

# It's not if. It's when.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022

“We can and will cure childhood cancer in the foreseeable future.”

— PROFESSOR MICHELLE HABER AM  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S CANCER INSTITUTE



#### OUR VISION

To save the lives of all children with cancer and improve their long-term health, through research.

#### OUR BELIEFS

We believe that:

- no child should die from cancer or suffer life-long side effects from their treatment.
- medical research is fundamental to curing childhood cancer.
- it is the critical iterative relationship between translational research, research that moves laboratory findings into the clinic; and discovery research, bench to bedside and back again, that is bringing us closer to one day curing childhood cancer.
- It's not if. It's **when**.

#### OUR PURPOSE

Children's Cancer Institute exists solely to put an end to the devastating impact of childhood cancer.

Every week in Australia, three children and adolescents die of cancer. Only when that three becomes zero, and when all the survivors can live a normal life, will our work be done.

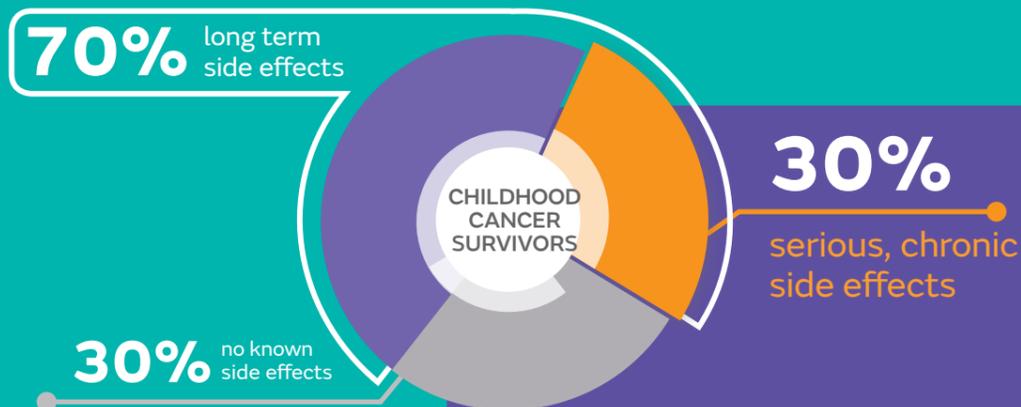
Our purpose as the only independent medical research institute in Australia focused exclusively on childhood cancer, is to Translate and Discover, through world class research, new treatments that will cure cancer and reduce side effects in children and adolescents.

# What is the problem?



**Cancer is the biggest disease killer** of children and adolescents in Australia. 950 children are diagnosed every year and nearly **three are dying each week**.

Because of medical research, today **8 out of 10 children now survive**, though many of these are left with life-long side effects:



# What is the solution?

Through our research, we must find safer and more effective treatments for each and every individual child and cancer type. Then in partnership with our clinical colleagues, we must translate our findings into novel clinical trials and changed clinical practices as rapidly and effectively as possible.

We have built our 2022 strategy with our core objective being to effectively and rapidly **TRANSLATE AND DISCOVER**. Our research will be supported by our strategic enablers which are to **EMPOWER, INNOVATE, PROMOTE, CONNECT AND ENGAGE**.

## WHAT'S OUR STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE THIS?

To bring us closer to our goal of one day curing every child with cancer, over the next 5 years we will **increase the scale and enhance the excellence of our TRANSLATIONAL and DISCOVERY RESEARCH**.

To do this, we will need to:

- EMPOWER the best and brightest people.
- provide them with INNOVATIVE world class facilities, cutting edge equipment and technologies.
- garner sufficient funds to ensure we can pursue our purpose in a financially sustainable way for as long as it takes to cure childhood cancer.



## WE KNOW WE CAN'T DO THIS ALONE.

We need a high level of support to achieve our mission. We need to PROMOTE what we do and CONNECT and ENGAGE with:

- world class research teams and leaders locally, nationally and internationally.
- collaborators and partners including the Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and all paediatric oncology centres nationally; the University of New South Wales, Paediatric<sup>1</sup>, as well as industry and national and international research partners.
- community and advocates, including parents.
- State and Federal Governments as well as corporate and philanthropic supporters.

Underpinning all of this, everything we do will be achieved in a sustainable way to ensure our research and operations are secure and our financial health is strong, so that we can pursue our purpose for as long as it takes to cure every childhood cancer.

1. Paediatrico, a collaboration between Children's Cancer Institute, Children's Medical Research Institute and Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, that aims to create Australia's most ground-breaking, innovative and translational Paediatric research hub.

Kayne, pictured above with his mum Danij, was diagnosed with brain cancer before his second birthday. He is now age 7 and doing well, but will live with life-long side effects from his treatment.

# Strategic Framework

## OUR OBJECTIVES 2018-2022

In working towards our vision, our two strategic objectives are to:

**TRANSLATE:** Accelerate the integration of our translational research into clinical care, including delivery of the flagship Zero Childhood Cancer program.

**DISCOVER:** To pursue world class discovery research, and to feed the translational pipeline through the depth, breadth and impact of our science.

## OUR STRATEGIC ENABLERS 2018-2022

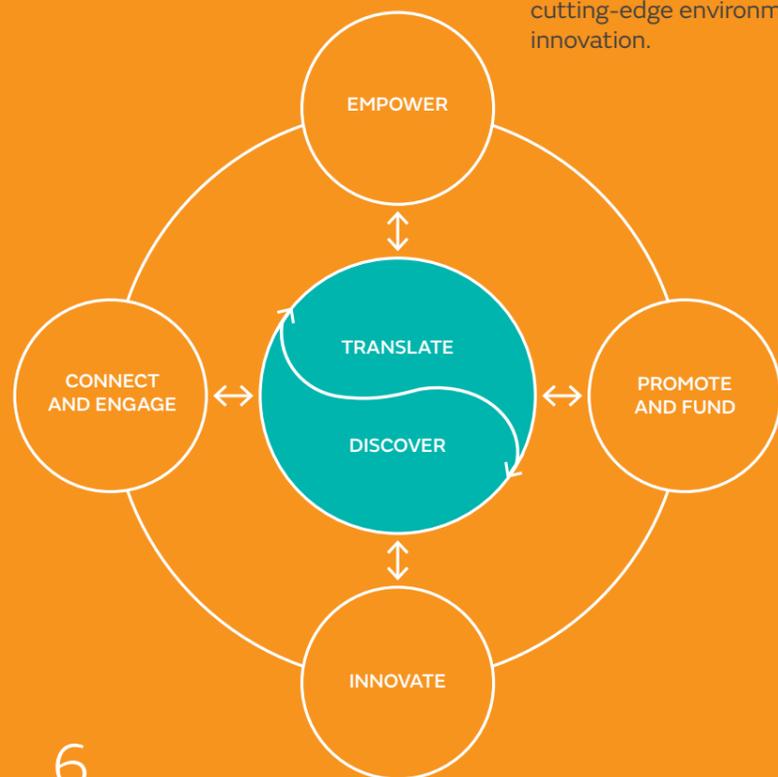
These are the areas of focus that we believe are essential to support the successful delivery of our objectives:

**EMPOWER:** Attracting and developing the brightest minds in a vibrant collaborative high-performance culture that fosters diversity, innovation and success.

**INNOVATE:** By providing our researchers and support teams with access to advanced technologies, infrastructure and facilities, we will create a dynamic and cutting-edge environment for innovation.

**CONNECT AND ENGAGE:** Partnering and collaborating with UNSW and Sydney Children's Hospitals Network together with national and international clinical and research leaders and organisations, governments and industry to leverage and maximise the outputs and impact of our research.

**PROMOTE AND FUND:** Sharing our beliefs, vision and purpose with others to drive awareness, engagement and support for our cause that ensures we deliver our strategic objectives in a financially sustainable way.



# Research Outcomes

## BY 2022 WE WILL HAVE:

- In partnership with the Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital and all children's hospitals around Australia, provided every high-risk child cancer patient in the country access to Zero Childhood Cancer<sup>1</sup>, Australia's most comprehensive national precision medicine and research translation program.
- Developed an internationally unique set of data, linking the biological, genetic and clinical characteristics of hundreds of children with high-risk cancer, to guide clinical decisions and inform discovery research.
- Grown our Computational Biology and Bioinformatics capabilities to fully harness the power of this invaluable data set which in turn will have led to new opportunities for research discoveries.
- Significantly grown our drug development and commercialisation capability.
- In partnership with the clinicians at children's hospitals around Australia, and leveraging off both the Zero Childhood Cancer platform and our other translational research programs, facilitated multiple early phase clinical trials, provided unprecedented access to novel therapies, and fast-tracked translation to clinical practice.
- Developed new immunotherapeutic approaches to treating children with cancer, in partnership with Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Vic), the Centre for Cancer Biology (S.A) and Kid's Cancer Centre, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick.
- Established, in partnership with the clinicians at the Kids Cancer Centre, a national workforce capability to drive the translation of outputs of the Zero Childhood Cancer national clinical trial into improved outcomes for high risk child cancer patients.
- In partnership with the Kids Cancer Centre, strengthened and consolidated relationships with clinicians, developed strength in new areas including cancer predisposition, health economics and health implementation, and increased the training of the next generation of child cancer clinician/scientists, through the UNSW Centre for Childhood Cancer Research<sup>2</sup>.
- Increased our discovery research capacity and excellence, through strategic investment and recruitment of both emerging and established, world leading talent.
- Driven our vibrant culture of innovation, knowledge sharing and collaboration, leading to increased impact of our work via top tier publications, new discoveries and innovative clinical trials.
- Managed the growth and success of the Institute's trajectory whilst ensuring financial sustainability.

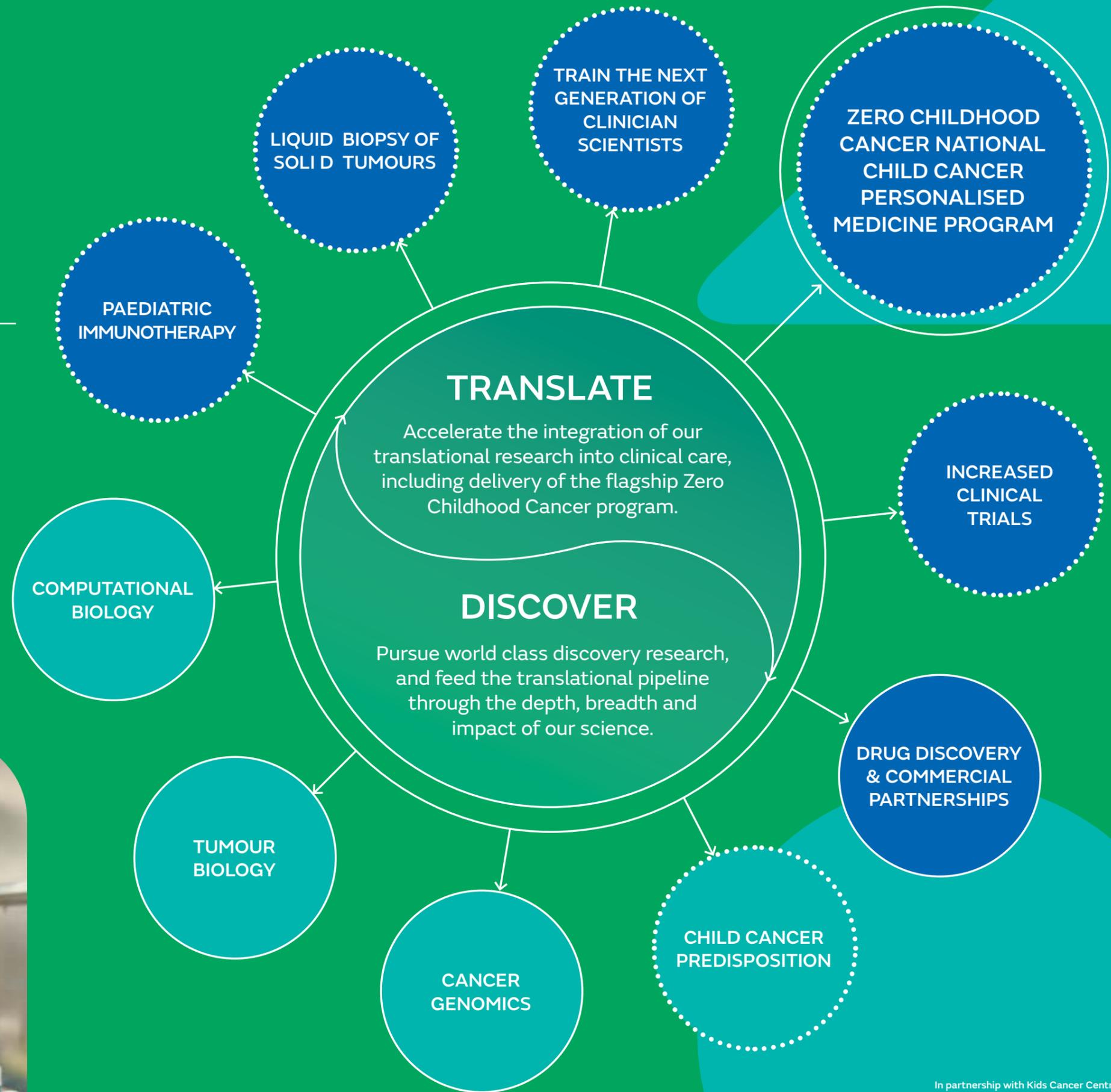
<sup>1</sup> Zero Childhood Cancer is led by Children's Cancer Institute and The Kids Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick, part of The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network.

<sup>2</sup> The UNSW Centre for Childhood Cancer Research partners with Children's Cancer Institute to provide excellence and innovation in children's cancer research and grow the next generation of researchers in this field.

# Research Strategy

WE WILL FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE OUTCOME FOR CHILDREN WITH HIGH-RISK CANCERS BY:

- Building on our international profile in understanding the biology and developing new treatments for children with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and neuroblastoma.
- Increasing our focus on the biology and treatment of children with high-risk sarcomas, brain tumours and acute myeloid leukaemia.
- Delivering, enhancing and leveraging the Zero Childhood Cancer national child cancer personalised medicine program.
- Translating our research into clinical outcomes by increasingly seamless partnership with the Kids Cancer Centre, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and with national and international child cancer treatment centres.



STRATEGIC ENABLER 1

# Empower

Attracting and developing the brightest minds in a vibrant collaborative high-performance culture that fosters diversity, innovation and success.

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT?**

One of the essential elements to achieving research success is having outstanding talent working in a supportive high-performance environment that rewards innovation. We need to attract, develop and retain the best people, and ensure we have a culture at the Institute that supports every member of staff to be as successful as they can be.

**OUR TOP PRIORITIES IN MAKING THIS HAPPEN**

- Attract and retain the best and the brightest minds, by implementing systematic talent identification, recruitment and development strategies together with a competitive remuneration framework.
  - Expand training and development programs, including recruitment of a Learning and Development Executive and expansion of our mentoring and leadership training programs.
  - Reorganise research activities and teams into themes to drive collaboration and academic outputs, enhancing cross-disciplinary links and succession opportunities.
- Invest in early mid-career Team Leader positions to build new independent research groups and leaders of the future.
  - Ensure our culture is regarded both internally and externally as collaborative, inclusive, vibrant, innovative, safe and compliant.
  - Increase engagement and cross-functional knowledge-sharing via implementation of a comprehensive internal communications framework.
  - Expand our staff wellbeing program.
  - Foster and drive innovation through a range of novel individual and collaborative programs aimed at empowering and enabling our teams to create and implement unique solutions to key strategic questions.



“We’re committed to investing in and developing the brightest minds, to be part of our collaborative, high-performance culture.”

— PROFESSOR MURRAY NORRIS AM  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
CHILDREN'S CANCER INSTITUTE

“The scale and sophistication of translating this type of discovery directly to the patient’s bedside in real time, wherever they are in Australia, is unprecedented. It is tomorrow’s care today.”

— A/PROFESSOR TRACEY O'BRIEN  
DIRECTOR, KIDS CANCER  
CENTRE, SYDNEY CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL, RANDWICK &  
CLINICAL RESEARCH FELLOW,  
CHILDREN'S CANCER INSTITUTE

## STRATEGIC ENABLER 2

# Innovate

By providing our researchers and support teams with access to advanced technologies, infrastructure and facilities, we will create a dynamic and cutting-edge environment for innovation.

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT?**  
Having access to world class research labs and facilities, together with technologies, equipment and research infrastructure at the cutting edge of innovation, is a fundamental driver of research success.

### OUR TOP PRIORITIES IN MAKING THIS HAPPEN

- Invest in advanced technology and infrastructure platforms, including establishment of computational biology and machine learning capabilities as key enabling platforms to exploit and create new insights into cancer biology.
- Invest in a range of new solutions to increase the mobility, agility, efficiency and productivity of our work, including high-end analytics, digital workplace tools and cloud technologies.
- Invest in building our skills and capabilities to best leverage and align with advances in technological innovation to underpin the success of our research and operational teams.

- Enhance our current facilities and services through the redevelopment of our laboratory spaces, optimising workflows and increasing access to research platforms, in order to increase collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Implement an innovative facilities expansion plan to accommodate substantial planned growth in our research activities. This will involve strategically partnering with UNSW and the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network to explore longer term facility solutions that will enable expansion of existing and newly recruited research teams, and build even greater clinical collaboration.

STRATEGIC ENABLER 3

# Connect and Engage

Recognising that partnerships and collaborations are critical for our continued growth and impact.

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT?**

We are operating in a rapidly evolving research landscape that is increasingly complex, resulting in an even greater focus on the importance of sharing knowledge, insights, skills and resources. Our success will be built not only on the direct achievements of our team, but also on our capability to strategically collaborate with partners across national and international clinical and research networks.

**OUR TOP PRIORITIES IN MAKING THIS HAPPEN**

- Deepen our strategic alignment with UNSW through the UNSW Centre for Childhood Cancer Research and make a sustained contribution to the University's 2025 strategy.
- Increase engagement with Governments to position the Institute for success in accessing infrastructure and grants funding.
- Build on our reputation as a trusted voice and advisor to contribute to shaping research, innovation and economic policy proposals and decisions.
- Further develop our key collaborative networks, including Paediatrico, to leverage our mutual strengths and expertise to improve health outcomes for children.
- Enhance our technology transfer capabilities and establish a drug development pipeline to take promising biological discoveries into the clinic.
- Commit dedicated resources to fully capture the benefits of partnerships and maximise the impact of our research.

Brydee was diagnosed with leukaemia when she was just 5 months old, she has endured chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. Thanks to research, Brydee is now 3 years old and doing really well. She loves playing with her sister and going to pre-school.



“I know without research my little girl wouldn't be here today.”

— SKYE, BRYDEE'S MUM



STRATEGIC ENABLER 4

# Promote and Fund

Sharing our beliefs, vision and purpose with others and driving awareness, engagement and support for our cause to ensure we deliver our strategic objectives in a financially sustainable way.

## WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT?

We must continue to grow our profile nationally and internationally, demonstrating the impact of our research for children with cancer, to attract new supporters, increase the engagement of current supporters and significantly grow our fundraising income.

## OUR TOP PRIORITIES IN MAKING THIS HAPPEN

- To own and promote our unique position as the only Australian medical research institute solely focused on curing childhood cancer, to differentiate our brand, growing awareness and broadening our supporter base.
- Promote the Zero Childhood Cancer program nationally and internationally, firmly establishing our researchers as global leaders.

- Optimise the opportunities provided by digital technologies, to foster deeper engagement, interactivity and support for our research.
- Ensure our supporters and donors understand the impact of their contribution to our research, feel valued and have a deeper commitment to support our work.

“We need research to find better treatments for childhood cancer, and eventually a cure for every child”

— NIKKI QUINN, CHILDHOOD CANCER SURVIVOR & CHILDREN'S CANCER INSTITUTE AMBASSADOR

Nikki Quinn was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia when she was 13 years old and still experiences severe side effects as a result of her treatment. Nikki is now a nurse and ambassador for the Institute. Nikki is pictured here with Nixon, aged 2, at a Children's Cancer Institute fundraising event. Nixon was born with an extra renal Rhabdoid tumour on his head and began chemotherapy at two weeks of age. Thanks to medical research, Nixon is now a strong healthy boy who loves playing with his big brother and sister.

# Research Collaborators



Our success will be built not only on the direct achievements of our team, but also on our capability to continue to strategically collaborate with partners across national and international clinical and research networks.

Through the Zero Childhood Cancer program we have strengthened and consolidated our partnership network and we now work directly with all paediatric oncology units across Australia and a range of leading medical research institutes both nationally and internationally.





We can.  
We will.

**CHILDREN'S  
CANCER INSTITUTE**

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