

L to R: Hon Gavin Jennings, Mr Neville Malley, Mr Brendan Murphy and Dr Anne Thompson

Austin Health Launch

On Thursday 22 January 2009 the Minister for Innovation, the Hon Gavin Jennings, officially launched the newly upgraded Biobank facility at Austin Health. Approximately 50 researchers, staff and supporters attended this event, which was chaired by Dr Brendan Murphy, CEO of Austin Health. Mr Neville Malley, a prostate cancer patient and donor, also participated in the launch.

The new facility will be the hub for the processing and storage of the much needed specimens collected from Austin Health, Warringal and Northern Hospitals.

In his speech, Mr Jennings said, "More than 6,000 people have donated tissue and blood to the Biobank since October 2006 and over 24,000 biospecimens have been supplied to cancer research throughout Australia." In order to help facilitate this growth the Biobank provided \$300,000 to create the new facility at the Austin, which includes a laboratory, a cryo storeroom and offices within the Anatomical Pathology department. The new facility will be the hub for the processing and storage of the much needed specimens collected from Austin Health, Warringal and Northern Hospitals.

The Victorian Cancer Agency has recognised the important role of the Biobank by committing \$2.23 million for 2008/9 financial year as a part of the Victorian Cancer Action Plan. These funds will be used to expand the Biobank collection network to the Geelong region, to support clinical trial activity at Barwon Health and cancer research being undertaken at Deakin University.

Annual Report 2008

The Victorian Cancer Biobank Annual Report 2008 was published in April. The report highlights the activities, achievements and progress made in 2008.

The report is available for download from the Biobank website – www.viccancerbank.org.au. For a printed copy please email – enquiries@viccancerbiobank.org.au.

Updated Website

The Biobank website has recently been updated to include further information for patient and researchers regarding the services the Biobank provides. This update also involved making the website more user friendly and adding additional forms.

Patients and researchers can now find a generic patient information sheet and consent form online. Any additional suggestions can be emailed to Anne.Thompson@cancervic.org.au.

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Quality Management

In March of this year, audits of the four main Biobank sites took place to ensure standard operating procedures were being followed. The audits focused on:

- Standard operating procedures for processing and labeling of tissue and blood biospecimens
- Management of consented donor information and specimens
- Quality control (pathology verification) of biospecimens

Results from the audit indicated good compliance by collection sites. Satellite collection sites will be included in a follow-up audit later in 2009.

Biospecimen Quality Control

The Biobank Quality Management System includes activities to manage and monitor:

- Quality Assurance (QA): development and adherence to standard protocols,
- Quality Control (QC): random sample checks to assess the functional quality of biospecimens

Results from QC testing will not only indicate the quality of the biospecimens, but have the potential to identify critical processing timeframes or activities, which impact the quality of biospecimens.

QC testing of biospecimens in the Biobank collection has been outsourced to Cancer Trials Australia (CTA). RNA extractions and RIN analyses on snap frozen tissue, fresh tissue stored in RNAlater (straight from theatre) and cell viability and proliferative capacity of peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC's) isolated from blood will be performed. Specimens for QC testing were selected to ensure they were representative of tumour types and year of collection.

Results from QC testing will not only indicate the quality of the biospecimens, but have the potential to identify critical processing timeframes or activities, which impact the quality of biospecimens. This information can then be used to revise and improve the SOPs, a central part of the continuous improvement cycle of quality management. It is anticipated that results from testing will be reported in the next edition of the Biobank Brief.

Researcher Satisfaction Survey

A customer satisfaction survey was undertaken in February 2009. The survey covered the application process, quoting, the supply of biospecimens and marketing. Researchers were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on any other issues relating to the services offered by the Biobank.

The responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the application process, the provision of quotes and communication with Biobank staff regarding their application.

Researchers were very satisfied with quality of the received biospecimens. This included packaging. Some feedback obtained regarding the labelling of biospecimens resulted in changes to the standard labelling procedure. Which has now been implemented.

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Researchers indicated their satisfaction with the services offered for each of the Application types (Fresh tissue, Archival Biospecimens, Value Added Services, Project Specific collections and Clinical Research Support).

Additional feedback from researchers showed particular interest in:

- Linking to Biogrid to obtain clinical data associated with the biospecimens
- Implementation of a database to manage the collection
- Of particular interest to researchers is the ability to access matched archival material for fresh tissue specimens they have received.
- A number of researchers indicated they would like to have access to the Biobank price list.

Where relevant, feedback from researchers led to review and adjustment of standard operating procedures to ensure greater clarity or provide more detailed information. Once case of researcher dissatisfaction was clarified and satisfactorily resolved by direct telephone contact.



Tissue Micro Arrays (TMAs): Survey Results

A survey of researchers (2008) showed a keen interest in TMAs being offered by the Biobank. The preferences for the format of TMAs was:

First: Tumour by Stage

Second: Tumour by receptor status, Tumour by histological grades and stages

Third: Tumour by subtype, Various cancer types with some normal and Tumour by grade

The majority of researchers indicated they would be most interested in the preparation of TMAs specifically for their research purposes while half of those surveyed said they would be interested in pre-prepared standard TMAs.

On average, researchers indicated they would request 10-50 sections per TMA of interest.

The Biobank is keen to support the needs of the research community. A program to develop the delivery of TMAs to researchers is currently underway. Key issues to address include:

- Quality assurance and control of TMAs
- Standard format of TMAs
- Fee per section
- Development of standard vs. researcher specific TMAs
- Inclusion of digital images of TMAs on website

Tissue Micro Arrays (TMAs): Digital Images

The Biobank is always looking for ways to support researchers and the feedback we are receiving suggests a lot of interest in TMAs.

Working with staff at our sites we have developed a standard protocol for the preparation of TMAs. This includes selection of suitable tissue blocks (with sufficient percentage tumour), inclusion of an orientation core to enable correlation to the TMA template and associated data and quality control procedures. TMAs will be offered in a variety of formats and core sizes.

With the upcoming installation of digital imaging equipment at our hub sites (Austin Health, Peter Mac, Southern Health and Melbourne Health) we plan to eventually offer digital images of TMAs in the library on our website.



Presentations

During the first quarter of 2009, the following presentations provided the opportunity for communication with researchers from the academic and commercial sectors:

- Victorian Cancer Biobank at Cabrini Health: Facilitating multi-site studies involving tissue to assist research, Cabrini Health Surgeons meeting, 9 Feb (Pam Mammers & Lisa McPhail)
- What does the Biobank offer and how can you use it? Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre DHMO Senior Medical Staff Meeting, 27 Feb (Anne Thompson)
- Victorian Cancer Biobank at Morning Tea for the Relay for Life, Geelong, 14 Mar 2009 (Anne Thompson)

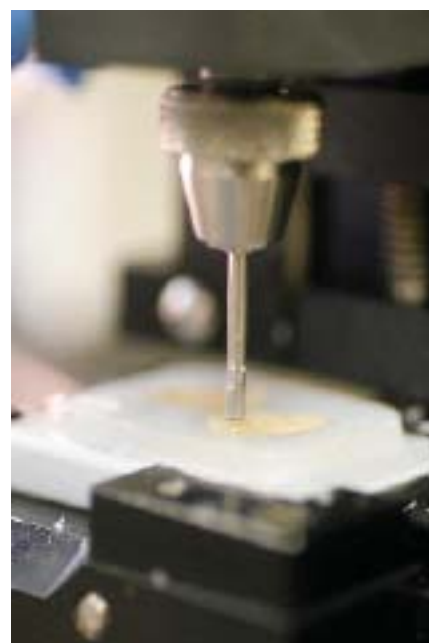
To arrange a Biobank presentation at your hospital or research institute, please email enquires@viccanerbiobank.org.au.

Commercial Applications

The Biobank is committed to supporting both academic and commercial research sectors. Supporting the commercial sector in the research of the identifying biomarkers that will underpin the development and commercialisation of diagnostic and therapeutic products will assist with the development of better outcomes for patients.

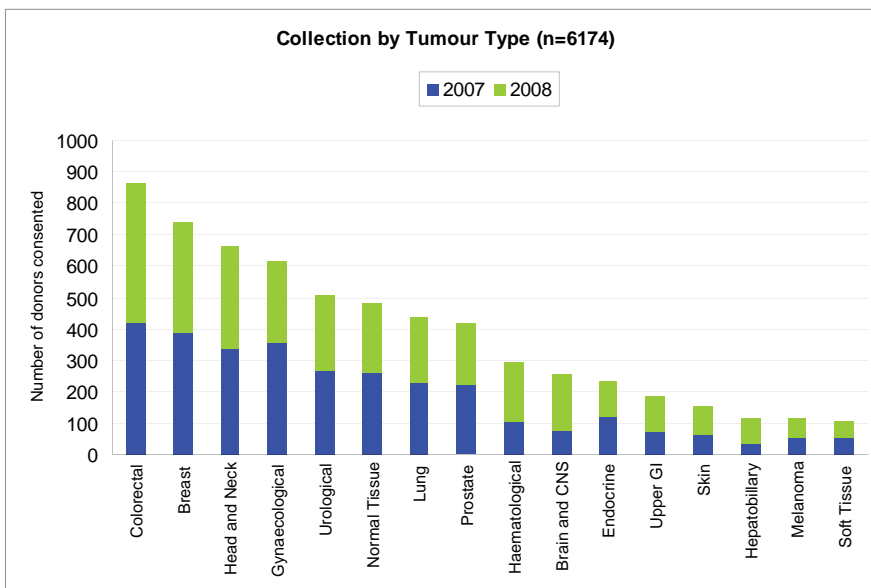
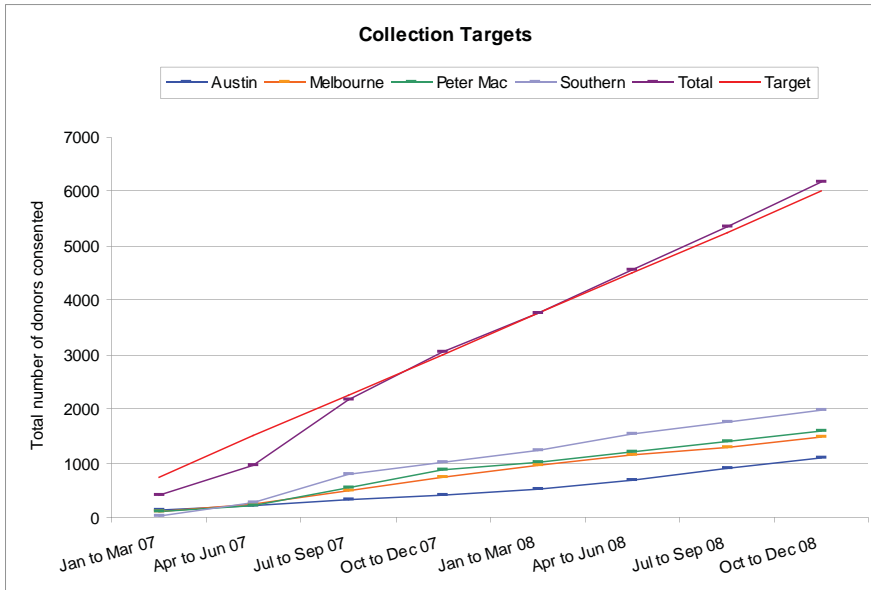
While applications from the academic sector are continually strong the interest from the commercial sector is increasing. The Victorian Cancer Biobank was excited to receive and approve the first commercial application during the first quarter of 2009.

As the Biobank works on a two-tier cost recovery model the applications and therefore income received from the commercial sector will ensure that the cost recovery model is successful and the Biobank operations are sustainable.



Our Collection

The number of donors who consented to providing blood and tissue to the Biobank has exceeded the targets for 2007 and 2008. Collection figures show that 3041 people donated to the Biobank in 2007 with this number increasing to 3133 in 2008. The number of donors for each tumour type has not varied significantly over the two years.



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 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