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SCOPE 89

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MALAGHAN INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH



Uncovering the origins of a severe type of Crohn's disease

WHAT'S INSIDE

New clinical research core to help take research from benchtop to bedside

Malaghan and University of Auckland cancer research advances into new biotech venture

WHO collaboration to reduce global burden of stomach cancer



From the Chief Executive

As we come to the end of another remarkable year, I want to take a moment to thank you. Everything you read in this issue of Scope was made possible by people like you, who believe in the power of research to change lives.

Connecting discovery science with real-world impact is a defining feature of the Malaghan Institute. Scope's cover story is a wonderful example. Our clinical study into Crohn's disease aims to uncover the factors that lead to this inflammatory condition by comparing samples from people with a severe form of Crohn's and people without gut disease.

Throughout this issue, you'll find more examples of the breadth and momentum of our work. Together, these stories reflect the dedication of our researchers and the growing impact of New Zealand science on some of the world's most pressing health challenges. They also highlight what can be accomplished when great science is backed by people like you, who believe in its potential.

Professor Kjesten Wiig | Chief Executive
BA (Hons), PhD (Otago)

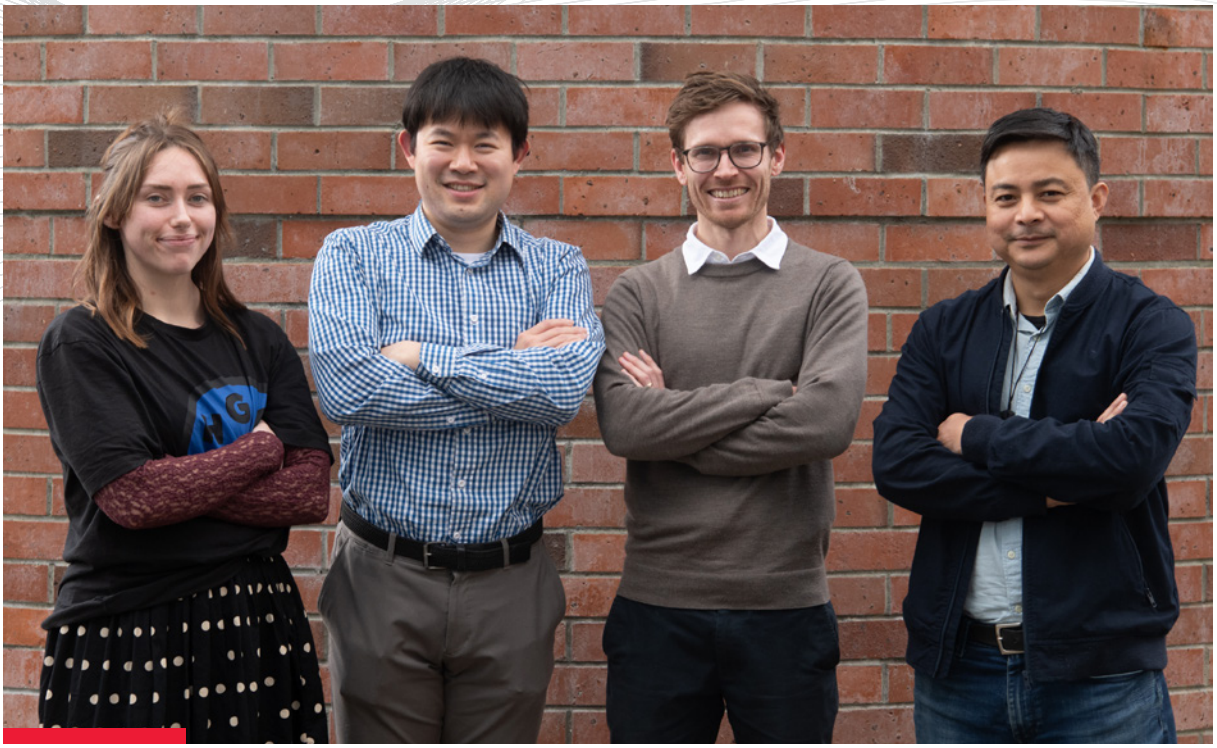
Clinical study to uncover the origins of a severe type of Crohn's disease

A new clinical study by the Mules Laboratory will explore the underlying triggers of perianal Crohn's disease with the aim of finding better treatment options.

Led by Dr Tom Mules, Malaghan Institute and Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora – Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley, in collaboration with Professor Michael Schultz, University of Otago and Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora – Southern, the research focuses on this severe form of the condition, which affects around 1 in 5 people with Crohn's disease.

"Our goal is to identify specific bacteria and immune pathways that new therapies can target," says Dr Mules.

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that causes life-long inflammation in the gut. The prevalence of IBD is increasing at a dramatic rate worldwide, on track to affect up to one percent of the population by 2045, according to Dr Mules. While the exact cause is not fully understood, it is likely a result of an imbalance or 'disharmony' in the gut, with



▲ Mules Laboratory. From left: Georgina Wheller, Dr Jeffry Tang, Dr Tom Mules, Dr Bibek Yumnam

the microbiome and environmental factors driving inappropriate activation of the gut immune system in genetically susceptible individuals.

IBD is also highly heterogeneous – with a wide range of symptoms and disease progression within a population – further complicating treatment options for patients.

To better understand the origins and diversity behind IBD, particularly Crohn's disease, the Mules Lab is running a clinical study to analyse the microbiome (the bacteria colonising the gut), metabolome (by-products of the microbiome), and immune system in patients with this severe form of Crohn's disease. The lab will also examine important patient factors, including the impact that this condition has on an individual's quality of life.

Approximately one in four patients with Crohn's disease will develop peri-anal fistulising disease, a painful and debilitating complication where tracts form between the intestine and skin, that is often resistant to conventional therapies. By comparing immune and microbiome profiles between patients with or without this subtype, and with people without IBD, Dr Mules hopes to uncover immunological clues that may lead to new and better treatments.

"We believe that studying the profiles found in patients with the most severe disease subtypes provides the best opportunity to understand the root causes behind the dramatic rise in IBD worldwide and to develop new approaches to prevention and treatment."

The study will collect samples from individuals with IBD and perianal Crohn's disease across Dunedin and the greater Wellington region. Potential participants with Crohn's disease can be referred to the study by their specialist.

The team are also seeking volunteers without IBD or other gut-related diseases living in the greater Wellington or Dunedin areas, aged between 18 and 80 years old, who are willing to provide stool and blood samples to analyse the microbiome and immune cells.

If you would like more details about the study, please email gutresearch@malaghan.org.nz.

New clinical research core to help take research from benchtop to bedside

The Malaghan Institute has established a new research platform to help scientists translate their research into the clinic.

"The clinical research core brings together Malaghan staff with expertise in running human clinical studies and trials and working with human ethics committees," says Brittany Lavender, new head of the clinical research core.



▲ Brittany Lavender

Previously, lab groups relied on knowledge and experience within their own teams to advance research to clinical stages.

"The role of the core is to provide consistent knowledge, advice and support to all areas at the institute that are working on research that could one day be used in a clinical study or trial," she says.

"Creating a strong platform for lab groups to make their clinical research more efficient and aligned with best practice supports our strategic goal of delivering world-class transformative science."

Drawing on knowledge and expertise built over years running clinical trials and studies, including the ENABLE CAR T-cell trials, the core will provide support in three key areas: standardising documentation and processes, advising on clinical trial design, and providing support for administrative tasks.

"One of the key aspects is facilitating knowledge sharing through advising," says Brittany. "We can help research groups from planning, grant writing and study design through to human ethics applications and practical implementation of their studies and trials."

Clinical Director Professor Robert Weinkove says the core will play a key role in enabling more research conducted at the Malaghan to progress into early-phase clinical trials and studies.

"We have gained tremendous experience through running clinical trials and observational studies at Malaghan. By consolidating this expertise, our procedures and information systems within the clinical research core, we can help Malaghan researchers design innovative trials and observational studies more rapidly, and run them more effectively.

"This will allow us to not only conduct important scientific research, but to translate these discoveries to improve the health of New Zealanders."

MALAGHAN AND UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND CANCER RESEARCH ADVANCES INTO NEW BIOTECH VENTURE

A promising cancer immunotherapy programme developed with the University of Auckland has taken a major step this year with the formation of a new biotechnology venture, Stave Therapeutics.

Established in conjunction with Unruly Partners and UniServices, the venture builds on underlying research from a long-standing collaboration between the university's Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre and the Malaghan Institute.

A type of immunotherapy, immune checkpoint inhibitors have revolutionised cancer treatment in recent years. They work by blocking signals from cancer cells that trigger the 'off switch' on T-cells – allowing these cancer-killing immune cells to keep fighting the cancer for longer.

Despite the success of immune checkpoint inhibitors, many patients don't respond because the tumour microenvironment suppresses the activity of the immune system, crippling the effectiveness of immunotherapies.

"For immunotherapies to be effective for solid tumours, we need strategies to overcome the tumour microenvironment," says Professor Ian Hermans.

One such strategy is to reset the microenvironment inside tumours. The team has developed novel compounds designed to activate immune responses precisely within tumours, rather than broadly across the body. By stimulating the immune system at these specific sites, it may be possible to improve immunotherapy outcomes.



▲ Professor Ian Hermans

While lung cancer is the starting point for Stave Therapeutics, the potential reach is much broader.

"Our research partnership has always had the goal of improving cancer treatment outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand. This new venture validates what the team has been working on for almost a decade and offers a real pathway to patients," says Prof Hermans.

The company is currently operating at the preclinical stage, with the next phase focused on completing preclinical development and progressing towards first-in-human clinical trials within the next two years.

Immune cells face many barriers in fighting solid tumours, including:

1. Densely packed tumour cells.
2. Toxic environments created by tumour byproducts.
3. Tumours 'hijacking' cellular signalling to 'switch off' immune cells early.

Research is helping us break down these barriers, but we can't do it alone. Support our cancer research to help us find new ways to support the immune system's fight against cancer.

COLLABORATION WITH WHO TO REDUCE GLOBAL BURDEN OF STOMACH CANCER

The Malaghan Institute's research into *Helicobacter pylori* – a bacterium that is the leading cause of stomach cancer – has led to a global collaboration with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the cancer research agency of the World Health Organization.

The Memorandum of Understanding will support research into stomach cancer prevention and control by addressing *H. pylori* infection – including tackling antibiotic resistance, developing screen-and-treat strategies and sharing scientific findings and methods.

Dr Tom Mules says the MOU is recognition that the Malaghan's *H. pylori* research and expertise has relevance well beyond New Zealand.

"Working with the IARC gives us the chance to contribute directly to the evidence base and toolkit that could shape stomach cancer prevention and control internationally."

> "Stomach cancer ranks fifth in both cancer incidence and cancer-related death worldwide. In New Zealand it disproportionately impacts Māori and Pacific peoples."

The Malaghan Institute's *H. pylori* clinical research programme has been running since 2024, initially focused on developing new methods to test for antibiotic resistance, and expanding into a number of projects aimed at improving how *H. pylori* infection is diagnosed and treated.

Stomach cancer ranks fifth in both cancer incidence and cancer-related death worldwide. In New Zealand it disproportionately impacts Māori and Pacific peoples. Most cases are caused by chronic infection with *H. pylori*, which can be prevented through successful eradication of the bacterium. However, increased antibiotic resistance to *H. pylori* is a major public health concern.

Through its global ENIGMA studies, the IARC is investigating resistance to a common antibiotic used for *H. pylori* infections – clarithromycin – across different geographic regions. This will allow better understanding of global patterns and the development of effective population-based *H. pylori* screen-and-treat strategies for gastric cancer prevention.

Dr Mules says the IARC has been particularly interested in a new molecular technique developed and validated through the Malaghan's research programme, to detect clarithromycin resistance mutations in *H. pylori* using stool samples.

"Testing for antibiotic resistance in *H. pylori* typically means an endoscopic biopsy. So finding alternative, non-invasive ways to detect resistance at a larger scale is important if we're going to get on top of the global antimicrobial resistance crisis and maximise the efficacy of stomach cancer prevention strategies."

As part of the ongoing collaboration with ENIGMA New Zealand, the IARC plans to conduct a pilot study in collaboration with Dr Mules' laboratory, using this new technique.

Dr Jin Young Park, Team Leader of the Gastric Cancer Prevention team within the Early Detection, Prevention and Infections Branch at IARC says the MOU marks the beginning of a productive relationship with a shared vision.

"As Dr Mules' laboratory shares our team's goal of reducing the global burden of gastric cancer through addressing *H. pylori* infection, we anticipate that further collaborative projects will be developed beyond the current pilot on clarithromycin resistance."

HRC funding to improve CAR T-cell 'fitness' and better fight cancer

The CAR T-cell research team has received a Health Research Council of New Zealand project grant to enhance cancer-killing CAR T-cells by improving their metabolic 'fitness'. The grant, worth $1.2 million over three years, aims to help these modified immune cells better perform in adverse environments caused by solid tumours – one of the current limitations of this ground-breaking therapy.

"Internationally, CAR T-cell therapies similar to the one being assessed in the Malaghan's ENABLE-2 clinical trial are revolutionising cancer therapy by training a patient's own immune system, specifically their T-cells, to hunt and kill cancer cells," says Senior Research Fellow Dr David O'Sullivan who is leading the project, alongside Professor Robert Weinkove, Dr Rachel Perret, Dr Olivier Lamiable and Dr Nathaniel Dasyam. "As 'living drugs' CAR T-cells are vulnerable to immune suppression caused by tumours which can impair their cancer-killing activity."

"Although successful in treating blood cancers, the full potential of these therapies for solid cancers is yet to be achieved," Dr O'Sullivan explains.

Solid tumours are particularly efficient at suppressing the immune system and use a number of strategies – like nutrient depletion – to stymie the effectiveness of immunotherapies like CAR T-cell therapy. In such challenging environments, CAR T-cells can become exhausted and unable to reach the deepest parts of the tumour needed to completely eradicate the disease.

As humans, the fitter we are, the less we tire performing a challenging task. T-cells behave in a similar way – something Dr O'Sullivan hopes to exploit when designing future CAR T-cell therapies.

"For T-cells to infiltrate tumours and kill cancer cells effectively they need to be at optimal metabolic fitness," says Dr O'Sullivan. "From previous research we know that mitochondria, the powerhouse of the cells, are key to supporting the energy needs of T-cells when they are targeting cancers.

"What we are aiming to achieve with CAR T-cells is a bit like what an athlete does to train for a big event. Through targeted exercises and a healthy diet, an athlete builds up stamina and strength. We want to give our CAR T-cells the same treatment."

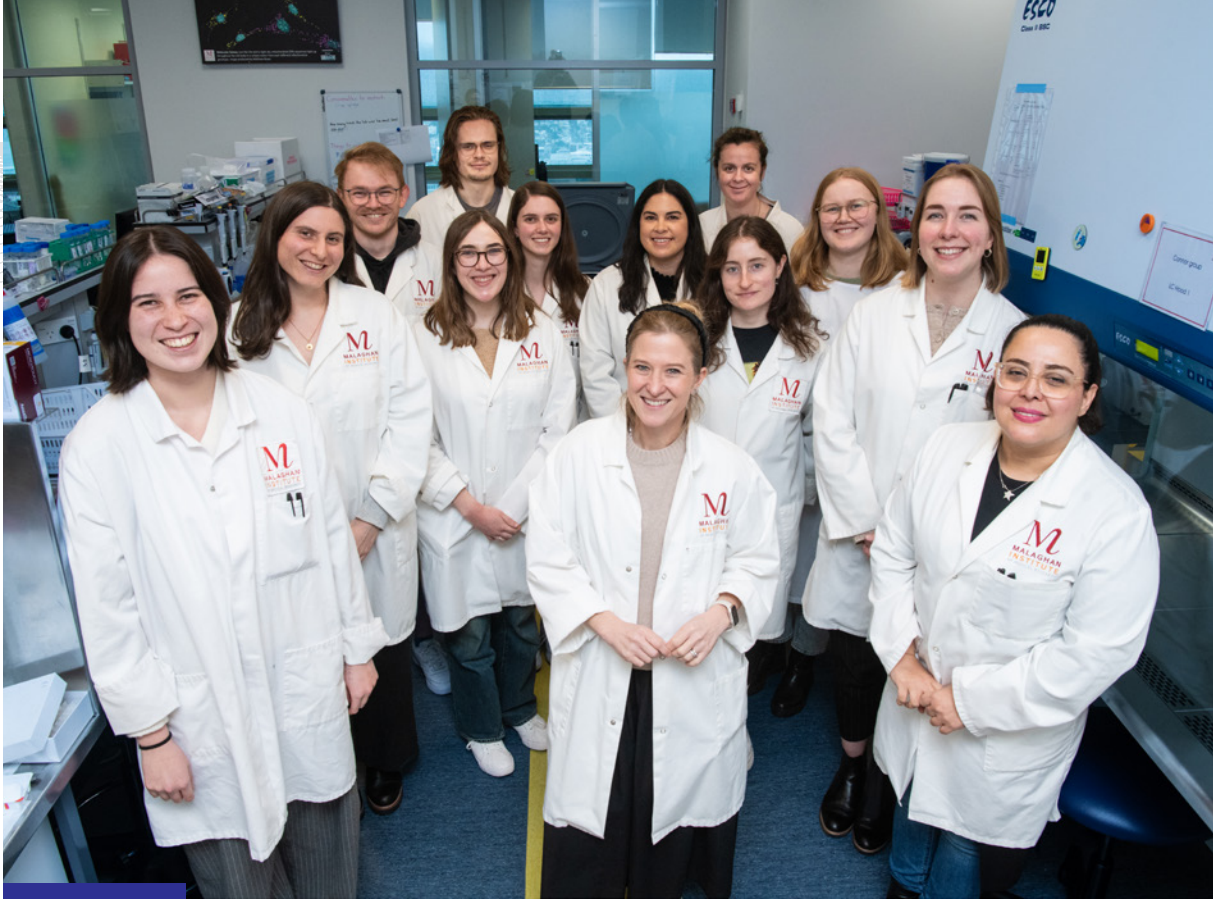
By tailoring the culture conditions and supplements used during the manufacture of CAR T-cells in the lab, the team aims to increase the mitochondrial mass per cell, meaning the CAR T-cells have more gas in the tank to carry out their important task – killing cancer cells – when reintroduced to the body.

"Improving T-cell fitness can also help with making them less susceptible to adverse tumour conditions as it provides a bit more metabolic flexibility which is beneficial in nutrient depleted environments," says Dr O'Sullivan. "This approach could be a simple and low-cost way to increase the effectiveness of CAR T-cell therapy for a broader range of cancer types."

"Future generations of CAR T-cell therapy will involve reprogramming T-cell biology, to armour CAR T-cells against the harsh conditions found within solid tumours," says Clinical Director Prof Weinkove. "Should Dr O'Sullivan's research find new ways to achieve this, our proven track record of taking laboratory discoveries into New Zealand clinical trials puts us in a strong position to advance his concept."



▲ Dr David O'Sullivan



▲ The Connor Laboratory

Research offers new approach to vaccine design for broader immunity

New research by the Connor Laboratory, published in the prestigious *PNAS* journal, shows how directing the immune system towards conserved areas of the Covid virus and its many variants, using RNA technology, could be a significant step towards designing broad-spectrum vaccines.

Viruses are incredibly adept at mutating and altering their structure to evade detection by the immune system – a process known as antigenic drift. The current solution is to design new vaccines each year to keep up. While effective, it comes at a significant cost and requires populations to be regularly vaccinated to maintain widespread immunity and prevent outbreaks and pandemics.

“Like many viruses, SARS-CoV-2 – the Covid virus – changes frequently with multiple different circulating strains globally,” says Dr Isabelle Montgomerie, a postdoctoral researcher in the Connor Lab. “The virus will mutate away from antibodies that people commonly make, something called immune evasion.”

Not all parts of a virus can change so liberally, though – some are ‘conserved’ and cannot mutate without loss of function. Dr Montgomerie says these parts are great to target because antibodies against them are very powerful and could provide protection against future variants.

The challenge is that the immune system doesn’t typically look for these areas to respond to.

In a natural infection, many different kinds of antibodies are generated by B-cells as the immune system figures out which antibody works best. Included in this process are broadly neutralising antibodies – antibodies that can recognise conserved areas – but they account for a very small percentage of the total antibodies made, too few to have much protective effect on their own.

Dr Lisa Connor wants to turn this on its head. “Our aim with this work is to amplify these rare antibodies, and

the B-cells that make them, so they represent a greater proportion of the total antibody response."

The Connor Lab used RNA technology to 'fuse' multiple variants of the Covid virus (both current and historic strains no longer circulating) to create what's known as a divergent vaccine, presenting it to the immune system in preclinical studies.

By combining multiple variants, they found that the immune system was better able to recognise antigens the different strains had in common – in other words, the 'conserved' regions.

"Rather than just combining two separate vaccines into a single shot, we found that a divergent vaccine produced more broadly-neutralising B-cells," says Dr Montgomerie.

"By boosting the presence of broadly-neutralising B-cells via divergent vaccines, we believe these next-generation vaccines could offer protection from rapidly evolving viruses like Covid," says Dr Montgomerie.

For now, the Connor Lab is focused on better understanding how the immune system interacts with divergent vaccines, and whether they can apply this technology to other infectious diseases.

"The same rules we're uncovering could let us build a vaccine before the next pandemic arrives, one that targets the parts of a virus that can't change. For a rapidly evolving virus like influenza or SARS-CoV-2, that could give us enough immunity to slow a new strain down and buy time while a more targeted vaccine is developed."



▲ Dr Lisa Connor

WATCH

The changing landscape of allergic disease research and treatment

Allergy treatment has changed dramatically over the past few decades, moving from reactive, symptom-based management toward more proactive, personalised approaches.

At the same time, recent research is opening the doors to new opportunities – for the first time offering the possibility of not just managing symptoms but preventing these debilitating conditions from occurring in the first place.

In our recent webinar 'The changing landscape of allergic disease research and treatment', world-leading allergy researcher Professor Franca Ronchese and clinical immunologist Dr Maia Brewerton, explored how much things have changed during their time as leaders in the allergy space.

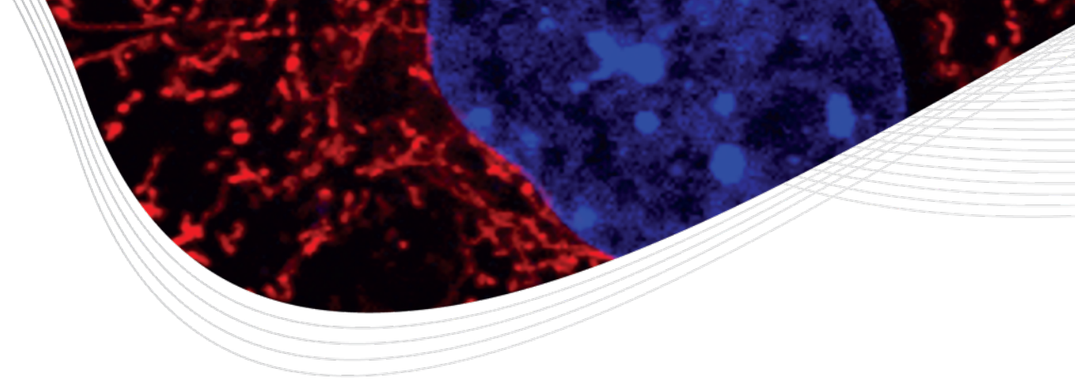


▲ Professor Franca Ronchese and Dr Maia Brewerton

WATCH THE WEBINAR

Scan the QR code or visit

tinyurl.com/2tn87f3x



Year in review

Our latest annual report shows what our supporter community has helped make possible this year: new discoveries in the lab, research moving closer to patients and new opportunities to improve the health of New Zealanders. It's a shared effort, turning promising ideas into discoveries that could change lives. You can read our annual report at **malaghan.org.nz/AR2026**.

WORLD-CLASS TRANSFORMATIVE SCIENCE

Chief Scientist

We've appointed Dr Michelle Linterman as our first chief scientist, to help shape our scientific direction.

New science strategy

We're developing a new science strategy, framed by our strategic plan, to guide our research priorities.

Pathways to people

We're building researcher capability in commercialisation and planning for real-world impact.

Leading-edge technologies

We've invested in new technology to support world-class research – from imaging entire organs in 3D to sequencing DNA and RNA in real time.

58 research papers published

10 ongoing clinical studies and trials

116 national and international collaborators

20 visiting speakers

Made **542** **RNA products** as a partner in NZ's RNA development platform

Total of **64** **patients** treated in ENABLE and ENABLE-2 trials

20 **years** since GMP facility fully licensed to manufacture cell therapies

A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Developing future science leaders

We've introduced an emerging science leaders programme to support development and transition planning.

Malaghan Family Leadership Fund

Thanks to Graham and Dale Malaghan, we're introducing a new professional development programme for senior leaders.

Project Synapse

We've launched an institute-wide initiative to improve how we share knowledge and support each other's work.

Technicians Commitment

We're implementing a plan to strengthen visibility, recognition and career development for technical specialists.

KIWI RESEARCHERS 'ON THE CUSP' OF MORE EFFECTIVE FLU VACCINE
The Post, August 2025

NEW YEAR HONOURS 2026: SIR GRAHAM LE GROS, LIFE SAVER
The Press, January 2026

I WOULDN'T BE ALIVE IF NOT FOR THIS MAGICAL SCIENCE
Sunday Star-Times, February 2026



Professor Sir Graham Le Gros
Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit; Companion of the Royal Society of New Zealand



Sam Small
International Society for Advancement of Cytometry Emerging Leader



Dr Kerry Hilligan
Australasian Society of Immunology Peter Doherty Medal and Lectureship; Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowship



Dr Olivier Lamiable
NZ Branch Councillor for Australasian Society of Immunology



Dr Tom Mules
Health NZ Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley Emerging Researcher Award; NZ Society of Gastroenterology Fellowship Award



Brittany Koning
NZ Executive Councillor for Australian and New Zealand Laboratory Animal Association

PARTNERSHIPS THAT DELIVER IMPACT

CAR-T vs Cancer

New Zealanders got behind our biggest public campaign to date, with $1.4M raised towards our ENABLE-2 trial.

Strategic Science Investment Fund

The government committed to a 7-year $24.9M investment in our mission-led research.

Advancing cellular therapies

We're strengthening and exploring research and commercial partnerships to develop new cell therapies in New Zealand.

Growth in BioOra Ltd

Our CAR-T spinout company has created 60+ science jobs in New Zealand and formed global partnerships, while developing its Christchurch manufacturing site.

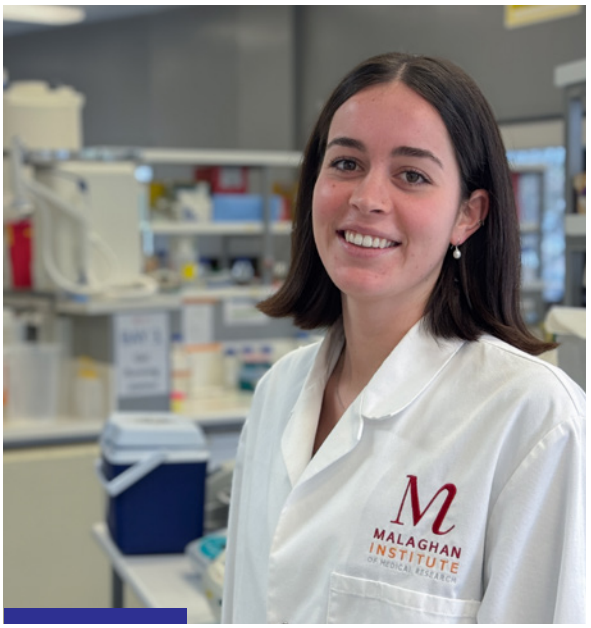
15 **Master's, PhD and postdoctoral researchers** supported through philanthropy.

457 **donors** supporting the Malaghan for 20+ years

3,205 **new supporters** joining our mission

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Louise Cameron is a Master's student in the Lamiable Laboratory, who first joined the Malaghan as a summer research student. Today she's exploring how subtle differences between immune cells may explain why some drive allergic responses and others don't.



▲ Louise Cameron

What first sparked your interest in a career in science?

My dad is an environmental scientist, so I have always been inspired by him to pursue a career in science.

What's the focus of your Master's research?

I'm studying type 2 dendritic cells, a type of immune cell that orchestrates allergic immune responses. Specifically, we're looking at this cell in the skin and lung to see if there are any differences or similarities compared with other dendritic cells, which may shed light on the allergic mechanisms unique to each of these tissues.

If we can uncover these underlying mechanisms, we may be able to find therapeutic targets so we can treat allergies at the core, rather than mitigate the symptoms.

Where do you see yourself in the next 5-10 years?

Hopefully, I will have completed a PhD and be working somewhere that is making a meaningful change in people's lives.

What has studying at the Malaghan Institute taught you so far?

Having inspiring and supporting people around you can help you achieve so much more than you thought you could. There is world-class research happening here at the Malaghan, so we're really punching way above our weight.

What would it mean to you to make or contribute to research that changes how allergies are treated or prevented?

A lot of my friends and family live with allergies, so I see what it costs them day to day. Knowing my work could make a direct difference to their lives is what makes it feel worth doing.

BIG IDEAS, BRIGHT FUTURES

Future breakthroughs in cancer, infectious disease or allergy research will come from the minds of today's young scientists, but only if we can give them the right head start.

Now more than ever, students and recent graduates face an uphill battle to transition from study to a successful, sustainable career in science and medical research.

Your support can make all the difference, giving Malaghan students the mentorship, training and resources they need to transform curiosity into cures.

FAREWELL TO GRAHAM MALAGHAN, STEWARD OF A FAMILY LEGACY

Graham Malaghan – whose family's name the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research carries, and who served more than three decades as chair – died peacefully on 2 July 2026, aged 82.

Former director, Professor Sir Graham Le Gros, who was appointed to lead the Malaghan Institute in 1994 by Graham and fellow trustees, says he will be greatly missed but remembered for his legacy steering an organisation founded on generosity and hope for a better future.

Graham's connection to the institute began in 1966 when his parents Len and Ann Malaghan gifted 100,000 shares in their company General Foods Corp Ltd to what would become the Wellington Cancer and Medical Research Institute Trust to foster medical research in the capital.

Following Len's death from blood cancer in 1967, Ann went on to make further gifts, with the institute renamed as the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research in 1986 in recognition of the family's generosity.

When the 1987 share market crash pushed the institute to the verge of insolvency, Graham stepped in to help secure a rescue package to rebuild it. Sir Graham Le Gros says it was Graham's tremendous sense of loyalty to his mother and what she and his father had intended for their money and the community that propelled him to get stuck in and help turn things around for the organisation.

"Graham taught me about loyalty and commitment to the job – about never, ever giving up, and never being afraid to just take whatever challenge comes your way. We shared a vision for the institute and the need for independent medical research to be done right here in New Zealand, that would improve New Zealanders' lives."

Graham served as chair from 1990 for more than 30 years, during which time the organisation grew from around 20 to more than 130 staff. His tenure was recognised in 2009 with an Honorary Doctorate of Science from Victoria University of Wellington, and in 2012 as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to medical research and philanthropy.



▲ Graham Malaghan

In December 2023, he stepped down as chair, passing the role to Sir Paul Collins, whose father, eminent Wellington surgeon Mr Tom Collins, was also integral to the institute's inception.

"Graham's were big shoes to fill, but I shared his sense of responsibility and stewardship – not just to the Malaghan, but to everything his parents and my father had hoped it would become," says Sir Paul.

"Graham created his own legacy, and in doing so honoured his parents' generosity and vision."

After retiring, Graham commissioned and funded the publication of A Shot in the Arm for Health, a book documenting the Malaghan Institute's history. More recently, Graham and his wife Dale continued their commitment to the institute's future, establishing the Malaghan Family Leadership Fund – a perpetual gift to support professional development for the organisation's senior leaders.

Chief Executive Professor Kjesten Wiig says the gift reflects Graham's and his family's understanding of what an organisation like the Malaghan Institute needs to thrive.

"Over his time at the Malaghan Institute, Graham helped cultivate a high-calibre team to support world-class science. This gift is a fitting way to extend that legacy."

Celebrating community spirit

Somewhere in Wellington this morning, someone ground a fresh batch of the Malaghan blend. They may not have thought about it, but a percentage of every bag sold by Acme Coffee helps cover the cost of doing science in our labs. It's a small thing. But that's how support for the Malaghan begins – with everyday moments that add up.

In Auckland, supporters have laced up for the Auckland Marathon, and Round the Bays isn't far away. Some will run, some will walk and chat the whole way, and every one of them is carrying the Malaghan with them. Come April, many will be walking, running, cycling or swimming for Go the Distance.

Out on the fairways in Hawke's Bay and Wellington, our Friends of the Malaghan groups have hosted golf days that are as much about good company as good golf. In Auckland, our Friends have brought people together for science talks, where our researchers share their work and get asked thoughtful questions about what future therapies might look like.

In workplaces, support looks different again. Chubb Life New Zealand, now three years into its partnership with us, has matched public donations to our annual appeal, shared our research with its advisers and customers, and invited staff to give through payroll. What began as a corporate gift has become something its people and community are part of too.

Coffee, running shoes, golf clubs, payroll giving – it all adds up. Together, it keeps our scientists in the lab, working towards better treatments for cancer and other diseases.

If you'd like to get involved – on your own, with your community group or through your workplace – we'd love to hear from you. You can reach us at fundraise@malaghan.org.nz.

Wendy Walker | Head of Fundraising



▲ Wendy Walker

Honour someone special with a lasting tribute

Giving in memory of someone special is a meaningful way to celebrate their life while supporting life-changing medical research and bringing hope to others.

Visit our new In Memory hub to explore ways to give in memory of a loved one, including creating a personalised tribute page where family and friends can share memories in their honour. Visit: **donate.malaghan.org.nz/give-in-memory**



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT MORE

A lasting commitment to New Zealand health: **Remembering Dr Doug Wilson MNZM**

Dr John 'Doug' Wilson dedicated his life to improving health and wellbeing. A distinguished medical researcher, academic, pharmaceutical executive, author and passionate advocate for healthy ageing, Doug believed science makes a real difference to people's lives – a belief that lives on through the generous gift he left to the Malaghan Institute in his will.

As a young medical researcher, Doug developed a strong interest in haematology and immunology, completing his PhD in London before returning to New Zealand to take up an academic role at Auckland Medical School. His career would go on to span medicine, research and the pharmaceutical industry, taking him and his wife Adele from New Zealand to London, Oxford, Melbourne, Saudi Arabia and the United States, before spending the last two decades of his life at home in Taupō.

But Doug's contribution to medical research was not confined to his own career, and his connection with the Malaghan ran particularly deep. He played an important role in the early development of the Malaghan Institute, including introducing former chair Graham Malaghan to Dr Jim Watson, Professor Sir Graham Le Gros' PhD supervisor at the University of Auckland. That connection helped pave the way for the independent research institute model that has become such an important part of the institute's story.

Doug remained a supporter and friend of the institute throughout his life. He and his wife Adele generously hosted gatherings at their home in Taupō to build interest and support for Malaghan's work in the region. He also continued to share his knowledge and connections, helping us explore opportunities to strengthen the institute and its research.

For Doug, an interest in health was lifelong. He understood that protecting our health was fundamental to living well, and in his later years he became a passionate advocate for healthy ageing.



▲ Doug Wilson MNZM

His work as an author, public speaker and podcaster reflected his belief that ageing should be approached positively and proactively. In 2021, his contribution to the health and wellbeing of older New Zealanders was recognised when he was named Senior New Zealander of the Year.

Doug died peacefully in Taupō in March 2025, aged 87. He leaves behind a remarkable legacy – not only through the people he mentored and inspired, the advances he helped bring to medicine, and the many New Zealanders he encouraged to think differently about ageing, but also through his enduring commitment to medical research.

Doug's generous gift to the Malaghan Institute is a special part of that legacy. It will help our scientists continue their research into the immune system and the diseases that affect so many lives.

We are deeply grateful for Doug's longstanding friendship, his belief in the importance of independent medical research, and his generosity to our future. We hope that, as the Malaghan continues to grow and make discoveries that improve health, Doug would be proud to see the role he played in helping make that possible.

PLEASE TAKE OUR SUPPORTER SURVEY

What matters to you most as a Malaghan supporter?

At the Malaghan Institute, our community helps make our research possible.

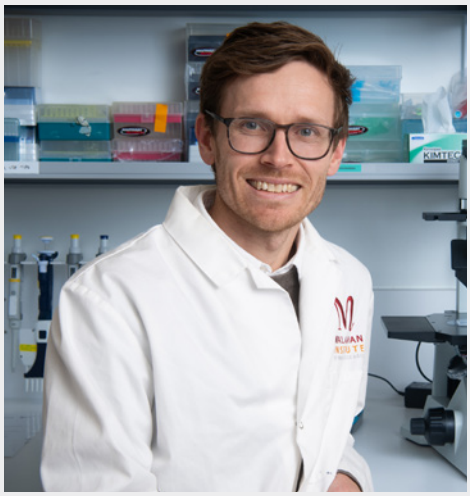
Our supporter survey is your opportunity to let us know what matters to you – what motivates you to support the Malaghan, the research you care about, and how you'd like to stay connected with our work.

It takes around five minutes to complete, and what you tell us will help us better understand what's important to you. Any information you choose to share will be kept in confidence and handled in accordance with the Malaghan Institute's Privacy Policy.

As a little thank you for your time and sharing your thoughts, everyone who completes the survey by January 1, 2027 will go into the draw to win a $100 book voucher.

TO COMPLETE OUR SUPPORTER SURVEY, SIMPLY SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT

malaghan.org.nz/survey-2026



"We're approaching disease from a different angle. Rather than simply treating the symptoms, we're working to understand what drives disease so we can intervene earlier, before complications develop.

Philanthropic support is what makes this research possible. It allows us to harness cutting-edge technology, take our research to the next level and push the boundaries of what's possible for patients."

– Dr Tom Mules

Your generosity helps our scientists explore new ideas and pursue discoveries that could change lives. If you'd like to support our research, we would be so grateful. To make a donation please visit **donate.malaghan.org.nz**.

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