



## Media release

**12 September 2018**

### New Chair for Ballarat's Cancer Research program

- *Graeme Dixon appointed the Chair of the Board of Directors at the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute following the retirement Emeritus Professor Wayne Robinson.*

The Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute has announced the appointment of Graeme Dixon as the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Mr Dixon's appointment follows the retirement of long serving Chair, Emeritus Professor Wayne Robinson, after fourteen years on the Board of the Ballarat based cancer research centre.

Mr Dixon takes on the new role after joining the Board of Directors in 2013. Based in Ballarat, he is now a retired business executive, who has over 47 years of corporate management experience. For the last ten years he was the General Manager of the FMP Group of companies. This depth of experience, includes directorships in several Australian and Asian group related companies, including Ballarat Health Services for six years. Other Ballarat connections include the Committee for Ballarat and a sitting Board member of UFS Dispensaries Limited.

This year, the Institute celebrated its twentieth year, having grown to be a world class cancer research facility based in Ballarat. As Australia's only regionally based cancer research centre, it is non-government funded, and relies on the generous support of the community to continue research into more effective ways to diagnose and treat cancer.

Mr Dixon stated that he was excited to take on this new role as Chair of the Institute and what the immediate three to five years will bring.

"FECRI is in a strong position; a first-class team of Research staff and students, a professional and diverse Board of Directors, and a solid Corporate Governance structure. For me it is about "Shaping Our Future" with the articulation of our five-year plan and building a financial model to support this. This includes building a funding model to finance the plan and a corpus fund to advance the ongoing research activities of the Institute."

"The Institute plays a major role in the scientific community in Ballarat particularly through our partnership with Federation University. The team collaborate with national and international research groups, and their work is becoming increasingly recognised at international symposiums and through publication in research journals. It really is a credit to the city" stated Mr Dixon

Mr Dixon said that he saw the challenges for the Institute were around developing a consistent pipeline of funding and building on the community's engagement with the program to ensure the momentum of the research can continue.

"...Cancer research is a long-term investment and we are making headway and contributing to the international pool of knowledge on this disease and the various forms it takes."

“Ensuring a flow of privately sourced funds through donations, fundraising, bequests and grants to deliver our mission – “to advance the understanding and treatment of cancer by making an internationally recognised contribution to cancer research. We are grateful to our community donors who fund our research.”

Professor George Kannourakis, Honorary Director at FECRI said. “The leadership and expertise that Graeme brings to the position as Chair of the Institute, marks an exciting phase and is a key element to our growth and success moving forward.”

Opened in 1998, the Institute was inspired by Ballarat teenager, Fiona Elsey who lost her fight with cancer in 1991. The Institute started in a shed in the back of St John of God Hospital with one part time researcher, and today has a state of the art facility at in the Ballarat Technology Park, employing nine PhD students from Federation University and ten senior scientific staff. Current projects include research into Chronic Lymphoid leukemia, ovarian cancer, Histiocytic Diseases and the immunology of cancer.

The ground-breaking work conducted by the Institute team, continues to gain recognition with over 40 papers published in medical journals. Most recently, new breakthroughs into the chemoresistance in Ovarian cancer and the treatment of Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis with immune based therapies have been recognised.

***All media enquiries, please contact Sarah Stapleton- Marketing and Fundraising Manager at FECRI on 0475 383 687 or sarah@fecri.org.au***

***Please tag the Institute on all social media using @fionaelseycri***