

From the Executive Officer

As can be seen in this edition of Biobank Brief, 2008 has been a busy and productive year. Staff at all the Biobank collection and processing sites and in Central Operations have done a fantastic job working together to process applications and coordinate the distribution of samples to researchers. More than 6000 donors have been consented for the collection of blood and tissue this year and more than 25,000 of the resulting biospecimens have been provided to researchers locally, interstate and internationally.

The Biobank was successful in its application to the Victorian Cancer Agency for \$2.23 million in the 2008/9 financial year to expand the services we offer to support translational research activities.

In these last four months of 2008, we have begun the process of employing additional Medical Scientists and a Pathology Registrar to support collection and processing of samples at Cabrini, the Alfred and Box Hill hospitals.

More than 6,000 donors have been consented this year and more than 25,000 of the resulting biospecimens have been provided to researchers locally, interstate and internationally.

The purpose of expanding our collection network to these sites is to support project specific collection services, however the research community as a whole will benefit from access to larger amounts of tissue and blood products. Research projects such as the Melbourne Melanoma Project, the Victorian Breast Cancer Research Consortium (VBCRC) and the Human Colon Cancer Initiative (HCCI) look to the Biobank to supply significant amounts of biospecimens and associated data to the participating researchers.

In addition, the funds from the Victorian Cancer Agency will be used to support expansion to the Geelong region. Agreements have been signed with St John of God Pathology to employ a Medical Scientist and a Pathology Registrar to support the collection and processing of blood and tissue from donors at Geelong Public, Geelong Private and St John of God Pathology. The Geelong site will be linked to the Melbourne Health Tissue Bank where the long-term storage of the biospecimens will occur. As outlined on Page 2, the funds will also be used to purchase digital imaging equipment for installation at the four Consortium Member sites. The process of selecting appropriate software and hardware has already commenced.

In 2009, we hope to continue to meet the needs of the research community. Some of our challenges will include increasing our supply of services such as clinical research support as well as value added products such as DNA, RNA and tissue microarrays and access to digital imaging equipment.

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 September to December 2008, presentations at the following events provided the opportunity for this communication to occur:

- ANZ Head & Neck Society Annual Scientific Meeting, Melbourne, 5 Sep (Anne Thompson)
- Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) Annual Scientific Meeting, Sydney, 18 Nov (Anne Thompson)
- Australasian Biospecimen Network (ABN) Conference, Sydney, 21 Nov (Sam Cauberg, Pam Mammers & Zoe Squire)
- Monash Cancer Network Symposium (MonCanN), Melbourne, 25 Nov (Anne Thompson)

In addition, the following talks were also given to community groups to increase awareness and support of the Biobank from the general public:

- Barwon Relay for Life Launch, Geelong, 10 Oct (Anne Thompson)
- Cancer Council Victoria Bequest Forum, Mornington Peninsula, 27 Nov (Anne Thompson)
- Leaders for Geelong Program, Geelong, 4 Dec (Anne Thompson)

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

MonCanN Report

On Tuesday 25 November 2008, the Monash Institute of Medical Research (MIMR) and Southern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service (SMICS) held a one-day symposium where researchers presented their work.

The goal was to provide an opportunity to network and identify potential collaborators. The symposium was such a success that the hope is that it will become an annual event.

Of particular interest was the significant proportion of researchers whose work is supported by the provision of biospecimens from the Biobank.

Of particular interest was the significant proportion of researchers whose work is supported by the provision of biospecimens from the Biobank. The biospecimens assist these researchers investigate breast, prostate, bladder and thyroid cancers and have been supplied as either fresh tissue or archival biospecimen derivatives.

The MonCanN symposium gave an excellent overview of cancer research in the southern region of Melbourne and was the perfect opportunity to provide information on the Biobank to researchers. We look forward to supporting them in their future research endeavours.

Upcoming Digital Imaging Resource

The Biobank was successful in receiving funds from the Victorian Cancer Agency to purchase digital imaging equipment for installation at the four Consortium Member sites. The equipment will be used to scan and store digital pathology images associated with Biobank tissue samples. These images will be used for quality assurance purposes and to enable researchers to view and request samples online.

The digital imaging equipment will also be available as a shared resource to pathologists and researchers at each site and associated sites for evaluating and quantitating tissue and tissue microarray sections (TMAs) visualised using in-situ hybridisation and immunohistochemistry. These images will be stored locally.

A Digital Imaging Working Group was formed in September to advise the Biobank Consortium Committee on the best equipment, software applications and server configurations to maximise benefits from this resource.

Representatives from Consortium Member sites, as well as an independent member, have generously provided their time to share their molecular pathology and informatics expertise during two meetings. It is anticipated that the new equipment will be installed and operational in the first half of 2009.

Members of the Digital Imaging Working Group are:

- Dr Anne Thompson, Executive Officer, Victorian Cancer Biobank (Chair)
- A/Prof Ian Campbell, Head, VBCRC Cancer Genetics Laboratory, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- Dr Michael Christie, Pathology Registrar, Royal Melbourne Hospital
- Dr Peter Crowley, Director, Anatomical Pathology, Austin Health



- Dr Siddhartha Deb, Pathology Registrar, Austin Health
- Margaret Dimech, Anatomical Pathology QA Program, RCPA
- Prof Stephen Fox, Director of Pathology, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- Dr Beena Kumar, Anatomical Pathologist, Southern Health
- Prof Tony Landgren, Director, Anatomical Pathology, Melbourne Health
- Dr Carmel Murone, Tissue Bank Manager, Austin Health
- Dr David Williams, Pathology Registrar, Royal Melbourne Hospital



Biospecimen Access and Supply

Applications Manager: Joanne Edgar

In the second half of 2008, the number of applications received for review by the Biobank Access Committee more than doubled, resulting in the need for a full-time Applications Manager. Joanne



Edgar commenced full-time with the Biobank this month and is based in Central Operations at the Cancer Council Victoria.

Joanne has a Bachelor of Biomedical Science degree from Central Queensland University

and more than six years experience as a medical scientist in commercial pathology laboratories, including experience in processing human tissue. More recently Joanne has worked as a senior scientist in Research and Development at Leica Microsystems where she supervised a scientific team and managed the Tissue Bank that is used by the research group there.

Our thanks to Judy Davey, who worked with us 2 days a week from June, for providing Joanne with a comprehensive briefing ensuring a smooth transition.

Biospecimen Supply

As shown in Table 1 below, more than 25,400 biospecimen products have been delivered to researchers over the previous 15 months. More than 92% of the biospecimens provided to researchers is in the form of archival material. Colorectal and breast are the predominant tumour types

supplied. The most commonly requested products are: snap frozen tissue aliquots, OCT embedded and paraffin embedded tissue sections.

Feedback from researchers indicates that the integrity of the tissue is sound, resulting in the successful culture of cell lines from the samples.

Fresh tissue has been supplied for 12 different tumour types throughout metropolitan Melbourne with the samples arriving in culture media on ice within hours of surgery. Feedback from researchers indicates that the integrity of the tissue is sound, resulting in the successful culture of cell lines from the samples.

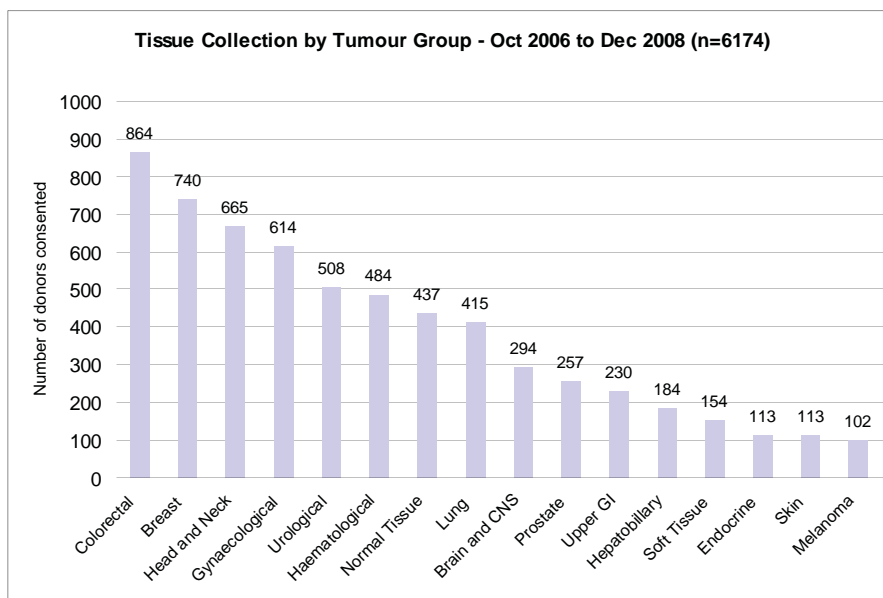
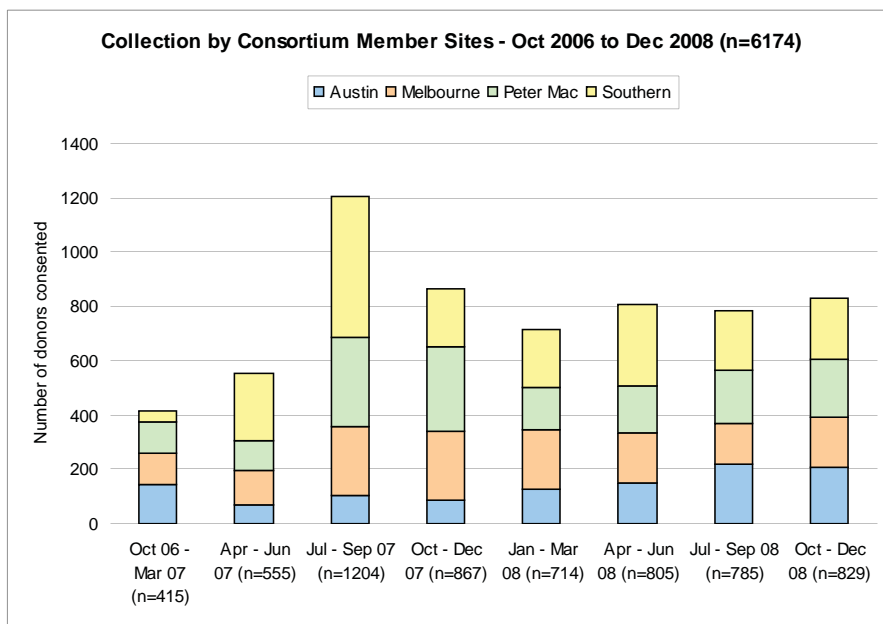
Table 1: Biospecimens supplied - September 2007 to December 2008

Tumour Type	Tissue Biospecimens							Blood Biospecimens				TOTAL
	Fresh Tissue	Snap Frozen Tissue	DNA	OCT Sections	OCT Blocks	Paraffin Sections	Paraffin Blocks	Bone Marrow	Plasma	Serum	Buffy Coat	
Bladder	37											37
Bone Marrow								3				3
Brain & CNS				43								43
Breast	186	317	13	256		20						792
Colorectal		4,423		47		17,886	1				1,080	23,437
Endometrium	83											83
H&N - Lymph Node	4											4
H&N - Tonsil	10											10
Kidney				23	7		405					435
Liver	1											1
Lung		49		53							36	138
Melanoma	12			57								69
Oesophagus	8											8
Ovary	34											34
Prostate	41			90								131
Sarcoma		63							22	22	53	160
Spleen	4											4
Stomach	19											19
TOTAL	439	4,852	13	569	7	17,906	406	3	22	22	1,169	25,408



Our Collection

More than 6,000 donors have consented to give their tissue and blood to the Biobank. Biospecimens across all tumour streams are collected along with associated clinical data.



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 for your acceptance, after which your application will be processed.

Step 4

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

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

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