cherish women's cancer foundation

CHERISH'S NEXT CHAPTER 2026

From promising ideas to meaningful progress, finding kinder treatments for women with gynaecological cancer.



THE ROAD TO HERE

What Cherish achieved in its first decade or so, with support from people like you, is quite extraordinary. It all started with a small group of determined researchers and courageous people who had experienced first-hand the heartbreak of gynaecological cancer. United by hope and driven by frustration at the lack of attention and funding for research, they refused to let women's voices go unheard. Tragically, gynaecological cancer research still does not get the support it so urgently deserves.

Vital funding to get started

Now a national charity powered by community compassion and visionary partners, Cherish has given seed funding to promising research studies and innovative ideas that might otherwise have been lost. Thanks to our community's generosity, researchers have gathered the first crucial evidence needed to unlock major competitive grants and launch clinical trials.

A cornerstone of this progress is our major research partner, the Queensland Centre for Gynaecological Cancer (QCGC) Research, a world-class team dedicated to advancing earlier detection, kinder treatments and improved outcomes for women.

Our work is far from done

While this progress is encouraging, research is a journey that requires sustained commitment. The work ahead is just as critical as the path behind us.

Cherish's investment in gynaecological cancer research to date has helped lay the groundwork for discoveries with the potential to improve detection, earlier diagnosis, kinder treatments, greater choice for women and to support recovery and enhanced quality of life after cancer treatment.

Thank you for partnering with us

I am deeply grateful to the people who have helped us reach this point. I invite you to join us as we write the next chapter of hope and discovery. Together, we can continue to turn promising ideas into meaningful progress, giving every woman the chance for more tomorrows.

Kathleen Banks

Chair, Cherish Women's Cancer Foundation

$6.1m+
RAISED

13
RESEARCH PROJECTS

2
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWS FUNDED



Research changing what's possible for women

Every advance in gynaecological cancer research begins with a simple question: can we do better for women?

At Queensland Centre for Gynaecological Cancer (QCGC) Research, that question drives us to challenge established approaches and find treatments that are more effective, less invasive and better suited to the needs of each woman.

Can we reduce or avoid surgery? Preserve fertility? Minimise lifelong side effects? Personalise treatment without compromising cancer outcomes?



With the support of Cherish and its generous community of donors, we have been able to pursue these questions and turn promising research into meaningful progress.

The projects highlighted here show what your support makes possible: research that can change clinical practice and create more effective, kinder treatment options for women. Thank you for your continued support and for sharing our commitment to doing better for women.

Professor Andreas Obermair

Director, QCGC Research

PROJECTS	IMPACT
LACE: Less invasive surgery – the same cancer outcomes	Changed surgical practice worldwide by showing keyhole surgery is as effective as open surgery for endometrial cancer, with fewer complications, less pain and faster recovery.
feMMe: Treating cancer without major surgery	Showed some women with early-stage endometrial cancer can safely avoid hysterectomy through hormonal therapy, reducing surgical risks while potentially preserving fertility.
feMMe Molecular: Personalising treatment for every woman	Aims to identify which women can safely avoid hysterectomy and benefit from hormonal therapy, enabling more personalised treatment, preserving fertility and reducing unnecessary surgery.
ENDO-3: Reducing unnecessary surgery	Investigates whether some women with early-stage endometrial cancer can safely avoid lymph node surgery, reducing unnecessary procedures, complications and recovery time while maintaining excellent cancer outcomes.
Pre-ANVU: Preventing lifelong harm from treatment	Investigates high-resolution ultrasound to detect cancer in groin lymph nodes, potentially sparing women from debilitating surgery and lifelong side effects including leg swelling, infection and impaired mobility.

I hope that other families will have more choice in the future



WHY IT MATTERS

The women who courageously share their stories remind us to never give up on our mission: to give every woman hope and a vibrant chance for surviving gynaecological cancer by funding research into clinically prioritised trials for treatments, diagnosis and prevention.

Fighting to have a family

At 36, Tammy faced devastating news. After years of trying to conceive with her husband Calvin, doctors discovered abnormal cells that could develop into endometrial cancer. The standard treatment was a hysterectomy, ending any chance of having a child.

Tammy was referred to the Queensland Centre for Gynaecological Cancer Research and the feMMe clinical trial. Through the trial, she was offered an alternative treatment using a hormonal IUD, giving her the chance to treat the condition while preserving her fertility.

“It was a blessing to have that option,” Tammy said. “Without the trial, my only choice would have been a hysterectomy.”

After six months of treatment and recovery, Tammy and Calvin tried IVF again. This time it worked.

Today, they are parents to their son, Jasper. Tammy hopes that through continued research, more women facing similar diagnoses will have choices that protect both their health and their dreams of starting a family.



Women with gynaecological cancer deserve better methods to detect cancer earlier and kinder treatments

From personal experience to powerful purpose

Annie and John O'Connor, proud operators of the iconic landmark The Rocks, Yandina, have been a cherished part of the Noosa community for more than 30 years. Known for their generosity, warmth, and unwavering community spirit, they have always been the kind of people who lift others up.

Unfortunately, Annie's world changed. After decades working as a medical sonographer, scanning thousands of women facing the fear of a gynaecological cancer diagnosis, she suddenly found herself on the other side of the screen. Annie was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer. The months that followed brought chemotherapy, major surgery, and ongoing immunotherapy. The physical and emotional toll was immense, yet Annie considers herself one of the lucky ones, having access to expert clinicians and lifesaving care.

Determined to turn her experience into action, Annie and John opened their beloved venue for the Cherish Midwinter Gala 2025. The night was unforgettable, raising close to $50,000 for vital gynaecological cancer research. Annie went on to join the Bhutan Cherish Challenge in 2025, raising nearly $12,000 and continuing to spread awareness across the Sunshine Coast.

Together, Annie and John are transforming personal hardship into hope, creating better futures for women and families everywhere.





WHAT LIES AHEAD

So far, Cherish has supported numerous studies that enable promising research work to get started. The next phase of research has clearly defined priorities.

Continued partnership and expanded investment in these research priorities can accelerate progress for the women and families affected by gynaecological cancer. Cherish's major research partner, the Queensland Centre for Gynaecological Cancer (QCGC) Research, has a clear and credible path forward, a dedicated team and projects on the go that need our support.

Early detection of cervical cancer

While HPV vaccines and screening programs have reduced cervical cancer rates, women are still being diagnosed at alarming rates and often too late for effective treatment. With the CLARITY study starting in 2026 researchers are taking a promising first step towards **a simple test that can help** detect cervical cancer, monitor it during treatment, or identify recurrence. Investigating tiny fragments and particles found in blood, the team hopes to identify early warning signs (biomarkers) that could drive better outcomes.

Potential outcome: biomarkers are identified, leading to the development of a blood test that detects cervical cancer early.

Kinder treatment for vulvar cancer

Vulvar cancer is rare, and its invasive treatment is harsh. Vulvar cancer research is underfunded. However, a transformational gift to Cherish helped launch a randomised, international clinical trial. ANVU, the first of its kind, will test whether high-resolution ultrasound can identify if vulvar cancer has spread to the lymph nodes. This may let some women avoid lymph node surgery, without compromising their survival. This trial will begin late 2026 and will require additional funding to complete.

Potential outcome: evidence for whether ultrasound is a safe and effective alternative to groin node surgery for women with Stage IB and II vulvar cancer.

Helping women thrive

NHMRC ALIVE WELL is a Centre of Research Excellence dedicated to improving quality of life and wellbeing for women affected by gynaecological cancer. Through research focused on preserving fertility, reducing lymphoedema, and enhancing recovery and survivorship, the program aims to help women live well during and after cancer treatment. Cherish is a valued partner in ALIVE WELL, supporting research, consumer involvement and future research leaders through its grant funding programs and support for PhD scholarship stipends. This investment is helping to build capacity in gynaecological cancer research while supporting better outcomes and quality of life for women affected by gynaecological cancer.

Potential outcome: women-centred research and care that helps women live well during and after gynaecological cancer treatment.

Personalised medicine for endometrial cancer

Endometrial cancer is the most common gynaecological cancer in Australia, and its incidence is rising steadily, even in younger women. Cherish is proud to support the ENDO-3 Molecular study, which is focused on treating the woman, not just the disease. In this study, researchers will analyse blood and tissue samples to find signals in the body that can help diagnose endometrial cancer earlier, show how well treatment is working, and detect relapses sooner. ENDO-3 Molecular is expected to commence in 2026 or 2027.

Potential outcome: evidence about what affects an individual woman's outcomes in early-stage endometrial cancer.

SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

Research progress depends on momentum. Only with sustainable funding can talented research teams continue building on earlier results, ensuring their discoveries reach the women who need them as early as possible.

By continuing to fund gynaecological cancer research, we are accelerating progress, helping to close care gaps, and ensuring every woman in the future has a chance at a healthy and fulfilling life.

Awareness saves lives

While advancing gynaecological cancer research, Cherish's second mission is to raise awareness.

Gynaecological cancers affect the reproductive organs, the private parts of a woman's body. Too often, women and girls feel embarrassed, dismissed or reluctant to talk about their symptoms. For women with rare and confronting cancers, like vulvar cancer, these feelings can be amplified.

By raising awareness and talking openly about gynaecological cancer, we can spark conversations that save lives and create a supportive community. Together, we can ensure that women facing a cancer diagnosis never feel alone.

Importance of community and purpose

Each year, Cherish brings people together through our Brisbane and Gold Coast fundraising events, sparking powerful conversations, raising awareness about gynaecological cancer, and generating vital funds for research. In 2026, our community rallied to raise over $340,000 in Brisbane and over $473,000 on the Gold Coast, uniting supporters in hope and action for women and girls everywhere.

Since 2019, our Cherish Challenge participants have also been making an incredible impact. Together, they have raised more than $950,000, a remarkable effort that continues to change lives. In 2026, the 19 trekkers who took on the Ten Peaks Challenge pushed our total fundraising for gynaecological cancer research past $1 million, a milestone powered by courage, determination and community spirit.

Our lunches and challenges are proof of what community can achieve. To keep driving change for women and girls facing gynaecological cancer, **we need supporters, trekkers, partners, and champions** to stand with us. Join us, support us and help carry this momentum forward.



Your invitation

Join Cherish now and help write the next chapter of hope, discovery and progress for women facing gynaecological cancer. By partnering with us, you can help raise awareness and funds that drive life-changing research forward.

Together, let's support research finding kinder treatments for women with gynaecological cancer.

- Donate to research
- Join a Cherish Challenge
- Attend a Cherish fundraising event
- Fundraise your way
- Share your story
- Become a corporate partner
- Leave a Gift in your Will

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"I have seen the difference Cherish has made by funding research into clinically prioritised trials for treatments, diagnosis and prevention. This investment has saved lives already, but so much more can and needs to be done."

Professor Andreas Obermair

Cherish Founder