

MELANOMA MATTERS

AUTUMN 2007

GP'S RALLY BEHIND PILOT STUDY

Hundreds of questionnaires and blood samples volunteered by West Australians with melanoma have been collected, marking the completion of the pilot program for the Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre (SKMRC).

The project aims to create the most comprehensive library of melanoma information of its kind in the world.

The Study's success is demonstrated by the strong support it's received from the medical community including practitioners on the front-line, dermatologists and GP's.

Dr Jeffery Lifshen, a GP who had his own brush with melanoma last year at the age of 31, said it was important for those diagnosed to be involved in the Study because melanoma would continue to affect future generations, unless more was learned about the disease.

"With more patients enrolled in genetic research projects such as this, researchers can more rapidly, and hopefully more accurately, identify people and families who are most at risk, so they can be directed to early detection services sooner," he said.

"I hope that this study will one day identify genetic links to each variety of melanoma. I believe that if a genetic link can be identified in the project, we'll be closer to putting programs in place that can improve detection rates, whilst we continue to look for a vaccine or cure."

Fremantle Dermatology's Dr Hannes Gebauer said the benefits of the initiative were two-fold, helping doctors and researchers to better understand the condition, as well as giving support to patients. "People involved in the study find value in the knowledge that something more is being done to help them and they are contributing to research that



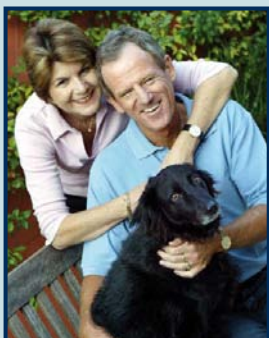
Dr Gabauer with Cassie at Fremantle Dermatology

could improve advice and treatment today as well as giving future generations a better chance," he said.

"All of my patients have been in full support of the study – one patient recently had an aggressive melanoma removed from his leg and while we were talking about statistics and risks, he came to realise they had all come from previous research studies, which really demonstrates the importance of being involved in such projects."

Please visit www.skmrc.org.au for more information about the Study and updates on the team's progress.

LIVING SIMPLY WITH CANCER: ROSS TAYLOR'S JOURNEY



Ross Taylor with wife Kathy and their dog Penny

Within three short weeks of being diagnosed with skin cancer in 1993, Ross Taylor's high-flying, jet-setting lifestyle was shattered.

At 42 years of age, the news that he had malignant melanoma with secondaries in the lymph glands was, of course, devastating.

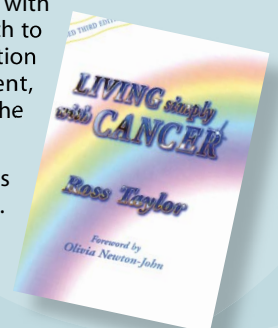
Now, 13 years later, Mr Taylor has been able to live well with the cancer, realign his personal values and purpose, as well as give strength to countless people whose lives have also been touched by cancer.

"The inspiration for my book came from a desire to give something back to society and I am in a fortunate position to be able to extend hope and empowerment to many people who have had to deal

with a cancer diagnosis," Mr Taylor said.

Mr Taylor's book 'Living Simply with Cancer' takes an holistic approach to healing, incorporating information on nutrition, stress management, diet, treatment, spirituality and the role of a carer.

'Living Simply with Cancer' is available online at www.lifeforce.com.au and can be ordered through most good book shops – Mr Taylor donates all profits from his book to cancer support.



RACE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CANCER

On a sweltering Saturday afternoon, Ascot played host to the hottest event this summer, raising more than \$40,000 for the SKMRC.

On February 3, the lively event attracted 1,200 guests who braved the heat to support the successful fundraiser.

The day reached its peak at race seven named in honour of the Centre – the SKMRC Challenge Stakes. After the race, awards were presented to the owner and jockey by Scott Kirkbride's brother, Nick.

As part of the day, Elizabeth Newnham of Dalkeith won a motorised scooter and Mark Leahy of Mt Pleasant will take his pick from two tickets to the AFL Grand Final or a trip to the Dubai World Cup.

The day would not have been possible without the support of the corporate sponsors. Money for the Centre was also raised through \$50 ticket sales and a generous donation from the SKMRC Challenge Stakes race winners, Peter Prendiville and Brett Fogarty.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken said the success of the event was a tribute to many, but was a direct result of the tireless efforts of Peter Collins who generously initiated and coordinated the event, Joanne Drew from Perth Racing and Scott Kirkbride's mother Yvonne. He also extended thanks to Jeff Newman for being the compere on the day, and to 720 ABC Perth for their integral support.

PETER COLLINS

Motivated by the loss of his mother to cancer, the passing of a young family friend and his own close encounters with skin cancer, 65-year-old Peter Collins made a pact with himself to do all he could to raise vital funds and boost awareness of melanoma, and recently led the coordination of the SKMRC's fundraising race day.

Mr Collins said he was driven to hold an event which would raise as much funds as possible for the Centre, as well as appeal to younger West Australians, who he believed were most in need of the skin cancer prevention message.

"We had a terrific response for the fundraising race day; especially from young people – there really was an enormous groundswell of support from the youth in Perth to be there on the day and help us raise money for melanoma research," he said.

"Having had a heap of small cancers removed myself because I spent most of my youth out in the sun without protection, I know all too well how important the skin cancer prevention message is at a young age – it can come back to haunt you and I count myself lucky that while I've had many small, common skin cancers cut out, thankfully they have not threatened my life."

Mr Collins said after his friends the Kirkbrides lost Scott, it struck a chord with his own experience of losing his mother through cancer 30 years ago and wanted to do something to help the Centre raise important funding.

Mr Collins also held a fundraising luncheon at Lake Karrinyup Country Club in July 2005, which raised \$12,000 for the SKMRC.



Rob Kirkbride, Peter Collins, Joanne Drew & Yvonne Kirkbride



VONNIE'S VOLUNTEERS

WAIMR is opening volunteer opportunities for people who would like to get involved and contribute to lifesaving work at the Institute and the SKMRC.

Volunteers are needed across a whole range of duties to suit all individual skills and talents.

If you are interested in becoming one of 'Vonnie's Volunteers' please register your interest via email at yvonnek@waimr.uwa.edu.au or by phoning (08) 9224 0333.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The next SKMRC event will be the annual fundraising luncheon and auction to be held on Friday May 18th. Table bookings and ticket sales are available.

For more information or tickets, please call (08) 9224 0333.

CONTACT DETAILS

Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre within the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research

Phone: +61 8 9224 0333
Fax: +61 8 9224 0322
Email: lucycont@waimr.uwa.edu.au
yvonnek@waimr.uwa.edu.au

Postal address:
Level 6, MRF Building
Rear 50 Murray St
Perth WA 6000
AUSTRALIA

www.skmrc.org.au

All donations to the Centre over \$2 are tax deductible.

