



From the Executive Officer

In the last edition of Biobank Brief we featured the supply of fresh tissue across all tumour streams from 1 January this year. Applications for fresh tissue access continue to increase and our processes for supplying researchers are meeting the demand. In the first three months, 23 fresh tissue samples across 7 different tumour streams were delivered. The graph featured on the back of this newsletter highlights the increasing demand for this service, which we continue to supply. In the second quarter of 2008, we supplied a further 95 fresh specimens across 9 different tumour streams to researchers.

In this edition, we highlight the expansion of our services beyond providing fresh and archival biospecimens to include project specific collection and clinical trial support where there is a translational research focus. In order to streamline the application process for accessing these four different categories of biospecimens and, we have introduced a module format that is detailed on Page 2.

In the last three months, renovations being undertaken at Austin Health and Southern Health have been completed. The upgrading of the facilities at the Austin and Southern Health sites provides all four Consortium member sites of the Biobank with equal capacity. Renovations to the Austin Health site have been completed and expand the Biobank's capacity to collect, process and store biospecimens from

donors undergoing surgery at the Austin, Northern and Warringal Private hospitals. The renovations at Monash Medical Centre, Clayton have provided a much needed storage facility for Southern Health. The new facility will provide space for storage and retrieval of tissues collected and processed from donors undergoing surgery at Monash Medical Centres at Clayton and Moorabbin, as well as Dandenong, Frankston, Cabrini and The Alfred hospitals.

Our services have expanded beyond providing fresh and archival biospecimens to include project specific collection and clinical trial support where there is a translational research focus.

In the 12 months since the centralised process for accessing biospecimens has been introduced, the number of applications has steadily increased. On the back page of this newsletter, the requests for accessing biospecimens across the tumour streams are included with the collection figures for the first time. The project specific requests for prospective collection clearly highlight the challenges for the Biobank as we work to meet the needs of the research community.

*Dr Anne Thompson, Executive Officer,
Victorian Cancer Biobank*

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Presentations

The Biobank welcomes the opportunity to inform researchers from the academic and commercial sectors of our services and to better understand their current and future needs.

From May to August 2008, presentations at the following events provided the opportunity for this communication to occur:

- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and The College of Surgeons of Hong Kong Conjoint Annual Scientific Congress, Hong Kong, 13 May (Anne Thompson)
- International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER) 2008 Annual Meeting, Bethesda, Maryland, USA, 20 May (Zoe Squire)
- VCOG Urological Cancer Committee Meeting, The Cancer Council Victoria, 12 June (Anne Thompson)
- Barwon Health Breast Multidisciplinary Meeting, Andrew Love Cancer Centre, Geelong, 25 June (Anne Thompson)
- Clinical Research Excellence (CRX08) Conference, Brisbane, 8 August (Anne Thompson)

To arrange a Biobank presentation at your hospital or research institute, please email enquiries@viccancerbiobank.org.au.

Streamlining Access to Biospecimens

The Biobank is committed to providing researchers with biospecimens and services, as quickly and efficiently as possible, through the model of multi-site collection and centralised access. The establishment of a centralised Access Committee in October 2007 was an important milestone in implementing the model. We have recently reviewed the processes we have been using over the last 10 months and introduce changes that we believe will improve the application process.

Application Forms

The revised Application Forms have been designed in a module format and a brief description is provided below:

Part A: General Application Details

All applicants must complete Part A, which includes details about the investigators, funding and ethics.

Depending on the specific requirements, one or more of the following forms will have to be completed:

Part B: Fresh Tissue

Applicants requesting fresh tissue (supplied on ice and in media) should complete Part B to provide details of their request.

Part C: Biospecimen Derived Products

Applicants requesting the following biospecimen products derived from the Biobank's archival collection should complete Part C:

- Frozen tissue
- OCT blocks or sections
- Paraffin sections
- DNA / RNA
- Blood products
- Tissue microarrays

In the event that the requested specimens are not available in the archival collection, prospective collection will be arranged.

Part D: Clinical Trials Support

Applicants requesting biospecimens as part of a clinical trial should complete Part D. This applies to clinical trial protocols that include approval for consent and collection of biospecimens from participants, or where there is an associated protocol, which includes approval for consent and collection for a clinical trial.

Part E: Project Specific

All projects that do not fall into one of the other categories listed above are considered to be project specific applications and Part E should be completed to provide details of the applicant's requirements. Applicants requiring the Biobank to consent donors should also complete Part E.

Applications Manager: Judy Davey

To coordinate the processing of the increasing number of applications being received, Judy Davey has joined us at Central Operations as the Applications Manager. Judy's role at the Biobank is to streamline access to biospecimens and services by liaising with researchers to ensure that all required documentation has been submitted and forms completed prior to forwarding applications to the Access Committee for review.

Judy has extensive experience in research management having worked at the Royal Children's Hospital as the Manager of the Ethics and Research Office before becoming Operations Manager at the Centre for Adolescent Health.

Judy is available on Monday and Tuesday at Ph: 03 9635 5362 or E-mail: judy.davey@cancervic.org.au.



Centralising management of pre-existing projects

An important part of implementing the centralised access model was to rollover all pre-existing projects being managed by the Consortium member tissue banks to Central Operations. A total of 35 projects have been transferred.

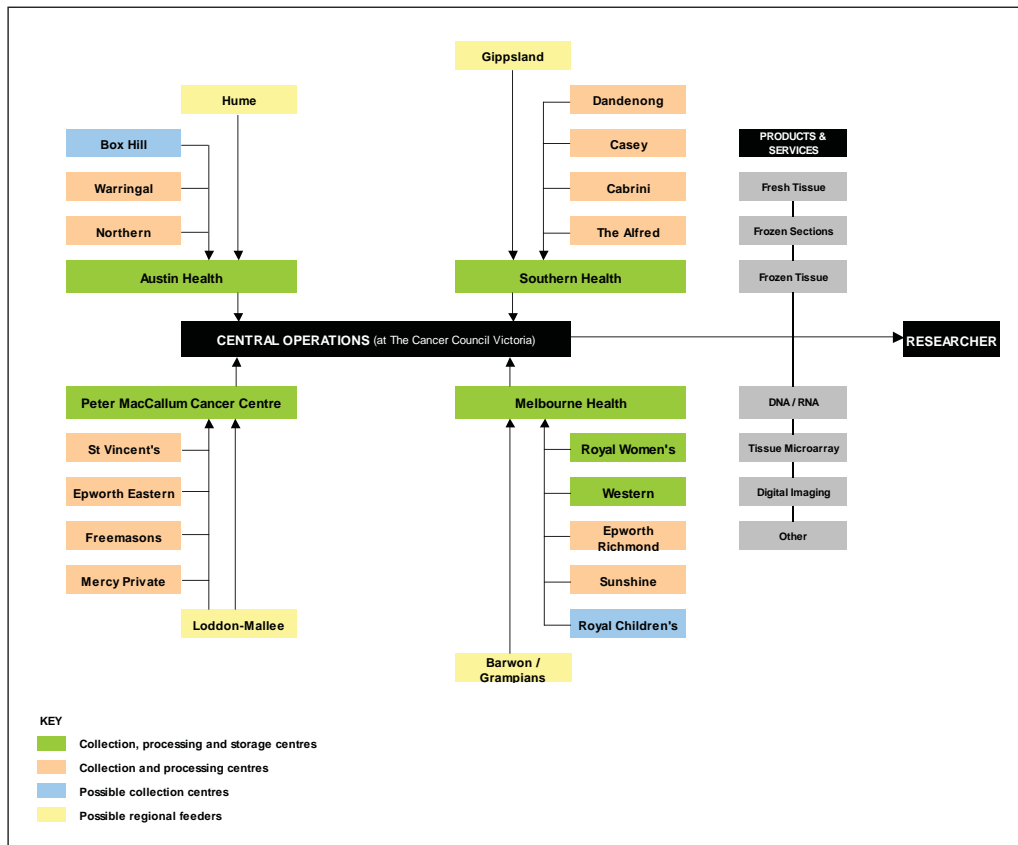
This process will enable these projects to be supplied with biospecimens from all the member sites, potentially reducing the time researchers wait to be supplied with the requested number of biospecimens.

Supporting Project Specific Collection and Clinical Trials

The “hub and spokes” model of the Biobank is ideally suited to supporting multi-site translational research projects and clinical trials. We now have in place an application module, Part E which enables researchers to detail the services they require from the Biobank at the participating hospitals. These services can include any combination of consenting, collection, processing, storage and delivery. Since introducing the new application forms last month, we have already received five applications.

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Expansion of the Biobank to the Geelong region will also provide support for multi-centre clinical trial activities involving patients and clinicians in the Barwon Region, as well as supporting researchers at Deakin University undertaking translational research requiring human tissue. The application for collection to commence has now been approved by the Barwon Health Human Research Ethics Committees. Plans for establishing a Biobank site within St John of God Pathology in Geelong are being implemented and it is anticipated that a medical scientist will commence tissue



collection activities before the end of 2008. Collection will involve donors undergoing surgery at Geelong Private, Geelong Public and St John of God hospitals.

Farewell to Audrey Partanen

After eight years managing the Royal Melbourne Tissue Bank, we farewell Audrey Partanen.

Audrey commenced her career in tissue banking in 2000 when she established the Victorian Breast Cancer Research Consortium Tissue Bank at Royal Melbourne Hospital.

For 12 months during 2004 and 2005, in addition to managing the VBCRC Tissue Bank, Audrey worked as the Tissue Bank Project Officer for the Victorian Tissue Bank Cooperative at The Cancer Council Victoria. In this role, Audrey developed then implemented the project plans to standardise and harmonise tissue banking activities across the existing tissue banks that are now the Consortium members of the Biobank. This work underpinned the STI-3 Grant application submitted to the Victorian Government and was fundamental in successfully obtaining funds for the establishment of the Victorian Cancer Biobank.

The Biobank continues to benefit from Audrey's contribution through the staff she trained and the standard operating

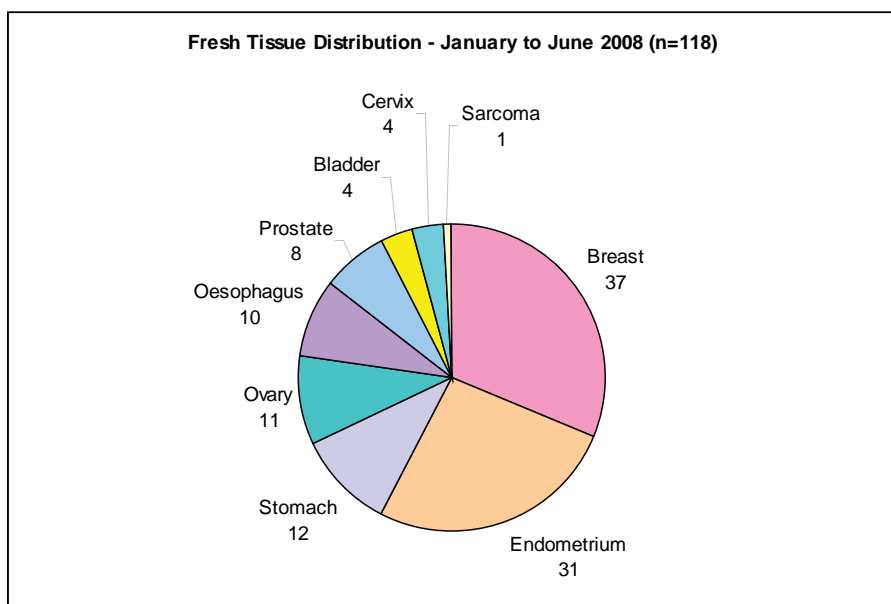
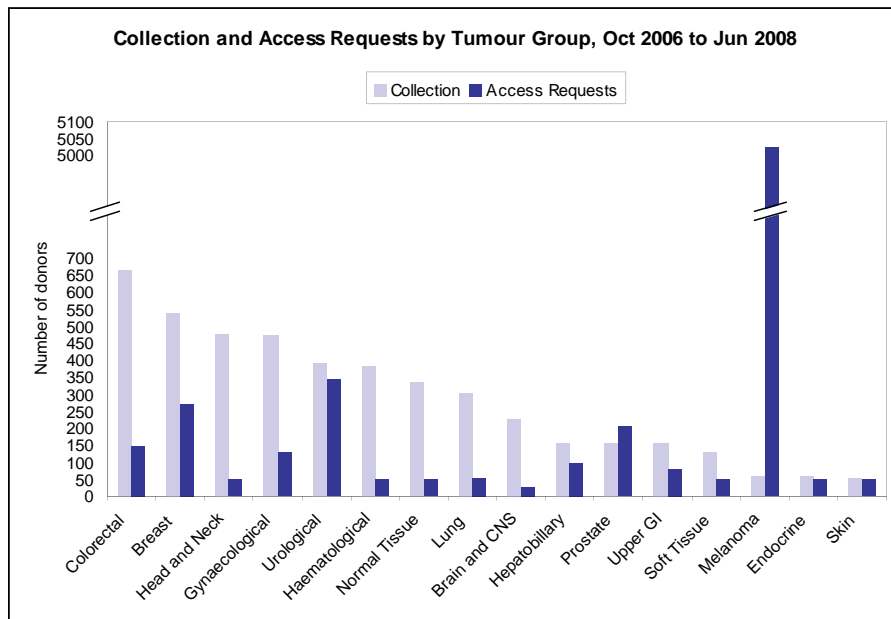
procedures and policies she developed. We will enjoy continuing to work with Audrey in her new role as Program Coordinator managing the Breast Cancer Biomarker Project, which is a VCA funded research platform that aims to identify and develop oncology biomarkers for drug development and potential clinical trial design.

We are fortunate to have Matt Chapman return to the Melbourne Health Tissue Bank as the Tissue Bank Manager. Matt has extensive experience in tissue banking having worked at the Western Health as the Tissue Bank Coordinator from 2004 to 2007.



Collection and Access

More than 4,500 donors have consented to give their tissue and blood to the Biobank. Biospecimens across all tumour streams are collected along with associated clinical data. The Biobank manages researcher requests for fresh tissue, archival specimens and project specific / clinical trial collection across all tumour streams.



The Victorian Cancer Biobank is a not-for-profit consortium supported by The Cancer Council Victoria and the Victorian Government.

Consortium members are Austin Health, Melbourne Health, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Southern Health.

Vision

To be the first choice for the supply of cancer tissue to take hypothesis through to discovery.

Core values

Integrity a reliable and ethical approach to biobanking.

Excellence the provision of quality biospecimens and service to researchers

Innovation centralised access to multi-centre collections

Contacts

1 Rathdowne Street
 Carlton Victoria 3053
 Ph 03 9635 5091
 Noellyn.Ngo@cancervic.org.au
 www.viccancerbiobank.org.au

How to Apply

Step 1

Visit the website to read the Information on How to Apply and Conditions of Use.

Step 2

Contact the Biobank to check availability and to discuss your specific needs.

Step 3

Download the relevant Application for Human Biospecimens forms from the website. Complete the forms and submit. A quote for the cost recovery fee will be provided and your application will be processed.

Step 4

The Biobank Access Committee will review your application. Once approved, a Materials Transfer Agreement will be forwarded to you. Upon receipt of the signed MTA, your biospecimens will be dispatched.

