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 7 – June 2011
We are at street level! Construction is going well with the north of the site catching up with the south, and the building now level with Victoria Street. There has been approximately 2,840m³ of concrete poured on site so far.

The leveling of the building means the car park is nearly completed, with construction now focused on the various link points between the cancer centre and Garvan. The scaffolding and screens are also going up in anticipation of the structure heading skywards. The last section of the Level 4 slab will be poured on the 9th of June.

We can also unveil here one of the first computer generated images of the interior of the Cancer Centre. One of the pioneering design features of the Centre is that it has been devised from the patient’s perspective. In addition to the major focus on sunlight and surrounding landscaping, the building is designed so the patient treatment areas on the lower floors can see the research activities on the upper levels through the central stairwell, creating a true connectivity between the clinical and research endeavours of the building. The picture (see left) is an image of one of the proposed research laboratory areas.

Cancer research news from Garvan
Breast cancer research and treatment has been a major focus of the Garvan Institute & St Vincent’s campus for the past 25 years and will be a major research priority in the new Kinghorn Cancer Centre where we plan to expand our current world class programs.

The most recent research breakthrough in this area is the finding that blocking a particular molecule can slow down the spread of tumours in breast cancer. Garvan scientists Associate Professor Sandra O’Toole and Dr Alex Swarbrick have shown that a signaling molecule, known as 'hedgehog', transmits biochemical signals between the cancer cells and healthy cells, creating conditions for the survival of cancer cells. When the 'hedgehog' molecule is blocked or 'silenced', the tumours shrink and stop their spread. While the finding applies to all types of breast cancers, it is particularly relevant for women with basal breast cancer, which is one of the most aggressive types of breast cancers and for which there is currently no targeted treatment.
Drugs for silencing the 'hedgehog' molecule are already undergoing Phase 2 clinical trials in other cancer types.

'We are hopeful that our findings will drive the progress of clinical trials for anti-hedgehog drugs in breast cancer,' says Dr Swarbrick.

Breakthroughs like this should assist in the translation of "personalised medicine" to the clinic where new molecular tests identify the best therapy for an individual patient prior to the start of treatment.

Cancer services/care news from St Vincent's
The Kinghorn Cancer Centre has been integrated into the new St Vincent's Hospital Cancer Strategic and Operational plans. This signals the Centre’s critical importance to the care of patients with cancer as we get closer to the time of commissioning of the new facility.

In tandem with the treatment aspects of The Kinghorn Cancer Centre is the need to provide support for the disadvantaged. This aspect is recognised by the allocation of funds to be raised from one of St Vincent’s regular donor appeals later this year.