The Kinghorn Cancer Centre is a joint facility of St Vincent’s Hospital and the Garvan Institute of Medical Research

AN INVITATION TO THE TOP

The Kinghorn Cancer Centre eNews Issue 10 – March 2012
Outside and in, the Kinghorn Cancer Centre (TKCC) is really starting to take shape. The structure is complete and the building is almost water tight. On level 3, work is progressing well with many of the lab benches now in place. Level 5 will primarily be a clinical floor, and all the walls are now in place, with doors and other fixed items now being installed.

Both the Molecular Genetics and Tissue Culture facilities will be housed on level 7, and this too is progressing well. All walls are in place and all the reticulated services have been installed with the ceilings to be installed soon.

Levels 8 to 10 will primarily be lab floors, and all walls are currently in place. The next step is to have the specific laboratory services droppers installed to serve the lab benches.

On level 12 and the roof, the large plant items are now nearly all delivered and in place.
Cancer research news from Garvan

Garvan researchers recently identified biochemical changes that commonly occur in the DNA of women with ovarian cancer, which may help diagnose the cancer at an earlier stage in the future.

Using whole genome DNA profiling methods, Garvan’s Brian Gloss, Dr Philippa O’Brien and Professor Susan Clark have identified a panel of six genes that are affected by an epigenetic process known as ‘DNA methylation’ in ovarian cancer.

The Garvan team collaborated with Professor Neville Hacker, Director Gynaecological Cancer Unit, Royal Hospital for Women Randwick, who provided tumour samples from ovarian cancer patients, as well as tissue samples from normal ovaries.

Ovarian cancer is not easily diagnosed early, and people with advanced disease tend to die quickly. Women diagnosed at a late stage (the majority) have a 30% five-year survival rate. Women diagnosed at an early stage have a 90% five-year survival rate.

This was one of first studies that used whole genome techniques to directly profile DNA methylation aberrations in ovarian cancer - with the aim of identifying diagnostic biomarkers.

Cancer services/care news from St Vincent’s

By Professor Allan Spigelman, Director, St Vincent’s Cancer and Immunology Program

Much work continues to be done in readiness for our move into The Kinghorn Cancer Centre (TKCC). As part of the preparations, plans are underway to upload detailed information about TKCC staff and services onto TKCC website.

In tandem with this, there are increasing numbers of site visits for our staff. We are also pleased to be able to allow visits from our generous benefactors, as well as those who have expressed an interest in occupying the available commercial space. This space has now been put out for expressions of interest.

The purpose-built Wellness Centre will incorporate credentialed providers in complementary fields as diverse as massage, fatigue management, exercise, nutritional advice and acupuncture. It is now anticipated that TKCC will host the St Vincent’s Dermatology Service. This service deals very largely with skin cancer patients, many of whom are post-transplant patients with an increased susceptibility to skin cancer because of the immunosuppressant drugs they take.
Arrangements for our new philanthropically-funded oncology information system are being finalised, at the same time as St Vincent’s moves to ensure that all clinical letters are able to be sent within 24 hours. This includes electronic transfer to referring doctors.

The National Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record is another initiative in progress at St Vincent’s that will also contribute to better communication across the spectrum of health care and will address important patient safety issues.

Last, but by no means least, there have been encouraging discussions between Garvan, UNSW and St Vincent’s as to how we might recruit additional clinician researchers of the highest calibre, with the lure of working in the state of the art TKCC as an additional incentive.