

# LIV ON

SPRING 2018



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Olivia  
Newton-John  
Cancer Wellness & Research Centre

THE  
WELLNESS  
WALK AND  
RESEARCH  
RUN



Olivia  
Newton-John  
Cancer Wellness & Research Centre

**TOGETHER WE ARE WINNING  
OVER CANCER**

**A LASTING LEGACY FOR  
CANCER RESEARCH**

**WHEN HOPE AND LOVE IS ALL  
YOU HAVE**



Olivia  
Newton-John  
Cancer Wellness & Research Centre





# OLIVIA'S MESSAGE FOR YOU

Hello everyone and welcome to the Spring edition of LIV ON. I have recently spent some time in Australia and the ONJ Centre and it always fills me with so much joy and gratitude to see so many people working hard, and so many more benefiting from that talent, care and dedication.

I loved being at this year's Wellness Walk and Research Run. Melbourne didn't disappoint with some beautiful spring sunshine and it was so wonderful to look out across the sea of thousands of people that came out to support family and friends and the ONJ Centre. I also want to say a heartfelt thanks to the many more that walked with us around the world as 'Livvy's legs'. I was moved by your support which will fund the innovative research and wellness programs at the ONJ Centre.

Earlier in the year you may have seen the ONJ Centre received \$18 million funding from the Victorian government, which will give our patients access to the world's best 'game-changing' cancer technology. As part of the package, \$8 million will go towards a new MRI-linear accelerator service for the ONJ Centre, the first of its kind in Victoria and just the second in the Southern Hemisphere! A further \$10 million for the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute will go toward establishing a Centre of Research Excellence with a focus on brain cancer. I am so proud of the level of support the Centre is attracting and the standard of care it can provide.

As I walk through the corridors and spend time in the Wellness Centre I can feel the love, care and hope in the air. Thank you for being a part of our community and your generous support – without you the Centre would not be the wonderful place it is.

*Love + light, Olivia* 



... that the ONJ Centre is at the frontier of cancer medicine, with almost

300 ongoing clinical trials. We are trialling new therapies including immunotherapies, targeted therapies, and personalised medicine diagnostics, all to win over cancer for you.





# When *hope and love* is all you have

*In the beginning, it sounds like a magical, perfect love story. French boy meets Australian girl in a charming Irish pub in beautiful Galway. They fall in love, settle in Australia, have two children and life is good. Until leukaemia, quietly brewing for some time, issues the young family a daunting challenge.*

Guillaume Zigan tells his story in a sunny, warm room in the Wellness Centre with a quiet, lilting French accent, interrupted frequently by his bubbly wife Julia. The two weave their words together, so in tune with each other and the cancer journey they have unwillingly shared.

*"Life was going really well, Charlie was 3, Audrey was a baby, we had just been to France," Guillaume explains. "I had knee surgery after an injury, and post-surgery I wasn't feeling very well. I got worse and worse and one day I really felt something wasn't right so I had a blood test."*

Julia knew something was very wrong. *"One morning he turned to give me a kiss, his gum was bleeding, he had a blood spot in his eye, he was white and he had lost so much weight."*

Guillaume was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. Leukaemia is abnormal and uncontrolled growth of immature white blood cells in the bone marrow, which then appear in the blood stream. These abnormal cells take up space in the bone marrow, which means the marrow can't make enough normal blood cells.

*"I went into panic mode. It was that moment where your world just stops,"* says Julia.

Because he was so sick, Guillaume was hospitalised that night at the ONJ Centre. Although he started on chemotherapy straight away, Guillaume remained very unwell and Julia describes the shock she felt one night when he called her from the hospital.

*"He called me one night to say everything was going wrong and he wanted to say goodbye, he hoped I would meet someone else and that he loved me."*

We all know going through cancer can be a very scary and sometimes isolating experience.

Thankfully, after six weeks Guillaume was doing well. The treatment had cleared up all the leukaemia in his blood and he was in remission. However, he soon had to return to the ONJ Centre for a second round of chemotherapy, this time far tougher than the first round.

The possibility of a bone marrow transplant was raised. If a compatible donor could be found, it was the only way for Guillaume to have a chance of being cured.

The search began, and after six months of searching, a compatible stem cell donor was found in Germany.

Guillaume received an allogeneic stem cell transplant at the ONJ Centre. *"I was happy to know I was coming back to the ONJ Centre for the transplant. It was like coming home."*

What stands out for Julia was the unconditional support of the staff at the ONJ Centre. *"The staff took us in like family, right from the very beginning,"* she says. *"The nurses would bring in blankets so that Audrey could sit on the floor or they would come and hold her so I could sit with Guillaume. They would heat up her bottles, they got plastic gloves for Charlie to play with to pretend he was a doctor. They just did those little things that made my life so much easier."*

After the transplant, Guillaume remained in hospital in isolation (to keep his environment as sterile as possible) and was finally allowed home approximately 30 days after the transplant.

Guillaume's journey with cancer is not over. However, he has become committed to giving back to the ONJ Centre.

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“It's time for me to give back and support those who battle cancer and to help all the amazing people looking after us at the ONJ Centre.”

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Guillaume has set up a fundraising page and will donate all funds raised to the Haematology Department at the ONJ Centre. At time of printing, he has raised nearly \$5,000. **If you would like to support this remarkable man on his quest to give back, you can make a donation to his page by visiting [onj-own-event.everydayhero.com/au/astarforwellness](http://onj-own-event.everydayhero.com/au/astarforwellness)**



# Extraordinary SUPPORT

*After months of training, nearly 100 dedicated Austin Health staff and supporters in the community took on the Run Melbourne challenge, raising a total of more than \$50,000 to help our patients and families.*

Joining 20,000 participants and taking on their chosen distance of 5, 10 or 21km in one of the biggest charity events on the Melbourne calendar, our ONJ Cancer Centre runners made the most of the opportunity to raise funds for various programs and departments.

A mixture of staff, patients, families and friends chose to run as individuals or created teams, nominating an area to receive their funds, including Day Oncology, Clinical Haematology, Palliative Care, Ward 6 South and Psycho Oncology.

We'd like to thank all the ONJ Centre runners for leading the way and demonstrating their compassion for the patients, families and staff. We look forward to next year and we hope you can help us grow our Run Melbourne community by embracing the opportunity to raise funds for the ONJ Centre.

“ I can't believe we have raised more than \$5,000! We chose to raise funds for the Wellness Centre and Day Oncology at the ONJ Centre to give back and say thanks for the care we received. My daughters got a real buzz out of having people cheer them on from the sidelines and wearing their ONJ Hero singlets! They were very proud that they had helped someone else's mummy or daddy who might be sick. ”

– Kate, ONJ Centre patient who walked the 5km event with her two young daughters while her husband ran in the 10km event.



## Amazing gift LEAVES A LASTING LEGACY FOR CANCER RESEARCH

*When Preston's Campania Sport & Social Club dissolved the members decided to donate the money from the sale of their clubhouse to four Melbourne charities including the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute.*

The generous gift of \$212,000 has enable the Institute to create two clinician scientist fellowships and to purchase a bench-top centrifuge machine, which helps researchers to analyse blood samples at a cellular level.

The Campania Club was formed in 1975 by a group of men from the Campania region in Italy. Members met each week to enjoy social activities and to remember their home land. The Club members have been fundraising on behalf of local community organisations for decades.

The clinician scientist fellowships were awarded to Associate Prof Andrew Weickhardt and to Dr Chun Fong. Andrew is a medical oncologist at the Austin Hospital and a senior researcher at the Institute,

who is investigating new treatments for aggressive bladder cancer. He has designed a clinical trial to test an immunotherapy drug that he hopes will boost the effectiveness of radiation and chemotherapy in shrinking tumours. Chun is a haematologist at the Austin Hospital and a clinician scientist at the Institute, who is focusing on developing new targeted anti-cancer drugs to treat acute leukaemia.

*Below: Andrew Weickhardt & Campania Club's Joe De Amicis*





# YOUR SUPPORT GIVES STEVEN *HOPE*

*After experiencing mysterious pains in November 2016, Steven was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Following surgery two months later, tests showed a very aggressive form of cancer for which Steven underwent extensive treatment. Grateful for the number of specialist staff, wellness programs, research and information sessions that are supporting his care, Steven wants you to know how much you are helping give him hope.*

“It’s really not easy. There’s the stress on yourself, your partner, your family and friends. Nobody wants to see you sick and nobody wants to hear that you’ve got an aggressive cancer.”

Steven is involved with many different areas of the ONJ Centre as he moves through diagnosis and treatment.

“The staff at the Austin Hospital and ONJ Centre work incredibly hard and they are very dedicated,” he says.

Under the care of an oncologist, an endocrinologist, a psychologist and an urologist; Steven attends the Continence Clinic, has been to information sessions for prostate cancer and radiation treatment, has regular oncology massage and uses the Wellness Centre every time he is here at the hospital.

“It feels welcoming and warm... a place where you don’t have to worry about the bad news,” says Steven about the donor-funded Wellness Centre. “It feels very much like a sanctuary. It is an important place where people can come and be themselves under very difficult circumstances.”

Like the Wellness Centre, Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses Carla and Giovanna’s roles are directly funded through money donated by you, our community. These specialist nurses provide reassurance, support and expertise to men and their families affected by prostate cancer, helping them understand their cancer and its treatment options and making sure medications, appointments and medical tests are on track.

“First day into the hospital I met Carla,” says Steven. “She’s warm and she’s knowledgeable. Having someone like Carla around reduces my stress enormously and I feel a lot more positive and a lot more confident that I’ve actually got a chance.”

“I know that I’ve had the best treatment available. There are a lot of sick people out there who just don’t get that chance. You can’t ask for more than that.”

– Steven Broadhurst



**Steven would be so grateful for any support you can give, no matter how small. Every dollar helps ensure the survival of the wellness and supportive care programs that have helped him so much.**

**Visit [ONJCancerCentre.org/donate](https://ONJCancerCentre.org/donate)**

*Steven with Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse Carla D’Amica*



# 'I'VE LEARNT TO BE *kind to myself*'

*The world of cancer diagnosis, tests, scans, radiotherapy, surgery, chemotherapy, doctors and nurses is a long way from Anne Stroud's usual world. Living on 110 acres in the rugged but beautiful mountains around Seaton in East Gippsland, 60 year-old Anne shares her days with her husband Denis and the many kangaroos, king parrots, wombats and echidnas who visit each day.*

Diagnosed with bowel cancer in March 2018, Anne's treatment includes seven weeks of radiotherapy and chemotherapy, to be followed by surgery and then six months of further chemotherapy. A daunting prospect, especially for somebody who lives 200km away.

*"I insisted on coming here to the ONJ Centre rather than being treated locally because a friend of mine was treated here for melanoma and was cared for so amazingly well," says Anne.*

Anne decided to stay close to the hospital while undergoing radiotherapy, giving her the opportunity and the time to immerse herself in the many nurturing and self-care wellness activities held here every day. Gentle yoga was a highlight for Anne.

*"Gentle yoga was just amazing. It gave me contact with other people so I felt I wasn't isolated or doing it alone," says Anne. "It was six sessions and we were all able to take our own journey within the class and do it at our own pace. The relaxation was lovely, it taught me to give myself time and be kind to myself."*

Surprised at how accessible the wellness programs were, Anne embraced many other offerings including oncology massage, singing in the Wellness choir, nutrition advice, talking with a social worker, and listening to beautiful music performed live in the ONJ Centre by a resident harpist and pianist.

*"Participating in the wellness programs gives me a sense of comfort, a sense of friendship, I love coming to the Wellness Centre to have a coffee, sit in the beautiful gardens, and just take time for me. The holistic picture is amazing, just amazing."*

*"Having cancer and access to these programs has taught me so much," she adds. "Being a busy person in my life at home and not sitting still very often, I'm taking a lot of these skills back home. I have three adult children, I've never given myself care or thought of myself, but these programs have taught me to do that now."*

*Mental  
Well  
Being*



“ I'm just really thankful; I don't know what it would have been like without this support for my own wellness and mental well-being. I love it, I just love it and I'm an advocate for Austin Health and the ONJ Centre every day. ”

We are deeply grateful to Dry July for funding the Gentle Yoga program at the ONJ Centre. Gentle yoga incorporates modified poses to allow people with cancer to practise self-care through relaxation and breathing techniques. It can help promote better sleep, reduce fatigue and depressive symptoms and help patients to feel supported and nurtured throughout a stressful time.

**The Wellness programs at the ONJ Centre would not happen without your support. Please consider making a donation today. Visit [ONJCancerCentre.org/donate](https://ONJCancerCentre.org/donate)**



# Selfless love FOR THOSE WITH CANCER

*When your job is to compile patient records, life can be pretty confronting. This is Caillin Austin's job. And he decided that he wanted to do something positive. With a wedding on the way and hoping to make a difference, Caillin and his partner Simone thought about how they could raise donations for patients with cancer.*

With what some people may consider a big sacrifice, the young couple decided to opt for no wedding gifts and instead encouraged their guests to donate to a cause close to their hearts – the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre (ONJ Centre).

*"A few years ago, my uncle passed away from colorectal cancer. We were really close to him and it affected us quite a lot. Simone also had her grandma and grandfather pass away from cancer and she was extremely close with them," Caillin says.*

*"I thought, why not make something even better out of the wedding and not make it just about us - but have a broader impact and raise awareness as well as a few dollars?"*

On their wedding day, the couple had a wishing well and ONJ Centre envelopes where guests could donate their money. **Caillin says that the act of giving has brought them joy and happiness.**

*"It's a special thing to be able to give. Giving is a much better feeling than taking. I think it's a great thing – it*

*makes you feel good and it makes others feel good too. When there's so many negative things going on in the world, it's nice to be able to do something positive and create a positive out of a negative."*

Caillin and Simone hope to inspire others to donate if they can.

“If you can donate, there's no reason not to. If you're putting on a function, perhaps you could do what we did too. At the end of the day, you're helping families and that is a special feeling.”

To date, the couple has raised \$1,300. They hope a few more people who have heard about their mission can donate too. They encourage everyone to donate to the ONJ Centre. Why not join them – show your support for patients with cancer. Visit [ONJCancerCentre.org](http://ONJCancerCentre.org) and donate today.

## Together we are winning OVER CANCER

*In 2003, Olivia Newton-John joined forces with Austin Health to build a comprehensive cancer centre. A centre dedicated to providing world-leading treatments, undertaking ground-breaking research and including innovative wellness and supportive care. Today, the ONJ Centre brings together breakthrough research, world-class clinical treatment, and the very best wellness therapies.*

Because of you and our community of caring donors, the ONJ Centre continues to be at the forefront of exceptional treatment for every patient who needs us. You have been right by our side, spurring us on to help patients win over cancer.

Patients like Jade Manning, who was treated at the ONJ Centre in 2016 and 2017. Jade, her husband Matt and their three beautiful children featured in the 2018 "Let's end cancer in our lifetime" appeal. The response to Jade's story was overwhelming. More than \$62,000 was generously donated, and many donors sent heartfelt wishes of support to Matt and their children.

Your generosity is enabling the ONJ Centre to continue its work of providing exceptional care to patients and their families so they can win over cancer. Thank you.



## ON18SP



To find out how you can support the ONJ Centre  
please call (03) 9496 5753,  
email [fundraising@ONJCancerCentre.org](mailto:fundraising@ONJCancerCentre.org)  
or visit our website at [ONJCancerCentre.org](http://ONJCancerCentre.org)