

Press Release

13 February, 2017

Philanthropy and Science for Valentine's Day

This Valentine's Day will mark the opening of the first of a two-part launch of Australia's first-of-its-kind fertility and research centre.

The Fertility & Research Centre, which is located at The Royal Hospital for Women, is a joint venture between the hospital and the University of New South Wales.

The centre will offer cancer patients the ability to preserve their fertility so they have the option to have children, despite the side effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which could otherwise render them infertile. It will also help the broader community with assisted fertility services, but many of the key services – such as IVF – won't be available until later in the year with the Phase 2 launch.

UNSW Professor and Fertility & Research Centre Project Lead William Ledger says -

"When a patient is diagnosed with cancer there is often only a small window where they can opt to have their fertility preserved before they start treatment.

"Some of the patients we can help are young children, even toddlers. When they grow up they'll be able to choose to have biological children. That's an incredible gift to give someone."

With the advanced technology that will be available at the centre, scientists will be able to help very young cancer sufferers, including being able to freeze small pieces of ovary taken from girls below the age of puberty.

UNSW Professor Ledger has worked closely with The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation to raise funds to open the centre.

Through dedicated fundraising events like BAZAAR in Bloom – which includes a couture runway and contributions from Australia's top designers and brands - and campaigns featuring patients who had benefited from treatment, The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation has raised \$1.6 million to fund the first phase of the centre. In addition there has been a generous \$400,000 contribution from The Sony Foundation. The first phase will include a dedicated clinical suite, with consulting and ultrasound rooms.

The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation Acting President Amanda Kenny says – "This centre is going to change the lives of future generations and that is indeed priceless! Donating to the Fertility & Research Centre will give many people the gift of parenthood that they might otherwise never have been able to experience and for that we are extraordinarily grateful to our community for their continued support and generosity."

Interview opportunities:

Prof William Ledger, Fertility & Research Centre Project Lead;
Rebekah Giles, Fertility and Research Centre Ambassador, who has benefitted from assisted fertility treatment;
Amanda Kenny, Acting President, The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation.

Media assets:

Photographs from BAZAAR in Bloom 2016 fundraising event;
Footage of Australian designer Alex Perry explaining why the fashion industry have come together to support fundraising efforts;
Photographs of the Fertility & Research Centre Phase 1 event opening

- ENDS -

For more information or photographs, contact: Anne Lazarakis, Marketing and Brand Project Manager on 0423 4616 84 or anne@royalwomen.org.au

BAZAAR in Bloom was the key event in 2016 that assisted to raise funds for the Fertility & Research Centre. Major event sponsors who made this possible were:

Merivale, Westfield Bondi Junction and Ruby Connection are the major sponsors of the event, with beverage sponsors being Champagne Laurent-Perrier and Lion.

About us

The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation raises vital funds to improve the health outcomes of women and babies. Funds raised are used to purchase lifesaving equipment and support research and education in all areas of women's health. The only dedicated public women's hospital in NSW, The Royal Hospital for Women provides health outreach services at its Randwick campus, and throughout Metropolitan Sydney as well as rural, regional and remote areas of the state.