



**pancare**  
FOUNDATION

**SCHOLARSHIPS &  
AWARDS PROGRAM  
2022-2024**

# Supporting emerging leaders in upper GI cancer research

Pancare Foundation recognises that fostering an engaged clinical research community is a major factor in developing research programs and clinical trials that will progress the therapies and best-practice care for those impacted by upper gastrointestinal (GI) cancer into the future.

Importantly, Pancare funds a range of scholarships and awards for emerging leaders in the field of upper GI cancer research.

The aim of the Pancare Scholarships & Awards Program is to engage early-career researchers in accelerating world-leading research and clinical trials that will deliver results that improve outcomes and quality of life for those living with upper GI cancer, their carers and families.

To ensure enhanced focus on upper GI cancer research, Pancare is introducing a new PhD Scholarship in 2022 for the study of pancreatic cancer and an early career Fellowship for biliary cancer research.

## Smith-Barrett Fellowship

Pancare Foundation is proud to host the Smith-Barrett Fellowship – “supercharging biliary cancer research”. This Award is supported by funding provided by the Highland Foundation, founded by the Smith family, of PFD Food Services. It has been created in memory of long-standing close friend of the Smith Family, Rod Barrett, who bravely battled biliary cancer and passed away in January 2020.

Rod, Head of Ford Performance Vehicles for a time in the mid 2000’s, had a long-time involvement in the V8 motor industry. He was known for his genuine passion, drive and enthusiasm for the industry, ignited the first time he drove a supercharged Falcon GT.

This fellowship is created in the spirit of Rod’s drive for supercars, to accelerate biliary cancer research by encouraging and supporting early career researchers to take up a career in biliary cancer research.

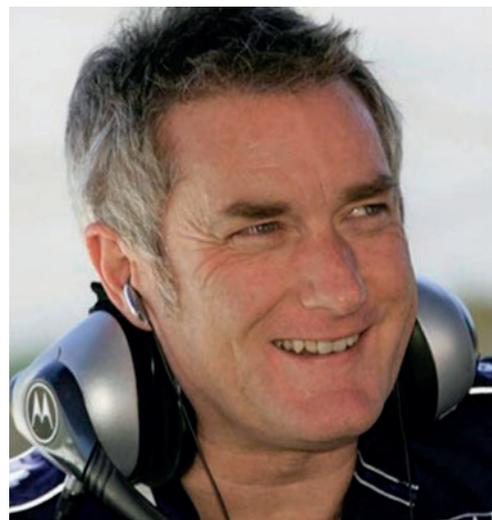
This Award is open to early career clinical and scientific researchers (1-5 years following completion of PhD), to achieve success in high-quality research related to identification of new therapeutic targets, risk factors, early detection, clinical care and clinical trials in biliary cancer.

**Value: 2-year funding \$50,000/y with an option to apply for a 3rd year \$100,000 top-up for a project performance that meets its expectations and has potential to take to the next level through additional funding. Starting July 2022.**

**Applications open February 25th and close March 25th 2022.**

Funds for this project were kindly donated by the Rod’s Accelerator for Biliary Cancer – a Highland Foundation Initiative fund.

For more information or to apply, please review the [\*\*Scholarship Program Guidelines and Award Application form\*\*](#).





## Timothy McGahan Research Scholarship

Pancare is pleased to be offering a PhD Scholarship dedicated to pancreatic cancer research in memorial to Timothy McGahan.

Tim McGahan was a respected vascular surgeon from Brisbane, well known for his friendly demeanour and ability to calmly navigate high stress situations. Before this, however, he was a caring brother to nine, enthusiastic father to three, doting grandfather to two, adoring husband to one and unconditional friend to countless others.

Tim was diagnosed with metastatic pancreatic cancer in May of 2020, and despite a legendary battle, passed away just shy of 12 months from his diagnosis. Tragically, his younger brother Andrew, a celebrated author, died from the same disease two years earlier.

Even for those known to be at higher risk, diagnosis of pancreatic cancer is usually made too late. We must come up with better ways of detecting this aggressive disease before it spreads.

Although devastated by his loss, the social and professional community Tim left behind were invigorated by his legacy to “fulfil your potential” every single day. As a result, nearly \$75,000 was raised for Pancare in his honour. The McGahan family now hope this money will help a dedicated PhD candidate fulfil their own potential in finding new ways to diagnose this terrible disease earlier.

**Value: \$65,000 (\$21,600 per year over three years) starting July 2022.**

**Applications open February 25th and close March 25th 2022.**

Funds for the Timothy McGahan Research Scholarship have been graciously donated by the McGahan family and friends.

For more information or to apply, please review the [\*\*Scholarship Program Guidelines and Award Application form\*\*](#).

# Past Pancare Award Recipients: 2021 Award Winners

Pancare Foundation funds a range of scholarship opportunities for early-career clinicians and scientists working in the field of pancreatic and upper gastrointestinal cancer research.

In 2021, Pancare proudly offered two PhD Scholarships, the Onward & Upwards Damien Woodruff and Phil Sly Research Scholarships towards fostering world-class research to improve the management of pancreatic, liver, biliary, oesophageal and stomach cancers.

## Onward & Upwards Damien Woodruff Scholarship winner

### Dr Michael Kuan-Ching Lee

**Institution:** The University of Melbourne

**Project:** The Role of Alternative Splicing as a New Therapeutic Modality for Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma

**Award Funding:** \$60,000 over two years

#### Project Synopsis

The aim of Dr Lee's project is to understand the role of alternative splicing as a new therapeutic strategy for pancreatic cancer. Alternative splicing is a method that cells use to create different versions of proteins from the same strand of DNA.

Specifically, Dr Lee aims to uncover the biology of how PRMT1 and PRMT5 inhibitor therapies work together to change the range of spliced events in pancreatic cancer cells and thereby slow or stop the growth of pancreatic tumours.

The information gained from this project will lead to better understanding of the biology of these events in pancreatic cancer. This will lead to improvements in identifying patients for targeted therapy and/or uncover additional rationale for combination treatment in the future.



The PhD work of Dr Lee is co-jointly supervised by Professor Grant McArthur and Associate Professor Karen Sheppard at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Professor Sean Grimmond, the Bertalli Chair in Cancer Medicine at the University of Melbourne Centre for Cancer Research.

## Phil Sly Research Scholarship winner

### Ms Antonia Cadell

**Institution:** Garvan Institute of Medical Research

**Project:** Dissecting the role of subcellular JNK activity in pancreatic cancer

**Administering Institution:** Garvan Institute of Medical Research

**Award Funding:** \$90,000 over three years

#### Project Synopsis

The aim of Ms Cadell's project is to establish the significance of subcellular c-Jun N-terminal kinase (JNK) activity in pancreatic cancer. Her work will determine whether novel therapeutic agents capable of specifically targeting oncogenic JNK activity in triple negative breast cancer will also be relevant for the treatment of pancreatic cancer.

The JNK pathway controls numerous cellular processes, including proliferation, development and death. Despite the well-known role of JNK in cancer there are no effective JNK-targeting therapeutic strategies, due to the complex nature of this signalling pathway. This project will characterise the activation of JNK in pancreatic cancer patient samples and use genetic profiling to identify relevant mutations. Inhibitors, including novel JNK targeting drugs will be used to determine the role of JNK in pancreatic cancer and the ability of these drugs to control the cancer cell growth.



This project will characterise a new drug target in pancreatic cancer, but also identify a drug that can target this aggressive disease and provide desperately needed progress in the search for treatment options for pancreatic cancer. Ms Cadell is supervised by Associate Professor David Croucher in collaboration with Professor Timpson and Dr Brooke Pereira.



70 Yarra Street, Heidelberg VIC 3084  
1300 881 698 | [info@pancare.org.au](mailto:info@pancare.org.au)

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