PERRY CROSS SPINAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION



ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"This year has been defined by progress in research, strength in our community and the deeply personal hope that drives us forward."



For more than three decades, I have held onto the belief that paralysis can be treated. This last year that belief has moved another important step closer to reality as Griffith University opened expressions of interest for the world-first Nerve Bridge Transplantation and Rehabilitation Human Clinical Trial.

The response from the spinal cord injury community has been extraordinary. More than 700 people registered their interest, reflecting both the urgent need for a treatment and the hope this research represents. Behind every expression of interest is a person, a family and a future that could be transformed.

Reaching this point has taken years of research, careful preparation and extraordinary generosity. Our community, partners and donors helped raise the millions required for the trial, and the Australian Government's Medical Research Future Fund committed additional funding that enabled the trial to expand. This is a powerful example of what can happen when researchers, government, philanthropy and community work toward one shared goal.

The next chapter will demand patience, discipline and sustained investment, but we enter it with greater capability and hope than ever before.

This year, we also mourned the passing of our cherished friend and Ambassador, Kurt Drysdale. Kurt brought warmth, integrity and his unmistakable cheeky grin to everything he did. His advocacy inspired others, strengthened our community and made a lasting contribution to the Foundation. He will be deeply missed.

Perry Cross AM
Founder & Executive President

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

"On behalf of the Board, I am proud to reflect on a year in which the Foundation strengthened the bridge between world-class research and the people it exists to serve."



The opening of expressions of interest for the human clinical trial was a defining milestone. It followed years of fundraising, collaboration and rigorous scientific preparation, and brought the spinal cord injury community closer to participating in research designed to restore feeling and function.

Our responsibility now extends well beyond funding a single trial. We must help sustain the people, infrastructure and discovery pipeline that allow promising science to progress safely and efficiently. The Foundation's investment in research fellows and PhD scholarships at Griffith University reflects this long-term view.

The year also demonstrated the remarkable reach of our community. SIP Week, our annual peer-to-peer campaign largely supported by people with SCI and their families, raised $135,609; Em Carey inspired 1,692 individual donations and raised $111,925 walking the New York City Marathon; the 2026 Everything is Possible Gala, presented by Prestige Automotive Group, brought together almost 800 guests and raised more than $320,000; and Perry Cross and Dan Boardman, one of Perry's long-term carers, 100km Roll and Run fundraiser embodied the resilience at the heart of this organisation.

I thank my fellow directors, our scientific committee, the executive team, company secretary, volunteers, patrons, ambassadors, research partners, corporate partners and every person who donated or fundraised.

I also congratulate Perry. His vision continues to unite an extraordinary community and turn hope into meaningful progress.

Tom Ray
Chairman



REMEMBERING KURT DRYSDALE

We were deeply saddened by the passing of our Ambassador, Kurt Drysdale in 2026.

Kurt was a passionate advocate, generous supporter and steadfast believer in our mission to treat paralysis. Perry first met Kurt in December 2015, while Kurt was receiving treatment in the spinal unit at Royal North Shore Hospital.

After returning home, Kurt, supported by his family and community, organised the highly successful Bridge to Beach Fundraising Dinner in Wollongong. It was the beginning of an enduring commitment to the Foundation and its work.

Kurt brought energy, integrity and heart to everything he did. Whether organising fundraisers, attending Foundation events or sharing his story to raise awareness of spinal cord injury, he inspired others to stand alongside our community and support the search for a cure.

Our heartfelt condolences go to his parents, Sonya and Steve, his family and everyone who loved him.

Kurt will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

THE STORY OF OUR BRAND

Our logo grew from a desire to create something deeply personal.

Perry Cross worked with designer Matt Vergotis to bring this vision to life.

Paralysed from the chin down, Perry holds a pen in his mouth to sign his name, and this distinctive signature became the inspiration for our logo.



Together, they created a brand that reflects Perry's identity, determination and belief that 'everything is possible'.

2025-2026 AT A GLANCE

A year of scientific progress, powerful advocacy and extraordinary community support.

RESEARCH

700+
Clinical trial expressions of interest from the SCI community

12
brilliant researchers funded by the Foundation

300+
people toured the research laboratories

AWARENESS

30+
Speaking and advocacy engagements reaching 2,000+ people

1,500
new followers to our community across social channels

2.32M
people reached across social channels this year

COMMUNITY

62
generous volunteers dedicated over 1,600 hours to the Foundation

$212K
raised through community-led events

264
sippers drinking through a straw for 7 days

LOOKING AHEAD

The coming year will be pivotal.

As Griffith University progresses participant screening and prepares the first cohort for the Nerve Bridge Transplantation and Rehabilitation Human Clinical Trial, the Foundation will continue to support the team, infrastructure and research pipeline behind this work.

Our priorities are to:

- support the safe and rigorous progression of the Nerve Bridge Transplantation and Rehabilitation Human Clinical Trial.
- recruit, develop and retain world-class spinal cord injury researchers.
- fund discoveries that optimise the current therapy and inform subsequent trials.
- translate complex research into clear, timely and transparent updates for donors and the spinal cord injury community.
- broaden national and international awareness of spinal cord injury through advocacy and our Cure Crusader Ambassador Program.

THE REALITY BEHIND THE MISSION

For Perry Cross, starting each day takes hours of personal care, careful planning and dedicated support.

Since sustaining a C2 spinal cord injury at 19, Perry has lived with paralysis from the neck down. He relies on a ventilator to breathe and requires around-the-clock care. Each morning, carers assist with his personal care, equipment and transfer into his wheelchair before his working day can begin.

In this deeply personal video, shared at the Gala dinner and as part of our tax appeal, Perry shares the daily realities of spinal cord injury and its impact on independence, families and carers.

Despite these challenges, Perry has spent more than three decades advancing research towards a cure. For Perry, regaining even a small amount of feeling or function, including the ability to feel a loved one's hug, would be life-changing.

His story is why we keep moving forward.

Watch Perry's behind-the-scenes video here:

WHAT ARE THE STATS?

Every day, one Australian suffers a spinal cord injury. **That is ONE TOO MANY.**

The Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation has one main goal: to find a cure for paralysis for all, by funding world-class spinal injury research.



Spinal cord injuries cost the Australian economy more than **$10M per day.**

Over 20,800

Australians are living with SCI.

40%

of people with SCI are likely to suffer PTSD.



30%

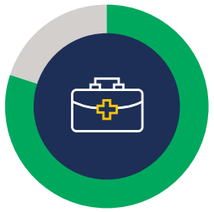
of people with SCI are at risk of depression.





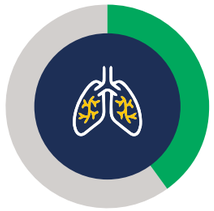
70%

of people with SCI suffer from **chronic pain** for more than 6 months.



80%

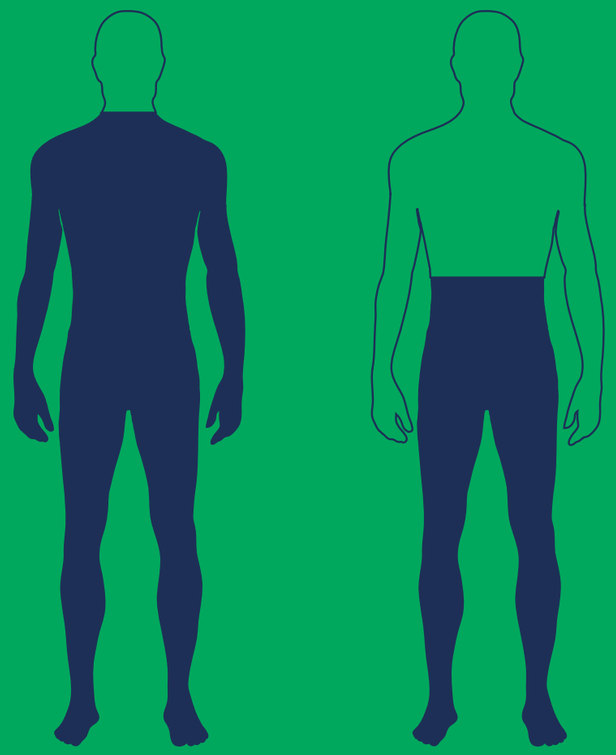
of people with SCI are affected by a lack of **bladder/bowel control.**



40%

of hospitalised people with SCIs have **respiratory failure.**

Paralysis is the loss or impairment of voluntary movement and the loss of function and feeling.





Quadriplegia

42% of injuries



Paraplegia

58% of injuries



Men account for 70% of SCIs

The main cause of injuries:

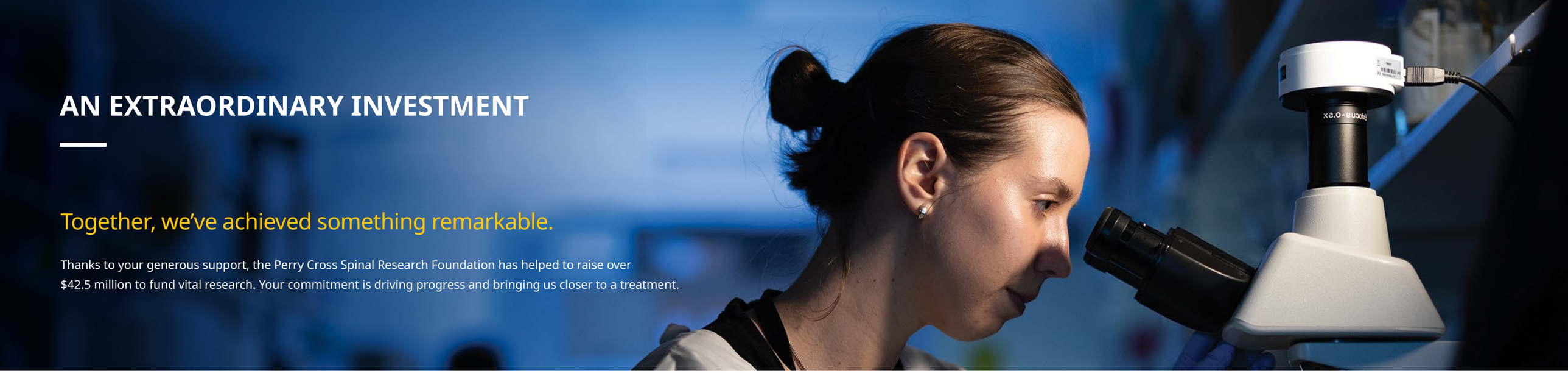
- **42%** falls
- **40%** vehicle accidents
- **11%** sporting injuries
- **7%** other



Since 2010, the **Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation** has helped to raise over

$42.5M

for groundbreaking Australian research.



AN EXTRAORDINARY INVESTMENT

Together, we've achieved something remarkable.

Thanks to your generous support, the Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation has helped to raise over $42.5 million to fund vital research. Your commitment is driving progress and bringing us closer to a treatment.

2012
BOND UNIVERSITY
$69k
Axonal Regeneration

2013
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$150k
Growth Factor Project

2015
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$50k
Olfactory Glia Project

2015
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$75k
Grant from Catwalk Trust

2015
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$20k
Nasal Biopsy Research

2015
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$86k
Nerve Bridge Project

2016
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$232k
Spinal Injury Project

2017
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$5.1M
Spinal Injury Project

2018
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
$433k
Spinal Cord Repair Project

2019
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$450k
Cleaning up the injury site, Spinal Injury Project

2019
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$28k
Olfactory Glia Project

2020
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$5.7M
Spinal Injury Project

2020
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$450k
Rehabilitation Trial 1, Spinal Injury Project

2020
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$420k
Rehabilitation Trial 2, Spinal Injury Project

2020
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$88k
Contract Research Organisation Scoping for human trial, Spinal Injury Project

2023
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$5.4M
QLD government funding, Spinal Injury Project

2023
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$149k
Dr Mo Chen Fellowship, Spinal Injury Project

2023
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$300k
MRFF Nerve Bridge Project, Spinal Injury Project

2023
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$1.2M
MRFF Nerve Bridge Project, Spinal Injury Project

2023
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$400k
LiveCyte Microscope, Spinal Injury Project

2024
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$6.8M
MRFF Human Trial (additional 15 people), Spinal Injury Project

2024
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$5M
Human Trial, Spinal Injury Project

2024
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$3.1M
Human Trial, Spinal Injury Project

2024
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$2.4M
Human Trial, Spinal Injury Project

2025
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
$1.7M
Research Fellowship, Spinal Injury Project

Learn more about the world-class research that your generosity makes possible here:

- Indirect
- Direct

SPINAL CORD INJURY: THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

Spinal cord injury can change a life in an instant, affecting movement, sensation, independence, health, relationships and employment. Its impact also extends to families, carers and the wider community.

WHY RESEARCH MATTERS

- There is currently no widely available cure for paralysis caused by spinal cord injury.
- Translation from laboratory discovery to clinical treatment depends on skilled people, specialist facilities, clinical trials and long-term funding.
- A treatment has the potential to restore function, improve health and independence, and reduce lifelong social and economic costs.



Griffith UNIVERSITY
Queensland, Australia

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation funded projects, Griffith University

Nerve Bridge Transplantation and Rehabilitation Human Clinical Trial Update
March 2016 – ongoing
Chief Investigator: Prof James St John
Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, Griffith University
Total Investment from PCSRF $5,400,000

The human clinical trial to test the olfactory nerve bridge transplantation therapy officially commenced in August 2025.

Griffith University's first-in-human clinical trial of olfactory nerve bridge transplantation for spinal cord injury has continued to make significant progress over the past year. While commencement of patient recruitment has taken longer than originally anticipated, this additional time has been essential to further strengthen the therapy and maximise the likelihood of success in the clinic.

A major focus of the past year has been refining and improving the manufacturing process used to produce the olfactory nerve bridge. These improvements are designed to increase consistency, quality and scalability, ensuring that every transplant is manufactured to the highest possible standard. As with any advanced cell-based therapy, introducing enhanced manufacturing methods requires extensive testing and validation to demonstrate that the final product remains safe, effective and suitable for use in patients.

The team has worked closely with regulatory experts and manufacturing specialists to confirm that the updated processes comply with the stringent requirements necessary for human clinical trials. This has involved detailed assessments of product quality, stability, safety and reproducibility, as well as comprehensive documentation to support regulatory approvals.

The manufacturing and regulatory activities are nearing completion, and we expect to begin treatment of the first participants in the near future.



This milestone represents the culmination of decades of research into olfactory ensheathing cell transplantation and nerve bridge technology led by Professor James St John and colleagues.

Highlights: Over 700 people have applied to participate in the trial. The call for expressions of interest remains open and the team is continuing to receive applications which shows the strong interest in participating in the trial.

Next steps: Once the cell manufacturing is finalised, the clinical team will commence pre-screening of applicants to select those most suited to be the first few participants in the trial. There will then be a staggered enrolment with about one to two people every few months, with plans to increase enrolment over time.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation funded projects, Griffith University

A biological nerve bridge device for repairing spinal cord injury in humans

Medical Research Future Fund - Early to Mid-Career Researchers Grant - Stream 3. January 2023 – January 2027

Chief investigators: Dr Mo Chen, Dr Ronak Reshamwala, Dr Mariyam Murtaza, Dr Yu-Ting Tseng.

Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, Griffith University

Total Investment from PCSRF $300,000

This project is focused on developing the next generation of olfactory nerve bridge transplantation technology for spinal cord injury.

While the current nerve bridge approach has shown great promise and is progressing toward clinical application, the research team is working to create a minimally invasive transplantation method that could further reduce costs, lower surgical risk, and improve accessibility for patients in the future.

Over the past year, the team has continued to advance the development of micro nerve bridges, a smaller version of the therapeutic implant that can potentially be delivered using image-guided procedures rather than open surgery. This approach could significantly simplify transplantation, reduce hospital and operating costs, and lessen the burden on patients undergoing treatment.



An additional advantage of micro nerve bridges is the potential to enable repeat or “top-up” transplantation. Rather than relying on a single intervention, future treatment strategies may involve an initial transplantation followed by additional minimally invasive procedures to further support neural repair and recovery. This flexibility could provide clinicians with new options to tailor treatment to the needs of individual patients.

By combining advanced cell therapy and minimally invasive delivery technologies, this project is helping to build a pathway toward more practical and scalable treatments for spinal cord injury. The work being led by this talented group of emerging and mid-career researchers is laying the foundation for future therapies that are safer, more accessible and capable of delivering ongoing regenerative support to patients.

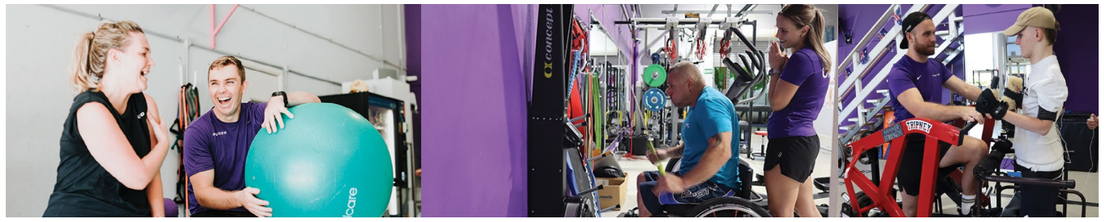
Highlights: PhD candidate Dr Peter Fawzy recently joined the team thanks to a PCSRF PhD scholarship. As a medical doctor with experience in surgery, he is helping design the minimally invasive transplantation approach to make sure it is relevant to clinicians.

Next steps: The MRFF funded aspect of the project is due to be completed in January 2027. Thanks to ongoing PCSRF support to the PhD candidates, the project will continue to develop the minimally invasive transplantation technique, with the aim of introducing it into a future clinical trial.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation funded projects, Griffith University

Rehabilitation clinical trials update



Physical rehabilitation is a critical component of the olfactory nerve bridge transplantation program.

Rehabilitation helps guide and strengthen new neural connections that form after injury, maximising the potential benefits of regenerative therapies and supporting meaningful functional recovery.

Over the past year, the research team has focused on combining and analysing the outcomes from both rehabilitation clinical trials (total investment from PCSRF $870,000). Together, these studies evaluated rehabilitation delivered before and after transplantation and have provided valuable information to support the design of the upcoming olfactory nerve bridge clinical trial.

The combined results demonstrate that the rehabilitation programs are safe, feasible and can be delivered successfully over extended periods. Importantly, participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the programs and valued the opportunity to participate in structured, specialist rehabilitation. These findings reinforce the strong demand within the spinal cord injury community for greater access to intensive rehabilitation services.

Feedback from participants, clinicians and rehabilitation providers has enabled the team to refine numerous aspects of the program, including exercise selection, scheduling, participant support and outcome assessments. These improvements have strengthened the overall olfactory nerve bridge trial design and will help ensure that participants in the trial receive a rehabilitation program that is practical, engaging and aligned with their individual goals.

Highlights:

- Combined analysis of the two rehabilitation trials has confirmed that the programs are safe and feasible for people living with spinal cord injury.
- Trends indicate that participants had improvements in muscle function that improved quality of life.
- Participants reported positive experiences and high levels of engagement throughout the programs.
- The studies demonstrated that intensive rehabilitation can be delivered successfully within the planned clinical trial framework.
- Findings from both trials have been used to optimise the rehabilitation program for the upcoming olfactory nerve bridge transplantation trial.
- The rehabilitation protocols are now considered suitable for incorporation into the main olfactory nerve bridge clinical trial.

Next steps: The research team is finalising the analyses and preparing the results from both rehabilitation trials for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Sharing these findings will help inform the wider spinal cord injury community and support the development of future rehabilitation-based therapies.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation funded projects, Griffith University

Cleaning up the injury site: optimising olfactory ensheathing cells for spinal cord repair

January 2018 – ongoing

Chief Investigator: Prof James St John

Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, Griffith University

Total Investment from PCSRF $450,000



Olfactory Ensheathing Cells (OECs) have several important functions that make them attractive for treating spinal cord injury.

One of their most valuable properties is their ability to remove debris from dead and damaged cells without triggering the harmful inflammation that often accompanies the body's natural immune response. By clearing inhibitory debris from the injury site, OECs help create an environment that is more supportive of repair and regeneration.

Over the past year, the research team has focused on understanding how different growth and culture conditions influence the behaviour of OECs. Building on earlier discoveries that OECs can exist in different functional states, the team is now manipulating the conditions in which OECs are grown to encourage specific therapeutic activities. The goal is to produce cell populations that are better suited to particular roles, such as clearing cellular debris, reducing harmful factors within the injury environment, or promoting nerve regeneration.

This work is providing important insights into how OEC therapies can be further enhanced and tailored for different stages of spinal cord injury. By controlling the characteristics of the cells before transplantation, the team hopes to maximise the therapeutic benefits delivered to patients.

Highlights:

- Research has confirmed that OECs can adopt different functional states with varying therapeutic properties.
- The team is successfully manipulating culture and growth conditions to influence the activities performed by OECs.
- Different growth conditions have been shown to alter the balance between debris-clearing and regeneration-promoting functions.
- Dr Francesca Oieni continues to lead this exciting area of research as a Research Fellow, building on discoveries from her PhD studies.
- The findings are contributing to the development of more targeted and effective OEC-based therapies for spinal cord injury.

Next steps: The research team will continue investigating how specific culture conditions can be used to direct OEC behaviour and enhance desirable therapeutic functions. The aim is to identify the optimal cell populations for different stages of spinal cord injury and to determine how these specialised OECs can be incorporated into future transplantation strategies. In combination with advances in micro nerve bridge technology, this work is helping to establish the foundation for more sophisticated and personalised regenerative therapies for spinal cord injury.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation funded projects, Griffith University

Building the best spinal cord injury team in the world

The Foundation is focused on recruiting, developing and retaining the world's best researchers to ensure we remain at the forefront of spinal cord injury innovation.

Scientific breakthroughs depend on talented people having the time, resources and long-term support needed to pursue bold ideas. Building a strong research team also protects the knowledge and expertise developed through decades of work, while creating a pipeline of emerging scientists who can lead the next generation of discovery.

To achieve this, the Foundation is committed to raising funds to support two Senior Research Fellows, two Junior Research Fellows and six PhD students. Together, they will advance the current therapy, explore new approaches and translate promising discoveries into future treatments.

Investing in people is an investment in progress.

PCSRF Research Fellows and PhD Scholars

March 2025 – ongoing

Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, Griffith University

Total Investment From PCSRF $1.7 million



Senior Research Fellow: Production of human cells for transplantation

Dr Mariyam Murtaza holds this Senior Research Fellow position and leads the critical human cell manufacturing team responsible for producing the olfactory cell nerve bridges used in the current clinical trial. Her team operates at the interface of research, manufacturing and clinical translation, ensuring that every nerve bridge is produced to the rigorous quality and regulatory standards required for human transplantation.

With extensive expertise in cell manufacturing and translational research, Mariyam oversees the integration of new scientific discoveries into the clinical manufacturing pipeline. Working closely with researchers across the Spinal Injury Project, she evaluates and implements innovations that have the potential to improve the safety, consistency, scalability and effectiveness of the therapy. These advancements are not only supporting the current first-in-human clinical trial but are also laying the foundation for future generations of the treatment.

Through her leadership, the manufacturing team is developing improved processes and technologies that can be incorporated into future clinical trials, helping to accelerate the pathway from laboratory discovery to patient benefit. This integrated approach ensures that research breakthroughs can be translated efficiently and in accordance with regulatory requirements, ultimately increasing the likelihood of delivering effective therapies to individuals living with spinal cord injury.



International Research Fellow: developing donor cell banks for future clinical trials

The manufacture of olfactory cell nerve bridges for transplantation involves several critical steps, including the purification and expansion of cells, storage of cells through cryopreservation, and preparation of nerve bridges for clinical transplantation. While these processes have been successfully implemented for the current clinical trial, future therapies for spinal cord injury will require manufacturing approaches that can provide cells more rapidly and at greater scale.

In July this year, **Dr Kamile Minkelyte** from University College London joined the Spinal Injury Project team as the International Research Fellow. Kamile brings expertise in cell biology, transplantation research and advanced cell banking technologies. Her research is focused on developing a bank of donor-derived olfactory cells that could be used to manufacture nerve bridges for the treatment of acute spinal cord injury.

Creating a donor cell bank has the potential to overcome one of the major challenges of personalised cell therapies, namely the time required to obtain and manufacture cells from an individual patient. By establishing carefully characterised and stored donor cell populations, future therapies could be prepared and made available much more rapidly following injury, when early intervention may provide the greatest benefit.

Through collaboration with the human cell manufacturing team and researchers across the Spinal Injury Project, Kamile's work is helping to build the next generation of olfactory cell therapies. The development of donor cell banks represents an important step towards creating readily available, clinically compliant treatments that can be delivered to a larger number of people living with spinal cord injury.



Junior Research Fellow: altering environmental production conditions to enhance cell activity

Research conducted within the Spinal Injury Project has demonstrated that the conditions traditionally used to grow cells in the laboratory do not accurately reflect the environment cells encounter within the human body. These differences can influence cell health, function and ultimately their ability to support repair following transplantation into the injured spinal cord.

Following the completion of his PhD within the Spinal Injury Project team, **Dr Md. Mahbubur Rahman (Mahbub)** was appointed to this Junior Research Fellow position. Building on his previous discoveries, Mahbub is leading research to develop improved methods for growing and preparing olfactory cells for clinical use.

His work focuses on modifying the conditions under which cells are cultured, with the aim of producing healthier and more functionally active cells for nerve bridge manufacture. By creating growth environments that more closely resemble those found within the human body, Mahbub is helping to improve both the cell manufacturing process and the biological properties of the cells prior to transplantation.

Working closely with the human cell manufacturing team, Mahbub is helping to translate these laboratory discoveries into clinically compatible manufacturing processes that can be incorporated into future versions of the therapy. His research is providing critical knowledge that will support the continued refinement of olfactory cell nerve bridge transplantation and contribute to the development of more effective treatments for people living with spinal cord injury.



Junior Research Fellow: cleaning up the injury site

One of the key goals of the Spinal Injury Project is to improve the ability of olfactory ensheathing cells (OECs) to survive, respond to injury and support repair following transplantation. Previous research by Dr Francesca Oieni demonstrated that OECs and their companion fibroblast cells work together to remove damaged tissue and cellular debris from the injury site, while also identifying growth factors that can significantly improve OEC survival and activity.

Building on these discoveries, **Dr Francesca Oieni** has been appointed to the Junior Research Fellow position and is now leading research that uses advanced live-cell imaging technologies to understand how growth factors influence cell behaviour in real time. These sophisticated imaging approaches allow researchers to observe living cells as they move, interact and respond to therapeutic signals, providing insights that cannot be obtained through traditional laboratory techniques.

Working closely with the wider Spinal Injury Project team, Francesca's research is helping to develop next-generation cell therapies that combine advanced cell manufacturing with targeted biological signals. Her work is generating new knowledge that will support the translation of growth factor-enhanced nerve bridge therapies into future preclinical studies and clinical trials, bringing the field closer to more effective treatments for people living with spinal cord injury.



Two PCSRF PhD Scholarships: training the next generation of translational researchers

PhD students play a critical role in advancing innovative research that can lead to new treatments for spinal cord injury. Through the generous support of the Morgans Foundation, two prestigious PhD scholarships have been established to attract outstanding researchers who can contribute to the future development of olfactory nerve bridge transplantation.

This year, **Dr Peter Fawzy** and Hardus Redelinghuys were appointed to these highly competitive scholarships and have commenced their research within the Spinal Injury Project team.

Dr Peter Fawzy, a qualified medical doctor, is undertaking a PhD focused on developing a minimally invasive method for transplanting olfactory nerve bridges into the injured spinal cord. Current transplantation approaches require highly specialised surgical procedures, and Peter's research aims to create techniques that could simplify delivery of the therapy while reducing surgical burden on patients. His work combines clinical insight with translational research and has the potential to improve the accessibility and adoption of future nerve bridge therapies.

Hardus Redelinghuys is investigating one of the most important questions in spinal cord injury treatment: when is the optimal time after injury to perform nerve bridge transplantation? The timing of intervention can have a major influence on how transplanted cells respond to the injury environment and how effectively they support repair. Through preclinical studies, Hardus is examining how biological changes that occur after spinal cord injury influence the success of transplantation and is working to identify the treatment window that provides the greatest therapeutic benefit.

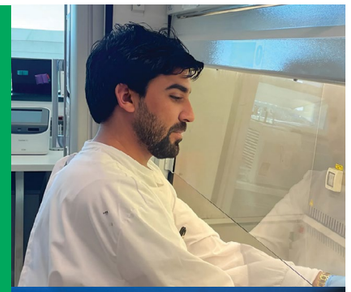
Together, Peter and Hardus are addressing two critical challenges for future clinical translation: how to deliver the therapy more effectively and when to deliver it for maximum impact. Their research will generate essential knowledge that will guide the design of future clinical trials and help optimise olfactory nerve bridge transplantation as a treatment for people living with spinal cord injury.

The appointment of these two talented PhD researchers reflects PCSRF's ongoing commitment to building the next generation of spinal cord injury researchers while accelerating the development of innovative therapies that can improve outcomes for patients.

Four PCSRF PhD top-up Scholarships

Attracting and retaining outstanding research students is critical to accelerating the development of new therapies for spinal cord injury. PCSRF top-up scholarships help alleviate the financial pressures associated with doctoral studies, enabling talented researchers to focus on innovative projects that have strong potential for clinical translation. These scholarships are particularly valuable for international students who relocate to Australia and do not have local family support networks.

The following students are currently supported through PCSRF PhD top-up scholarships and are making important contributions across multiple aspects of the Spinal Injury Project.









Mr Shah Hussain is investigating biomarkers that can help predict which types of spinal cord injury are most likely to respond to olfactory nerve bridge transplantation. His research is also examining how changes that occur within the injured spinal cord over time influence treatment success, helping to identify the optimal conditions and treatment windows for future clinical applications. By better understanding the biological factors associated with successful outcomes, Shah's research will contribute to more personalised approaches to spinal cord injury treatment.

Ms Molly Sullivan is leading research into sex differences following spinal cord injury and how these differences may influence responses to cell transplantation therapies. Her work is addressing a major knowledge gap in the field by investigating the social and biological mechanisms that contribute to different outcomes in females and males. The findings will help ensure that future therapies are developed and evaluated in a way that maximises benefits for all patients. Ms Molly Sullivan is generously supported by Em Carey.
Read more about this partnership on page 23.

Mr Subhrajyoti Banerjee is exploring how products naturally released by olfactory ensheathing cells can be harnessed to enhance the therapeutic effects of nerve bridge transplantation. These biologically active factors have the potential to support tissue repair and improve recovery following spinal cord injury. By identifying, characterising and testing these cell-derived products, Subhra's research is creating opportunities to develop combination therapies that augment the benefits of olfactory cell transplantation.

Ms Cara O'Dwyer is working to advance the development of micro nerve bridges and minimally invasive delivery approaches. Her research aims to create small, engineered nerve bridge constructs that could enable repeat or supplementary transplantations following the initial treatment. This strategy has the potential to provide ongoing therapeutic support to the injured spinal cord and may form an important component of future generations of the therapy.

Together, these four emerging researchers are addressing critical questions ranging from patient selection and treatment timing to biological enhancement strategies and advanced delivery methods. Their work is helping to build the evidence required for the next generation of olfactory nerve bridge therapies while developing the highly skilled research workforce needed to drive future breakthroughs in spinal cord injury treatment.

OPENING THE RESEARCH LABORATORY DOORS

Research becomes more meaningful when supporters can see it, question it and meet the people behind it.

Across two evening events, over 80 guests visited Griffith University for a behind-the-scenes experience inside the Spinal Injury Project laboratories. Supporters heard directly from researchers, explored the science and saw how their generosity is being translated into real progress.





A COMMUNITY CONNECTED TO PROGRESS

Throughout the year, the Foundation continued to host laboratory tours and research updates for donors, partners and members of the spinal cord injury community. A special thank you to our Cure Crusader Ambassador, Lindsay Nott, for generously assisting with the hosting of these inspiring tours.

Want to see the research in action?

Book a tour today:







IF YOU CAN, YOU MUST

Em Carey knows how quickly a spinal cord injury can change a life.

In 2013, at just 20 years old, Em was five days into a long-awaited European adventure when a skydiving accident in the Swiss Alps left her with paraplegia. What followed was a challenging journey of surgery, rehabilitation and recovery. Em defied expectations and learned to walk again, emerging with a determination to use her experience to help others.

In November 2025, Em took on another extraordinary challenge: walking the New York City Marathon. After nine hours of courage and perseverance, she crossed the finish line, raising an incredible $111,925 through 1,692 donations.

The funds raised are supporting PhD scholar Molly Sullivan, a member of Griffith University's Spinal Injury Project team. Molly is exploring biological differences between males and females following spinal cord injury, an important yet underexplored area of research.

Em's message 'If you can, you must' inspired others to use whatever they could to help create change.

Watch Em Carey's video here:

YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION

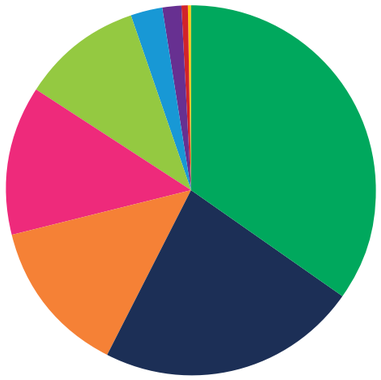
We extend our deepest gratitude to our fundraising community for your unwavering support. Together, we are advancing vital spinal cord injury research and building a future where no one is limited by paralysis.

Throughout the year, the Foundation delivers a range of fundraising campaigns and events and relies on the generosity of our donors, partners and community to fund this critical research.

View our full audited financial statements here:

INCOME BREAKDOWN

Function Income	34.89%	Regular Donations	2.76%
Major Gift Income	22.82%	Grants	1.43%
Campaign Income	13.65%	Donations (other)	0.77%
Interest Income	13.01%	Other Revenue	0.06%
Community Events	10.62%	Government Funding	0.00%



GRANTS

During the year, the Foundation was fortunate to receive generous grant funding to support the development of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and website.

While these investments will strengthen our internal systems, their greatest value will be in helping us better serve and connect with our community. The new CRM will enable us to communicate more effectively with our donors and supporters, keep them informed about the progress and impact of the research they help fund, and better understand and manage the relationships that are so important to our work.

Our new website will also provide a more engaging and accessible way to share research updates, stories and opportunities to get involved, helping us build greater awareness of spinal cord injury and the urgent need to fund research towards a cure.

We sincerely thank Queensland Gives for two grants totalling $35,000, and the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for a grant of $31,405. This generous support is helping us build stronger connections with our community and, ultimately, strengthen our ability to fund life-changing spinal cord injury research.



FOUNDATION EVENTS

Connecting with our community

‘Everything is Possible’ Gala Dinner, presented by Prestige Automotive Group, March 2026

Almost eight hundred guests gathered at The Star Gold Coast for an unforgettable evening celebrating generosity, hope and possibility. Presented by Prestige Automotive Group, the Gala raised more than $320,000 to advance life-changing spinal cord injury research and the pursuit of a cure for paralysis.

A highlight of the evening was a special on-stage conversation between Perry Cross, Board Member and donor Ryan Holsheimer, and valued friend and generous supporter of the Foundation, Paul Cronin. Paul shared why his family has committed $1 million over the next 10 years to help build and sustain a world-leading spinal cord injury research team.

This outstanding event was made possible by our presenting partner, generous emcee Shelley Craft, sponsors, Cure Crusaders, event partners, prize donors, guests and 45 dedicated volunteers led by the unstoppable Kaye Hastie. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the evening’s extraordinary success.



FOUNDATION EVENTS

Connecting with our community

‘Everything is Possible’ Thank You Celebration, November 2025

Our community gathered at HOTA, Home of the Arts, for a special evening celebrating an extraordinary year of progress and generosity.

Donors, volunteers, partners, suppliers, ambassadors and stakeholders joined us to reflect on the commencement of the human clinical trial and the collective effort behind this milestone.

Special guest host Shelley Craft led an inspiring conversation with Perry Cross and Professor James St John, sharing insights into the Foundation’s journey and hopes for the future.

Watch this inspiring video celebrating the journey of Perry Cross, the Foundation and the research.













FOUNDATION EVENTS

Connecting with our community

Brisbane Legends Lunch, October 2025

Now in its eighth year, the Brisbane Legends Lunch welcomed 140 guests to Black Hide Steak & Seafood by Gambaro, hosted by Tim Horan and Ben Dobbin at The Star Brisbane, Queen’s Wharf.

Bringing together great food, entertaining sporting stories and a shared commitment to finding a cure for paralysis, the event was a wonderful celebration of community and generosity.

A heartfelt thank you to our generous Event Sponsor, Morgans, and to the Morgans Foundation for their wonderful contribution of $30,000.

We extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors, speakers, guests and supporters who helped make the afternoon so memorable, raising $220,000.








COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Connecting with our community

Jay Stevens challenge events, October 2025 and June 2026



After sustaining a spinal cord injury in a devastating helicopter crash in 2018, Jay Stevens has continued to push boundaries and turn adversity into action.

In October 2025, Jay completed the gruelling 78km Bondi to Manly Ultramarathon.

Then, in June 2026, Jay became the first paraplegic athlete to walk continuously on a treadmill for 24 hours.

His achievements raised $22,017.

Gold Coast Local Charities Lunch, June 2026



Our heartfelt thanks to Pam Sturgess and the incredible women of the Gold Coast Local Charities Lunch for once again hosting a wonderful fundraising event at Edgewater Dining.

The luncheon brought together a generous community of supporters and raised an outstanding $8,000 for life-changing spinal cord injury research.

We are deeply grateful to Pam, her dedicated committee and everyone who donated, purchased raffle tickets and contributed on the day.

Gold Coast Fundraising Ball and Golf Day, June 2026



We extend our sincere thanks to Beric and Tina Lynton, Kyla Page and the incredible Gold Coast Fundraising Ball and Golf Day committee for their unwavering support over many years.

The Foundation has been honoured to benefit from these much-loved events, which have supported numerous Gold Coast charities. This year, the event raised $18,202 for the Spinal Injury Project. This year marked the final event, bringing the total raised through years of generous support to a phenomenal $247,108.

Special Sydney supporter event hosted by Rochelle Collis and Saxon Carr, November 2025



Long-term supporter Rochelle Collis brought together friends for a special evening at the Sydney home of Babak Moini, raising $85,535 for life-changing spinal cord injury research.

The cause is deeply personal to Rochelle. In 2024, her son, Saxon Carr, sustained a spinal cord injury while mountain bike riding. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Rochelle for sharing her family's story and generously hosting this meaningful event, to Babak for opening his home, and to everyone who attended and contributed.

Boutique Business House Charity Golf Day, September 2025 and March 2026



The Boutique Business House Charity Golf Day returned to the beautiful Royal Pines Resort, bringing together generous supporters for a memorable day on the green.

Hosted by Jason Howard, Andy Hollis and Jake Krause, both of these events raised $40,500 to support life-changing spinal cord injury research and our mission to find a cure for paralysis.

Foundation Ambassador Mick Chisholm also shared his powerful story with guests, offering a moving reminder of why this research matters.

2025 ASICS Gold Coast Marathon, July 2025



The Foundation was proud to rank 24th among the 312 charities supported through the event. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who ran, donated and supported the team. Every kilometre and every gift helped move us closer to a treatment for paralysis.

ADVOCACY

Connecting with our community

Creating awareness is central to driving progress. By sharing lived experience, explaining the importance of spinal cord injury research and connecting people with our mission, we build understanding, inspire action and ensure the urgent need for a cure remains visible.

Throughout the year, Perry Cross and our dedicated Volunteer Speaking Ambassadors represented the Foundation at more than 30 engagements, reaching over 2,000 people. From corporate presentations, community groups and university forums to research lab tours, industry panels and major fundraising events, these engagements brought our work to diverse audiences across business, government, health, education and the wider community.

A key highlight was Perry's contribution to influential forums attended by senior executives, political leaders, researchers and community decision-makers. He shared the Foundation's journey, updated audiences on the progress of the human clinical trial and advocated for more accessible, inclusive communities.

Our Volunteer Speaking Ambassadors, including Joanna Fowler, Lindsay Nott, Nick Dempsey, Mick Chisholm and the late Kurt Drysdale, also played an invaluable role. By generously sharing their personal experiences of spinal cord injury, they helped audiences understand its profound and lifelong impact in a way that statistics alone cannot convey.







TWO FRIENDS, ONE MISSION



Perry Cross and his support worker of eight years, Dan Boardman, took on the 100km Roll and Run at Broadbeach, celebrating friendship, resilience and their shared commitment to a future without paralysis.

Starting at 5pm and finishing at 3.45am, the challenge tested their determination through driving rain, strong winds and cold. Perry steered his power wheelchair using his chin, with protective layers shielding him, his ventilator and equipment. Generator charging stops kept his wheelchair moving throughout the night.

Dan ran an extraordinary 60 kilometres, while his mum, Jane Boardman, cycled the full 100 kilometres. Supporters joined on foot and in wheelchairs, braving the weather to offer encouragement and help them reach their goal.

Every kilometre reflected the persistence needed to turn bold ambitions into reality. To everyone who donated, volunteered, cheered and took part—thank you for making this shared achievement possible.



SIP WEEK 2025: SIPPING FOR A CURE

264 Sippers

1,999 Donations

$135,609 Raised

SIP Week 2025 was an inspiring celebration of community, connection and commitment, raising an amazing $135,609 for life-changing spinal cord injury research.

Across Australia, hundreds of supporters sipped every drink through a straw while hosting workplace morning teas, barbecues and raffles, and sharing plenty of SIP selfies along the way.

Our heartfelt thanks to corporate partners Admiralty Capital Group, Molmiké Medical, Hickey Lawyers and CareMatch, whose generosity made a $20,000 Matching Day possible. We also thank Village Roadshow Theme Parks, Sargood on Collaroy, Worklocker, ByGreen and CocoCoast and all of our prize donors for helping make the week such a success.

Together, every sip brought us one step closer to a cure for paralysis.



OUR VOLUNTEERS: AN UNSTOPPABLE FORCE

Volunteers contribute time, energy, expertise and care across events, campaigns, administration, ambassador activity and supporter engagement.

Their contribution allows more funding and focus to be directed toward research.

We extend a special thank you to Kaye Hastie for her valued contribution to the Foundation, alongside every volunteer who generously gave their time this year.

From the 45 volunteers supporting the 2026 Gala to the many people who helped with SIP Week and community events, every hour strengthened our collective impact.



62 **amazing volunteers contributed approximately**



1,614 **hours of service this year**

to the Foundation amounting to an estimated value of

$40,350

THE POWER OF PERSONAL STORIES

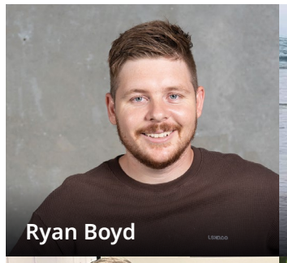
Personal stories have the power to inspire, educate and create meaningful change.

Our Cure Crusader Ambassadors are people with lived experience of spinal cord injury who generously share their journeys to raise awareness of its impact and build support for life-changing research.

Through the program, Ambassadors use their voices to connect with communities and share powerful messages of courage, resilience and hope. This year, they delivered keynote addresses, hosted laboratory tours and supported events, helping to raise vital awareness and funds for our research.

Would you like a Cure Crusader Ambassador to speak at your next event? Read their inspiring stories and learn more about the program here:

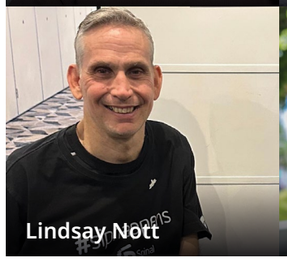
MEET OUR CURE CRUSADER AMBASSADORS



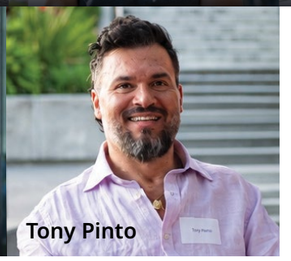












THANK YOU TO OUR PLATINUM PARTNERS

We are proud to partner with organisations that share our commitment to improving the lives of people affected by spinal cord injury.

Thank you to Ryan Holsheimer, a valued board member since 2014 and the founder of Admiralty Capital Group.

Ryan's deep personal connection to our cause gives him a unique and powerful understanding of the challenges faced by those living with spinal cord injuries. His unwavering support and dedication have been instrumental in raising both awareness and crucial funds for our research.

Admiralty Capital Group invests in innovative companies with global ambitions, supporting their growth through its invested and intellectual capital. Their commitment to innovation aligns perfectly with the PCSRF's mission to drive research and find a cure for paralysis.



ADMIRALTY CAPITAL GROUP

We'd like to extend our deepest gratitude to Dan Marino, a valued PCSRF board member and partner at Hickey Lawyers. Dan has been a dedicated supporter of our mission since our inception in 2010, working tirelessly to raise funds and awareness for spinal cord injury research over many years.

Established on the Gold Coast in 1993, Hickey Lawyers has built a reputation as one of Queensland's preeminent commercial law firms. We are so appreciative of the entire team—including partners Simon Chan, Mark Lacy, and Joe Welch—for their steadfast support.



HICKEY LAWYERS



CareMatch Australia

A huge thank you to Vitori Buatava, founder of CareMatch, and his entire team for being such long-time friends and generous supporters of our mission.

CareMatch offers tailored care, specialising in spinal cord injury support. Their genuine and enthusiastic carers are dedicated to helping people achieve their goals, push boundaries, and stay connected. This commitment to care for people in their community makes their partnership with our research even more meaningful.



molmikè medical

Our sincere thanks go to Martin Hogan, Director of Molmiké Medical, and his team, for being such generous and consistent supporters of the Foundation.

For many years, they have been a key sponsor of our SIP Week campaigns and annual gala dinners.

Molmiké Medical is a provider of high-quality, specialised medical consumables. They have access to over 8,000 products and have recently launched a revolutionary new tool to help consumers and their healthcare teams manage their ongoing consumable requirements. From quoting through to ordering – ConsumAble by Molmiké™ has streamlined the process, making it quicker and easier to access the products you need.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Progress towards a cure for paralysis is made possible by the extraordinary generosity of our community.

We gratefully acknowledge the individuals, foundations, organisations and businesses whose significant contributions of $10,000 or more—including donations made at our Gala Dinner—helped advance our mission during the 2025–2026 financial year.

Queensland Health	$1,000,000.00
PD Cronin Family Trust	$200,000.00
The estate of Patricia Helen Sayer	$84,556.72
Morgans Foundation	$30,000.00
Babak Moini	$25,000.00
Terry & Jodie Jackman	$25,000.00
Fundación Proyecto Lázarus	$24,082.48
Ryan & Bec Holsheimer	$22,080.00
Anonymous	$20,000.00
Fairbrother Foundation	$20,000.00
Maureen Stevenson	$17,000.00
Fleur Richardson, Fleur Collective	$16,500.00
Rochelle Collis	$12,500.00
Anonymous	$12,500.00
Tutungi family	$10,200.00
Anonymous	$10,000.00
Nathan Mitchell	$10,000.00
Douglas Murphy KC	$10,000.00
Anonymous	$10,000.00
James & Hayley Baillie	$10,000.00
Anonymous	$10,000.00

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2025-2026 FOUNDATION PLATINUM SPONSORS

Admiralty Capital Group · Hickey Lawyers · CareMatch Australia · molmikè medical

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2025-2026 RESEARCH PARTNERS

Making Strides · Griffith University, Queensland, Australia

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2025-2026 EVENT PARTNERS

PAG Prestige Automotive Group, Gold Coast · Jaguar · Land Rover · BYD · Gold Coast Car Clearance · morgans · morgans Foundation

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2025-2026 IN KIND SUPPORTERS

bt. Marketing · nova Press Print & Mail · Ditto Press · KPMG cutting through complexity

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE GALA DINNER 2026 PRESENTING PARTNER

PRESTIGE AUTOMOTIVE GROUP. GOLD COAST

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE GALA DINNER 2026 GOLD SPONSORS

ADMIRALTY CAPITAL GROUP

molmikè medical

CorpSure Insurance Broking

CareMatch

HICKEY LAWYERS

nova PRESS PRINT & MAIL

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE GALA DINNER 2026 CURE CRUSADERS

fleur COLLECTIVE

All Care QLD

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY | GRIFFITH BUSINESS SCHOOL

BESPOKE LONGEVITY & AESTHETIC MEDICINE

HOSPYCARE

CROSS CARPETS EST. 1966

VILLAGE ROADSHOW THEME PARKS

morgans

carehero

Brightside DISABILITY SUPPORT & RESPITE

FLYNN&CO. ACCOUNTANTS

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE GALA DINNER 2026 EVENT PARTNERS

THE STAR GOLD COAST

DW DREAMWEAVERS EVENT CREATORS & PRODUCERS



HOW YOU CAN HELP

DONATE

Make a one-off gift, become a regular donor or leave a gift in your Will. Every contribution helps sustain the people and research moving us closer to a treatment.

FUNDRAISE

Turn something you enjoy into impact. Host a morning tea, take on a challenge, organise an event or create your own fundraising campaign.

JOIN SIP WEEK

For seven days, drink your beverages through a straw to build awareness and raise funds for spinal cord injury research. Visit sipweek.com.

PARTNER WITH US

Corporate partners can support research through sponsorship, workplace giving, matched giving, volunteering and in-kind expertise.

VOLUNTEER AND SHARE

Give your time, invite a Cure Crusader Ambassador to speak at your workplace or an event, follow our progress and help more people understand why this research matters.

team@pcsrf.org.au

pcsrf.org.au

OUR GOVERNANCE AND PEOPLE

Learn more about the Foundation team here:

PATRONS AND AMBASSADORS



L-R: THE HONOURABLE DAME QUENTIN BRYCE AD CVO, Patron, **JOHN EALES AM,** Ambassador, **ADAM GILCHRIST AM,** Ambassador, **NATHAN GREY,** Ambassador, **BEN IKIN,** Ambassador, **NATHAN SHARPE,** Ambassador

EXECUTIVE TEAM



L-R: PERRY CROSS AM (Executive President and Founder), **MELISSA BROWN** (Foundation Manager), **JEN HUTCHINGS** (Philanthropy Manager), **CLARE WITALIK** (Admin and Events Officer)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



L-R: **PERRY CROSS AM** (Executive President and Founder), **TOM RAY** (Chairman), **MARCUS DORE**, **RYAN HOLSHEIMER**, **MELANIE LEIS**, **DAN MARINO**, **DR BRENT MCMONAGLE**, **GEORGE MOSKOS**, **BRETT WALKER**

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE



L-R: **DR BRENT MCMONAGLE** (Scientific Director), **PROFESSOR RANDY BINDRA**, **MARTIN CODYRE**, **DR WAYNE NG**, **DR DINESH PALIPANA**, **DR ELLISON STEPHENSON**, **LINDA WATERS**

COMPANY MEMBERS



L-R: **ADAM BENNETT-SMITH**, **ROBERT DOUGLAS**, **LYNNE GILLOGLY**, **DAMON HARRIS**, **KAYE HASTIE**, **BLAKE HEDGER**, **HEATH HILL**, **JODIE JACKMAN**, **BERIC LYNTON**, **LETITIA MAXWELL** (Company Secretary / Member), **ANDREW MCLAUCHLAN**, **WADE MCMONAGLE**, **BEN MCNEIL**, **BEN MICHAEL**, **LINDSAY NOTT**, **GREG PINK**, **TRACEY ROBERTS**, **MICHAEL RUDD**, **KRISTEE SHEPHERD**, **PAUL STEER**, **JENS TAMPE**, **DAN TROLLOPE**, **ADAM TWEMLOW**, **TOM WALSH**

THANK YOU

We extend our sincere thanks to Chad Lemming and the team at Nova Press for their exceptional generosity and ongoing partnership.

Each year, Nova Press donates more than $25,000 in printing services, including this annual report, event programs and branded stationery. This significant in-kind support enables us to direct more funding towards life-changing spinal cord injury research.

We are deeply grateful for Nova Press's unwavering commitment to our mission to find a cure for paralysis.



nova PRESS PRINT & MAIL


PERRY CROSS
SPINAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION