies and advanced flow cytometry services.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

The Platform **acquired major new technologies,** including the Cytek Aurora cell analyser for spectral cytometry, the S2 Genomics Singulator for efficient single-cell preparation and the Australasia-first PacBio Onso to expand our high-accuracy short-read sequencing capabilities.

We **launched a pilot grant scheme** in collaboration with PacBio, supporting genomics research across Australia and New Zealand. Five successful applications to the scheme will begin in 2025.

In December, the Platform achieved a key milestone by becoming a **certified 10x Genomics Trained Xenium Service Provider** for spatial services.

Data Science

The Data Science Platform enables data-intensive medical research by providing cloud infrastructure, software solutions and advanced data analysis through machine learning and statistics. It plays a key role in national genomics initiatives, developing and deploying software for large-scale computation.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

Grant-success including $2M from BioCommons to expand development of national-scale systems that manage genomics data.

Successful migration of Garvan's research data from end-of-life on-premise servers to the commercial cloud and national high performance compute infrastructure

Cross-institute bioinformatics training including 12 courses with more than 120 attendees covering fundamentals of programming, introduction to high performance computing and specialised computational biology courses.

Development of AI-based tools for analysis of intravital microscopy images

Biologics

The Biologics Platform accelerates the discovery and development of next-generation protein-based technologies across therapeutics, diagnostics and research tools. By partnering with internal labs, the platform delivers engineered molecules that enable disease targeting, immune modulation and mechanistic research.

In addition to supporting fundamental studies, the platform plays a critical role in bridging early discovery with translational science, laying the groundwork for a future therapeutic pipeline with commercial potential. By integrating with Garvan's genomics, imaging and data science capabilities, it drives innovation from discovery to preclinical development, advancing antibody therapeutics into clinical applications to improve human health.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

Completed first phage display campaign targeting a protein relevant to small cell lung cancer.

Initiated bispecific antibody programs with two Garvan research groups; constructs are currently under in-house evaluation.

Launched new collaborations across oncology, immunology and genomics to expand the discovery pipeline.

Delivered custom reagents and assays to support mechanistic studies in cancer and immune-related diseases.

Advanced foundational work to enable future diagnostic and therapeutic translation from internal discovery efforts.

Development

The Development Platform was established to accelerate the translation and commercialisation of Garvan's most promising research. Designed around milestone-driven funding, go/no-go decision points, and flexible commercialisation pathways, the platform empowers researchers with strategic guidance, market analysis and operational expertise.

By bridging early-stage discovery with development-readiness, it ensures high-potential projects are positioned for real-world impact.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

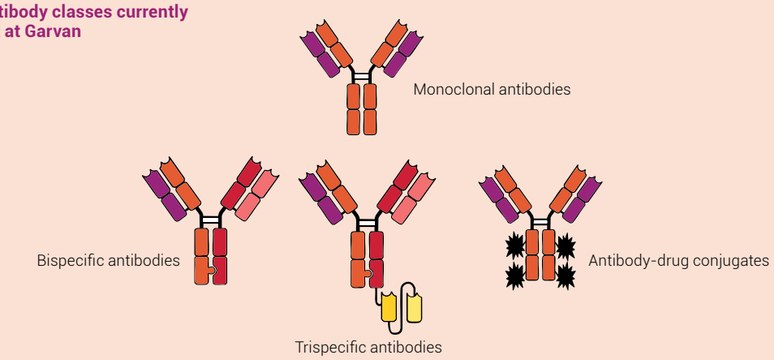
Dr Rachel Galimidi was appointed Head of the Development Platform and **led the creation of a structured operational model to guide project intake, evaluation, and translational support.** The platform identified key capabilities, personnel needs, and governance frameworks required for long-term scalability. To validate this model, three pilot projects were selected, reflecting the breadth of Garvan's translational ambition:

Antibody engineering to eliminate autoreactive B cells in autoimmune disease (Professor Christopher Goodnow, Dr Daniel Suan).

Precision small molecule development targeting oncogenic signaling pathways (Dr David Croucher, Dr Sharissa Latham).

Replacement therapy formulation for mevalonate kinase deficiency, a rare autoinflammatory condition (Professor Mike Rogers, Dr Marcia Munoz).

Therapeutic antibody classes currently in development at Garvan



Imaging

The Imaging Platform provides access to advanced microscopy and preclinical imaging expertise. It houses Australia's largest fleet of intravital microscopes, enabling the visualisation of dynamic cellular states in disease models.

The platform's team supports researchers from experimental design to analysis and pioneers new imaging methods through R&D projects.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

The platform **expanded capabilities with a high-content screening system** for automated analysis of cellular models and 3D organoids, enabling large-scale discovery and validation pipelines.

We **acquired an Akoya Phenocycler to enable precision tissue mapping** and visualise up to 100 proteins in tissue samples revealing cellular interactions in complex tissue microenvironments. This cutting-edge technology supports research from fundamental discovery to clinical translation, including drug development pipelines and preclinical studies.

Clinical Translation and Engagement

The Clinical Translation and Engagement (CT&E) Platform is an interdisciplinary team of genetic counsellors, psychosocial and clinical researchers. The Platform provides a pathway for researchers to meet their ethical obligations and return actionable results to patients. When research participants are informed of clinically significant genetic variants, they and their family members can undertake evidence-based risk management strategies to reduce the likelihood of disease onset or progression. These strategies ultimately aim to decrease disease-related morbidity and mortality.

The benefits of consumer and community involvement in research are widely recognised and funding bodies are increasingly requiring evidence of consumer involvement in research grant applications. The CT&E Platform established the Garvan Consumer and Community Involvement (CCIR) in Research program to ensure CCIR becomes a standard of our research.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

The Platform reached the milestone of having engaged with **more than 400 research participants,** to facilitate the return of individual research results.

The Consumer and Community Involvement in Research Program was launched to **facilitate meaningful partnerships** between researchers and consumers, to drive communication and involvement and to build a framework that ensures involvement becomes embedded in Garvan's research.

To learn more about our scientific platforms

garvan.org.au/platforms

Celebrating Higher Degree Research

In partnership with UNSW Sydney, Garvan is committed to supporting Higher Degree Research training of our PhD and Master of Science students in advancing scientific knowledge. We ensure academic standards are achieved, so that Garvan's emerging young researchers go on to become future leaders in their fields.

In 2024, we celebrated another exceptional cohort of graduates. Their collective work continues to strengthen our research community and build our expertise in genomics, cancer research and immunology.

As we celebrate their achievements, we remain dedicated to providing the training and resources that enable our graduates to contribute to the future of healthcare.

In 2024

104
Higher degree research students hosted at Garvan

31
Clinicians undertaking higher degree research at Garvan

79
Garvan researchers supervising PhD students

BELOW: Dr Tracy Anderson, Manager HDR Students and Supervision

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Allegra Angeloni
Supervised by Ozren Bogdanovic, Ksenia Skvortsova & Irena Voineagu
DNA methylation in evolution, development, and disease

Eva Apostolov
Supervised by Alexander Swarbrick, Daniel Roden & Holly Holliday
Deep insights into the cellular and molecular milieu of hormone-therapy naïve localised PCa using scRNA-seq

Olivia Ciampa
Supervised by Liz Caldon, Elgene Lim & Sarah Alexandrou
Characterising the senescence response and its therapeutic implications in ER+ breast cancer

Emma Fletcher
Supervised by Michael Rogers & Marcia Munoz
Defining the effects of bisphosphonate drugs on tissue-resident macrophages

Abigail Grootveld
Supervised by Tri Phan & Robert Brink
Investigating the origin and cellular dynamics of Tingible Body Macrophages

Hui Min Hor
Supervised by Alexander Viardot & Lesley Campbell
Are GLP-1 Receptor Agonists safe in Prader-Willi Syndrome? A detailed investigation on safety and efficacy with a focus on gastric emptying

Christopher Jara
Supervised by Joanne Reed, Christopher Goodnow, Robert Brink & Etienne Masle-Farquhar
Investigating tolerance of a cross-reactive human autoantibody: Distinguishing self and foreign antigens

Candy Laurianto
Supervised by Robert Brink & Tri Phan
Genetic manipulation of lymphocytes in germinal centre responses

Nele Lenders
Supervised by Ann McCormack, Jerry Greenfield, Warrick Inder & Peter Earls
Towards precision medicine for pituitary tumours

Joseph Mackie
Supervised by Stuart Tangye, Cindy Ma & Antoine Guerin
The spectrum of inborn errors in STAT3: Impact on cytokine-mediated adaptive immune responses in humans.

Benjamin McLean
Supervised by Marina Pajic & Sean Porazinski
Effective Co-Targeting of Fibrotic and Immune Microenvironments to Improve Overall Anti-tumour Response in Models of Advanced Pancreatic Cancer

Cristian Pena Martinez
Supervised by Daniel Christ & Sarah Kummerfeld
Characterisation of DNA i-motif structures in the human genome and the role of non-canonical nucleic acid structures

Zoe Phan
Supervised by Liz Caldon, Caroline Ford & Leila Eshraghi
PARP inhibitors: beyond maintenance therapy

Daniel Reed
Supervised by Paul Timpson, David Herrmann & Liz Caldon
Investigating the ROCK2 signalling axis as a stromal and epithelial target in triple-negative breast cancer

Jemma Rezitis
Supervised by Herbert Herzog, Chi Kin Ip & Robert Brink
A Novel Neuropeptide Y Network Regulating Hedonic Eating Behaviours

Shona Ritchie
Supervised by Paul Timpson, Brooke Pereira & Marina Pajic
An integrated analysis of the cancer cell secretome reveals PCSK9 as a potential co-target in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma

Gabriela Santos Rodriguez
Supervised by Robert Weatheritt & James Blackburn
Evolutionary dynamics of post-transcriptional regulation mechanisms in vertebrates

James Sligar
Supervised by Andrew Philp, Dorit Samocha Bonet & David Ross Laybutt
The Importance of Mitophagy for Healthy Ageing

Jennifer Snaith
Supervised by Jerry Greenfield & Jane Holmes-Walker
Insulin Resistance and Metformin in Type 1 Diabetes

Laura Yeates
Supervised by Jodie Ingles, Chris Samsarian & Alison McEwen
Caring for families affected by inherited cardiovascular conditions and sudden cardiac death

Taopeng Wang
Supervised by Alexander Swarbrick, Sandra O'Toole & Daniel Roden
Adoption and implementation of single-cell and spatially resolved transcriptomic technologies for metastatic breast cancer research

Master of Science (Research)

Luke Ardolino
Supervised by Lisa Horvath, Anthony Joshua & Hao-Wen Sim
Targeting the actionable circulating lipid signature in men with metastatic prostate cancer using systemic metabolic therapies

"Our 2024 cohort of PhD graduates at Garvan has demonstrated exceptional dedication to advancing healthcare through their research. Their work reflects the strength of our research program and its growing impact."

Professor Thomas Cox, Chair of the Higher Degree Committee

Board of Directors

Garvan is governed by two Boards who provide strategic leadership and oversight. Their expertise and commitment are essential to our progress and impact.

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Shaping Discovery

Our most significant research publications

In 2024, Garvan researchers published discoveries across a wide range of diseases. These discoveries enhance scientific progress and ensure that our research findings are accessible to the broader community, driving collaboration and innovation.

At Garvan, we turn public support into public knowledge – conducting medical research that not only advances science but also empowers the public through shared understanding.

The following page lists our most significant research publications with an impact factor of 10 or higher.

Garvan Institute of Medical Research

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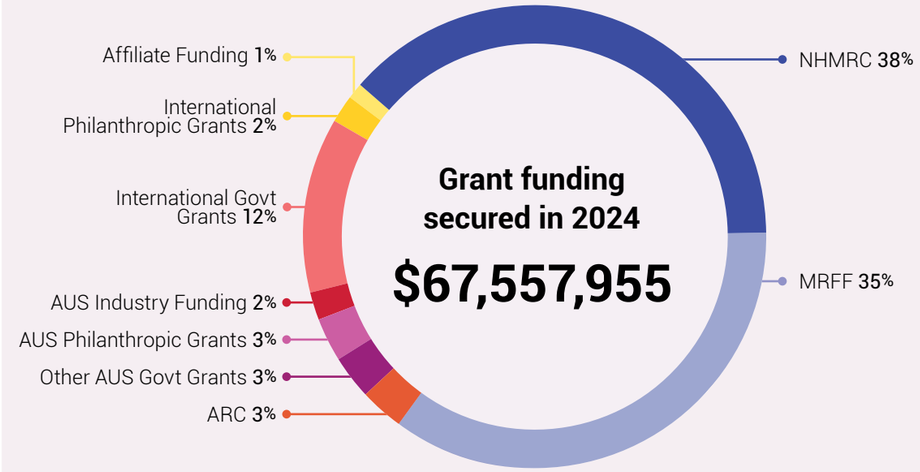
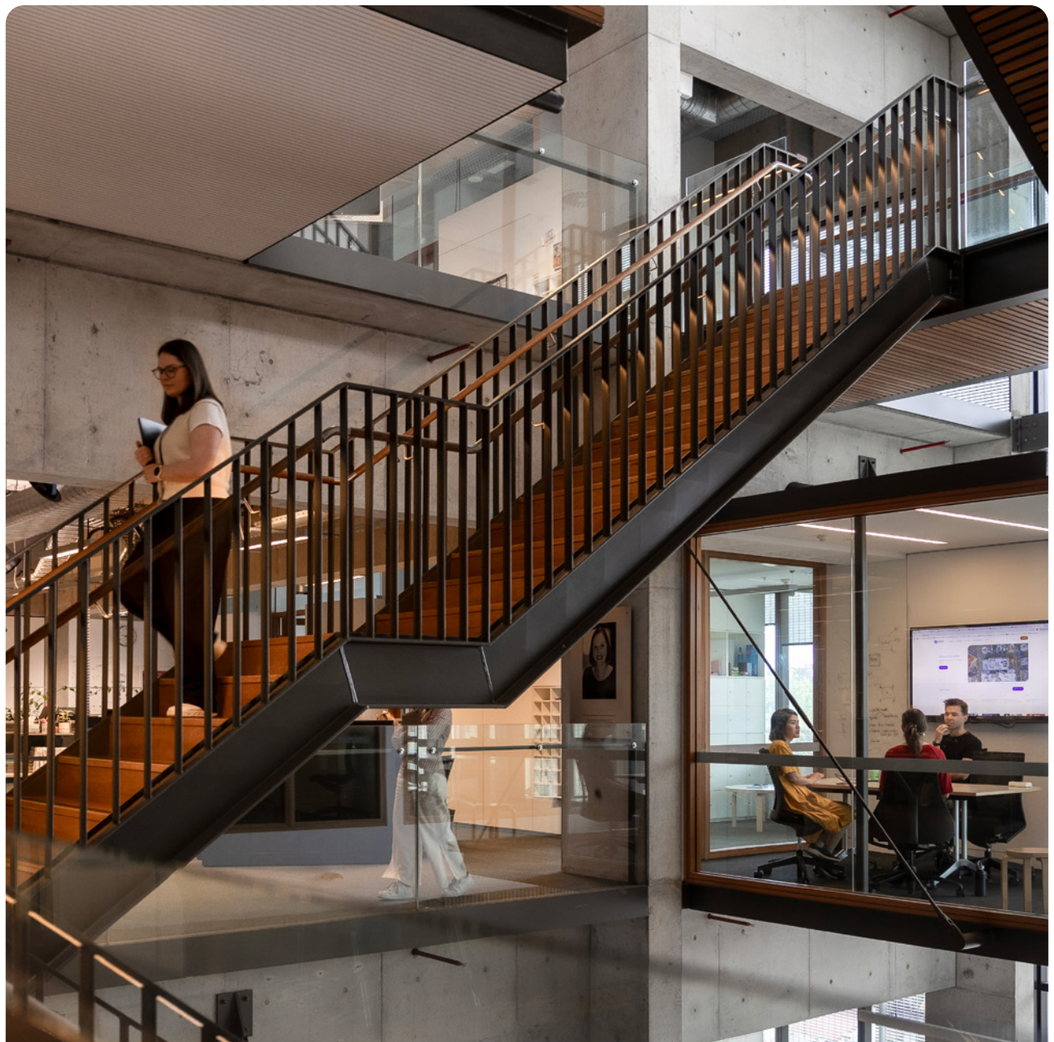
Competitive grants awarded in 2024

		AU$
National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)	Investigator Grants	18,695,725
	Ideas Grants	3,687,676
	Postgraduate Scholarships	541,917
	Development Grants	987,585
	NHMRC-AMED 2024 Collaborative Research Scheme: ASPIRE	1,988,050
		25,900,953
Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	Genomics Health Futures Mission	7,999,534
	Cardiovascular Health Mission	4,999,576
	Stem Cell Therapies Mission	4,999,499
	Early to Mid-Career Researchers	4,951,986
	Targeted Translation Research Accelerator – Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes Mechanism	916,315
		23,866,910
Australian Research Council (ARC)	Discovery Projects	**2,258,983**
Other Australian Government Grants	NSW Ministry of Health	1,000,000
	Cancer Institute NSW	1,292,744
		2,292,744
Australian Philanthropic Grants	Various Funders	**1,876,518**
Australian Industry Funding	Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd	47,949
	CSL	1,249,905
		1,297,854
International Government Grants	US Department of Defence	8,030,149
International Philanthropic Grants	Various Funders	1,197,248
		9,227,397
Affiliate Funding	UNSW Sydney	346,596
	St Vincent's Clinic Foundation	490,000
		836,596
	TOTAL	**67,557,955**





Financial Highlights

Statement of financial position for the period ended 31 December 2024

Statement of profit or loss

Revenue	2024	2023
	A$'000	A$'000
Fundraising and grant income		
NHMRC fellowships, scholarships and other grants	12,692	11,818
Peer-reviewed research grants	8,329	10,314
MRFF grants	7,232	7,990
NSW government grants	–	5,983
Other grants	6,641	11,284
Donations received	56,988	47,031
University of NSW contribution	8,866	9,188
	100,748	103,608
Other income		
Revenue from contracts with customers	18,871	18,803
Investment income / (loss)	12,298	12,509
Share of losses of associates accounted for using the equity method	(87)	(1)
Net loss on foreign exchange	(114)	(27)
	30,968	31,284
Total revenue	**131,716**	**134,892**

Expenditure	2024	2023
	A$'000	A$'000
Sequencing consumable expenses	2,062	4,014
Employee benefits expense	69,396	69,004
Other research expenses	17,870	24,083
Depreciation and amortisation expense	6,824	6,296
Administration expense	6,698	7,558
Fundraising expenses	4,988	4,036
Building and scientific expenses	9,383	8,771
Finance expenses	309	306
Total expenses	**117,531**	**124,068**

Statement of financial position

Assets	2024	2023
	A$'000	A$'000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	32,563	26,800
Trade and other receivables	9,643	7,418
Sequencing consumables	937	868
Financial assets at fair value through profit and loss	111,422	103,791
Other current assets	2,281	2,226
Biological assets	641	363
Term deposits	33,416	39,505
Total current assets	**190,903**	**180,972**
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	68,815	65,984
Intangible assets	195	207
Right-of-use assets	9,357	9,332
Investments accounted for using the equity method	27	114
Total non-current assets	**78,394**	**75,637**
Total assets	**269,297**	**256,609**

Liabilities	2024	2023
	A$'000	A$'000
Current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	456	377
Trade and other payables	10,842	10,893
Employee benefit obligations	7,028	6,000
Deferred revenue	34,561	37,260
Total current liabilities	**52,887**	**54,530**
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	5,619	5,516
Employee benefit obligations	1,242	1,200
Total non-current liabilities	6,861	6,716
Total liabilities	**59,748**	**61,245**
Net assets	**209,549**	**195,364**
Equity		
Reserves	141,511	126,702
Retained surplus	68,039	68,662
Total equity	**209,549**	**195,364**

The Statement of Financial Position provided above, together with the Statement of Profit or Loss have been extracted from the audited general purpose financial statements of Garvan Institute of Medical Research and its controlled entities. The summary financial information does not include all the information and notes normally included in a statutory financial report. The audited general purpose financial report can be obtained from the ACNC website.

The statutory financial report (from which the summary financial information has been extracted) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and Regulations 2013, Australian Accounting Standards and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

Thank You to Our Garvan Family

Our wonderful supporters come from all walks of life and give in various ways. They each have their own reasons for supporting Garvan, but what brings them together is a shared passion for making a real difference in the fight against disease.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to all those who supported Garvan in 2024, helping us move closer to a future where all diseases can be prevented, treated or cured.

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Medical research saved Karen's life.

Now she's on a mission to help others.

In 2020, Karen received a bowel cancer screening kit she almost dismissed. After a routine colonoscopy less than a year earlier returned clear results, she had no immediate health concerns. But on a whim, she completed the test – a decision that ultimately saved her life.

Her results showed signs of faecal occult blood, leading to a devastating diagnosis of rectal cancer. Over two years, Karen underwent chemotherapy, radiotherapy, major surgery and, later, more treatment when cancer spread to her liver. Throughout it all, she kept her sense of humour and grew determined to support the research that gave her hope.

Now cancer-free, Karen is one of our proud *Partners for the Future*, choosing to leave a gift in her Will to drive life-saving discoveries. "It's my way of honouring what I went through and supporting the researchers whose work saved my life," she says.

Instead of Christmas gifts, Karen now asks her family to donate to Garvan. "We're not all billionaires, but lots of small contributions add up. If every Australian gave $50, imagine what we could achieve."

Today, Karen's story stands as a testament to early detection, cutting-edge research and the incredible community of supporters who fuel Garvan's mission to transform lives.

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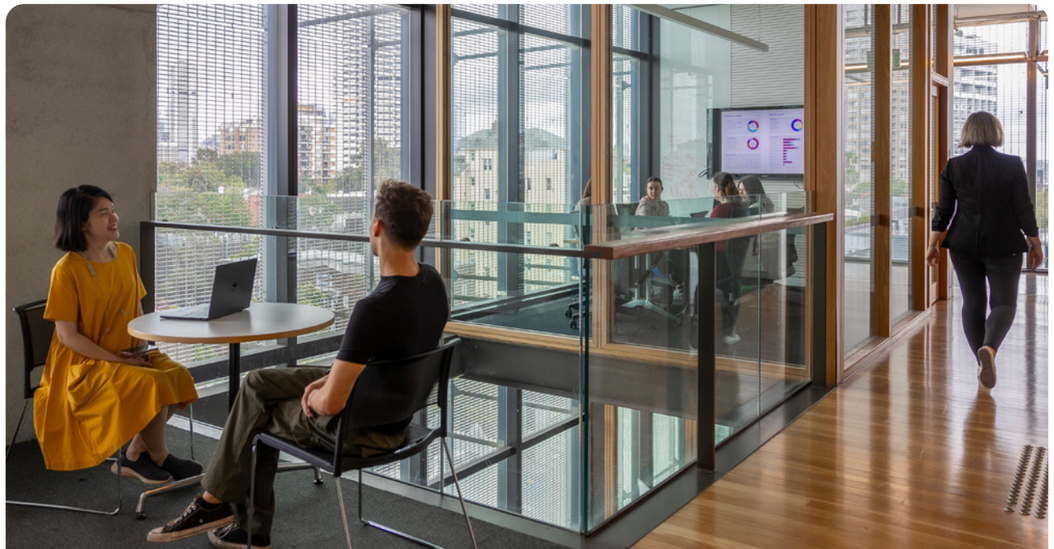

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