



The
Skin
Hospital

NEWS February 2025

SKIN & CANCER FOUNDATION

AUSTRALIA

Patients

at The Skin Hospital



Psoriasis patient for over 40 years



Clinical Trial for atopic dermatitis



Mohs patient



Nikon's first **Eclipse Ui** in Australia

Welcome from **Georgie Blundell**



CEO at **The Skin Hospital**

This edition of The Skin Hospital's newsletter is particularly special as it focuses on our patients and their experiences visiting our facilities.

The Skin Hospital (Skin & Cancer Foundation Australia) was established in 1976 to provide a training and research facility for the development of academic dermatology. Nearly fifty years on, The Skin Hospital is now a leading facility for dermatological patient services, education and training, plus clinical trials and research.

We now have over 50 dermatologists and over 60 dermatology nurses working across our facilities, which are located at Darlinghurst, Westmead and a much smaller practice in Dubbo. Our range of dermatologists and nurses treat every skin condition, from acne, eczema, vitiligo and alopecia, through to Mohs procedures for skin cancer.

We also work closely with the Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD) on our training program, helping to train the next generation of dermatologists. The Skin Hospital hosts the largest number of training positions for domestic and international dermatology registrars in New South Wales.

Our Clinical Trials & Research Team in Darlinghurst, have clinical trials covering a wide range of skin conditions. As you will see from page three, the important work of our team in Trials, can offer patients life-changing treatments.

Some of our patients have a longstanding relationship with The Skin Hospital and our dermatologists, which spans many decades. This is unique and is something that we cherish. See page four to read about one of our much-loved patients, Jeffrey Gold, who has been visiting The Skin Hospital for decades!

As a dermatological facility, we continuously work hard to ensure that we meet all quality standards for exceptional patient care. You can also read more about this on page eight.

We hope you find this latest newsletter insightful. Our dedicated team is striving forward to pave the way for future advancements in dermatology and dermatological excellence.

If you have any questions at all about The Skin Hospital and our work, please email newsletter@skinhospital.edu.au.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Kind regards,
Georgie Blundell

Ken Davies

Atopic Dermatitis

I initially went to see my GP for eczema and ended up going to see Dr Nick Stewart at The Skin Hospital. I was really struggling with my skin condition and, after we tried every treatment, I went onto a clinical trial to see if there was something else that could work for me.

I have now been part of a clinical trial for atopic dermatitis at The Skin Hospital for around three years. For two and half years of that, I have been on a drug that cleared up my condition completely. Atopic dermatitis is a type of eczema.

Finding a treatment that worked effectively for my skin condition has been a huge relief. I was born with eczema, then it went away briefly as a teenager, then came back again very

severely as an adult. I'm pleased to say that I am now eczema-free, thanks to the clinical trial at The Skin Hospital.

I'm grateful for being introduced to the trial. Before I found a solution to my skin condition, it affected so much more than my skin. I could choose to be quite reclusive and sometimes avoided doing every day, normal things. It was physically debilitating and a huge mental drain on me.

Now, I can do anything, and it's not an exaggeration to say that it has completely changed my life for the better. In joining the clinical trial, my main priority was to find a treatment that worked for me, however, I was also attracted by the thought that others may benefit from the results of this research too.



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I am now
eczema-free

It has been truly incredible. I'm due to get my last injection next month as the clinical trial is finishing up, however, I now have a treatment plan and I am feeling hopeful that this will continue to work well for me. I'm relieved that we found a solution to a condition that had previously been so debilitating in my life.

Why are **clinical trials** important?

Clinical trials are crucial for several reasons. Firstly, they help us to discover new and effective treatments. Through these trials, we can test new drugs, combinations of drugs, and other treatment modalities to determine their efficacy and safety.

Clinical trials also allow us to improve quality of life for patients by finding ways to manage chronic symptoms more effectively. They provide valuable data on long-term outcomes and potential side effects, helping us to refine and optimise treatment protocols.

Participation typically begins with a screening process to determine if the patient meets the eligibility criteria for the trial. This includes a thorough medical history and physical examination. If eligible, the patient will receive detailed information about the trial, including its purpose, duration, procedures, risks, and benefits. Informed consent is obtained before any trial-related activities begin.

Throughout the trial, participants are closely monitored by the research team, and their health and response to treatment are regularly assessed. Patients can withdraw from the trial at any time if they choose.



To see The Skin Hospital's list of currently recruiting clinical trials, please visit our website.

If you are interested in learning more about our research initiatives or participating in a clinical trial, please contact Dr. Cindy Kok at 02 8651 2042 or ckok@skinhospital.edu.au.



Jeffrey Gold

PSORIASIS

I started seeing Dr Edmund Lobel for my skin condition in 1979, the year I started high school. My psoriasis started off simply as what looked like dandruff, so I got some cream for that, however, it got worse and steadily progressed to all over my back and then onto my arms. By 1984, my plaque psoriasis was really impairing my quality of life and negatively affecting me.

Back then, Dr Lobel had a practice in Bondi Junction. The Skin & Cancer Foundation (now The Skin Hospital) started at the corner of Burton and Victoria Street in Darlinghurst, opposite the old St Vincent's Hospital. It had two rooms: one was for the UVA machine, and the other was a consultation room. When I started UVA treatment, it was 1984. I remember it well as I was going to Queensland for a holiday that Christmas, and my plaque psoriasis covered my entire back. Dr Lobel suggested UVA treatment and the psoriasis completely disappeared in three months. It was completely gone. I couldn't believe it; I was relieved and ready for my beach holiday!

It was really interesting as, prior to 1979, I hadn't ever had any skin conditions at all. Then suddenly, I had plaque psoriasis, which had a negative effect on my life. I've found that food and stress definitely triggered the development of my psoriasis.



The Skin Hospital has perfected the UV treatment



These days, I see other dermatologists when I visit The Skin Hospital as Dr Lobel now specialises in Contact & Occupational Dermatology, however, my friendship with Dr Lobel has lasted for over 46 years. I am very loyal to Dr Lobel as he has been a great supporter and has guided me through my journey. He is an absolute gentleman and I'm very lucky to have him. He has the knowledge, experience and trains other

doctors. Why would I go elsewhere? You can't go wrong at The Skin Hospital, I've never had a reason to go anywhere else.

In my opinion, The Skin Hospital has perfected the UV treatment. They go to extremes to perfect the phototherapy treatment and they are still striving for advancements. As far as I'm concerned, they are at the leading edge of psoriasis and phototherapy, and that's a good reason to stay. The treatment used to take approximately three months and now it's only approximately six weeks. Well done to The Skin Hospital.

It's funny to think back to the early 80's and how much things have changed when visiting The Skin Hospital in comparison to these days. Back then, of course, there were no laptops or mobile phones and definitely no booking confirmations via text message. I've even known Dr Lobel longer than my wife, Nicole of 33 years!

My psoriasis gets worse during the winter months when it's under clothing. I remember, when my kids were younger I always wanted to make sure that I could be at the beach without bad skin. That was important to me.

These days, I tend to visit The Skin Hospital approximately once a year. This is normally in September or October for UVB treatment to ensure my skin is clear, ready for the warmer months ahead.

Dr Edmund Lobel Dermatologist

Jeff first attended as a teenager about 40 years ago when I had a General Dermatology practice in Bondi Junction.

Long-term treatment of patients with "difficult" psoriasis is always possible, although patients with psoriasis often shop around looking for that miracle cure.

Psoriasis patients with intractable psoriasis need constant or frequently recurrent treatment, even with today's vastly improved range of therapies. Intractable psoriasis is psoriasis which does not respond to standard treatment and requires stronger forms of treatment.

As my role at The Skin Hospital specialises in Contact & Occupational Dermatology & Patch testing, I am no longer Jeff's treating Doctor, however, he always pops into my room for a chat whenever he is attending The Skin Hospital.

Jeff's treatment has not changed a lot because UVB therapy is effective and Jeff is reluctant to change to potent Biologic Monoclonal antibody treatment, whilst UVB is effective for flares. Rather, when his psoriasis flares up he attends for a new round of UVB.

What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis is an immune-mediated disease, which means it is caused by a dysfunction in the immune system leading to inflammation in the body. This condition speeds up the life cycle of skin cells, causing them to build up rapidly on the surface of the skin. The result is raised plaques and scales that can itch, burn, and sting.

These plaques are commonly found on the elbows, knees, and scalp, but they can appear anywhere on the body. Psoriasis can also lead to other health issues, including psoriatic arthritis, which causes pain, swelling, and stiffness in the joints.



Vicki Hannan

BCC & Mohs patient

I love the outdoor lifestyle, the sun, the surf and connecting with communities. It was through the community, volunteering my time at The Skin Check Champions' pop-up, that I realised something was wrong. All volunteers get a check and, before I knew it, they came across a suspect spot on my nose, smaller than a pimple.

So, I went for a biopsy with my GP and then from there I found it was a BCC (basal cell carcinoma). My GP then referred me to The Skin Hospital for a Mohs procedure.

I worked as a physical education (PE) teacher at a high school for 20 years and, as a result, I was out in the sun a lot. Sun safety as a kid, at university and even in the early days of teaching was minimal and it was a different mindset back in the 80's. Who didn't love the smell of coconut oil? A baseball cap was the biggest hat I owned, a v-neck polo shirt and

netball skirt and 20 years of being in the sun. Yes, we wore block out, and I'm sure most of that ran down my skin in perspiration. Did I re-apply? Obviously not enough.

When I went to The Skin Hospital for my Mohs procedure in 2020, I remember it being very well organised. I found that reassuring. I received a lot of information about what was going to happen. I found out that I was having a Mohs procedure, which I hadn't heard of before, but I learnt it was the most effective procedure to remove my BCC.

I have had my fair share of different surgeries; I found The Skin Hospital relaxing. I felt comfortable asking questions. I was put at ease knowing a Mohs procedure was more precise and I was not going to lose a bigger proportion of my nose than was necessary. It is better to be patient so the specialist can test to make sure they have excised what is needed.

The staff at The Skin Hospital were fabulous. The nurses kept coming in and out and kept a close eye on me to ensure I was well looked after. The Doctor was terrific too. I'm very grateful for the care I have received at The Skin Hospital. I'm now keen to share my experience and tell people about Mohs procedures so they understand what it is. Many people still haven't heard about it.

I am thankful for the early advice I received and the time I spent listening and learning about what The Skin Hospital had to offer. Previously, I had no idea melanoma could occur in any part of the body. One of the hardest parts of any procedure is the waiting, but after 20 years of skin damage, a couple of hours while it is repaired is time well spent. I am so glad I didn't avoid it or put it off. During the process, (from reception, to the nurses and the dermatologist), the staff were helpful and caring. They were mindful about my journey. I wasn't just a patient number.

MY TAKE AWAYS

- I happened to be in the right place at the right time to get a skin check, just sheer luck!
- Now, I put the time in to notice any changes to my body and I get an annual check with The Skin Hospital.
- As I get older a friend gave me a great lifestyle tip. A month before my birthday, I complete all my annual health checks (a full physical). Tick all the boxes and then I go out with friends and family to celebrate my birthday. It's positive and it makes for a great year!

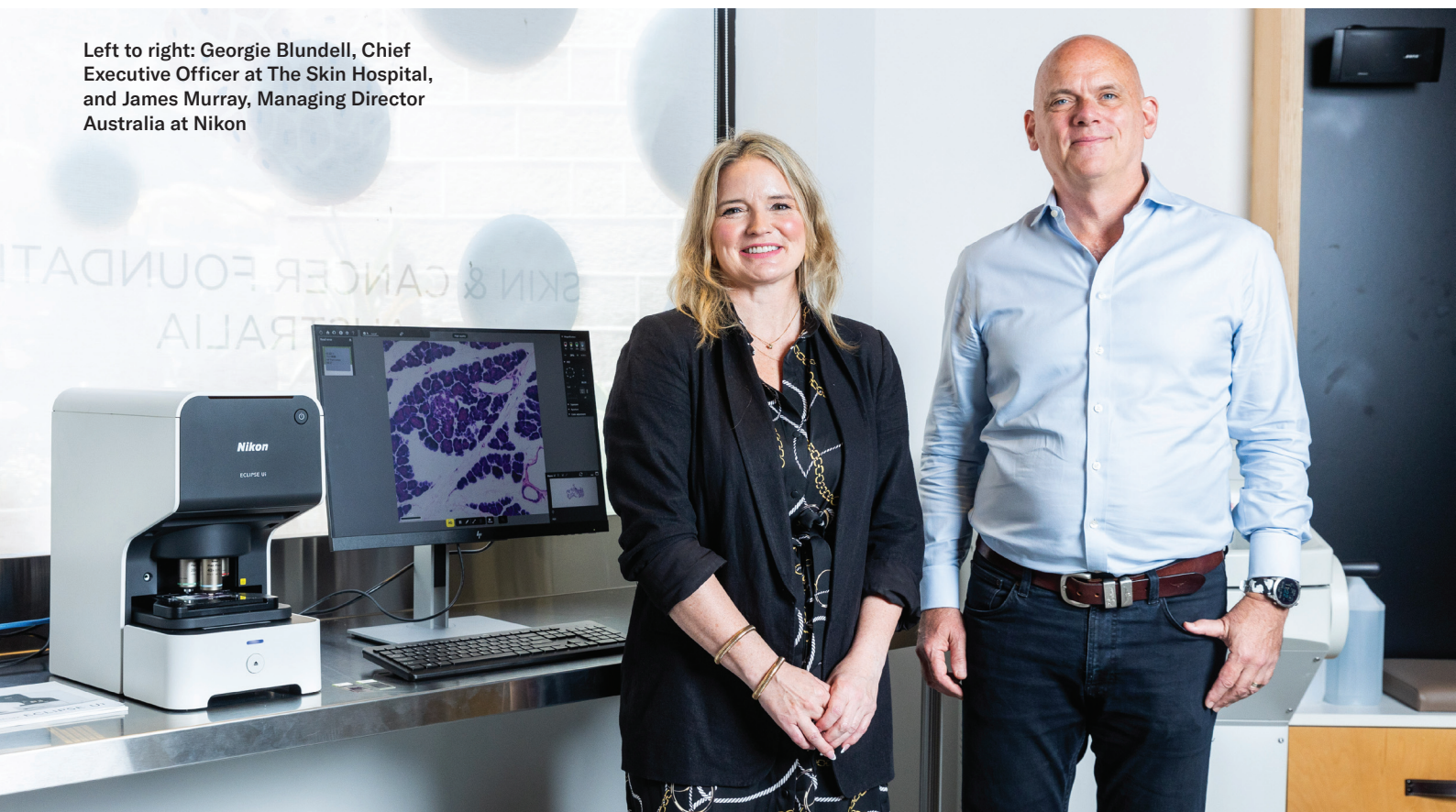
NIKON'S FIRST Eclipse Ui I N A U S T R A L I A

The Skin Hospital has become the first organisation in Australia to invest in Nikon's new Eclipse Ui Digital Upright Microscope, which provides accurate, microscopy-based observation imaging.

The Skin Hospital will utilise the new microscope for a wide range of purposes which will benefit patients, including Clinical Trials and Research, dermatology training and education, plus many others. The Skin Hospital has the largest number

of training positions for dermatology registrars in New South Wales and is the only facility to offer a Mohs Fellowship. The microscope will assist across a wide variety of the training that takes place at these facilities.

Left to right: Georgie Blundell, Chief Executive Officer at The Skin Hospital, and James Murray, Managing Director Australia at Nikon



Q&A

Georgie Blundell CEO at The Skin Hospital answers a few questions on the new microscope

How significant is the arrival of this microscope in Australia?

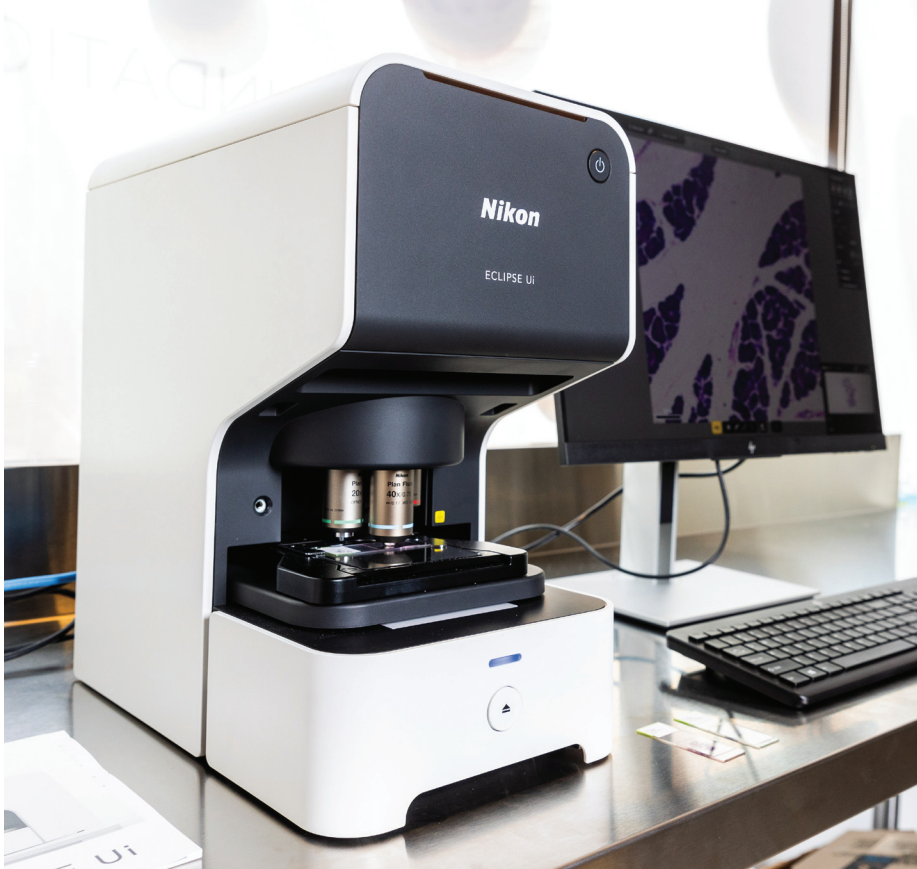
Imaging in dermatology is essential, for diagnosis, comparative analysis teaching and research. Advancements in imaging are evolving and, as a leading dermatology research and teaching Foundation, it is incredibly

important that we embrace and work in partnership with leading imaging companies to integrate these technologies into our practice.

Being the first facility in Australia to have the Nikon Eclipse UI installed demonstrates our forward-thinking approach. It enables us to teach with

the latest technology and our research is enabled with cutting edge imagery.

With the expanse of a country like Australia, we can test the remote access capability of the Nikon Eclipse UI which has the potential for diagnosis and support from experts into remote locations.



How will it benefit patients?

Ensuring that there are clear and accurate images enables our specialists to be able to more accurately assess and diagnose conditions. It also enables remote access to specialists who can support diagnosis and allows more accurate records for future comparisons.

How will it help doctors and researchers?

The Nikon UI will offer great potential in streamlining processes in the laboratory with slide photography. It will have an immense impact on the ability to gain offsite second opinion regarding biopsy slides, as well as enabling the education of trainees and registrars, even in rural and remote areas.

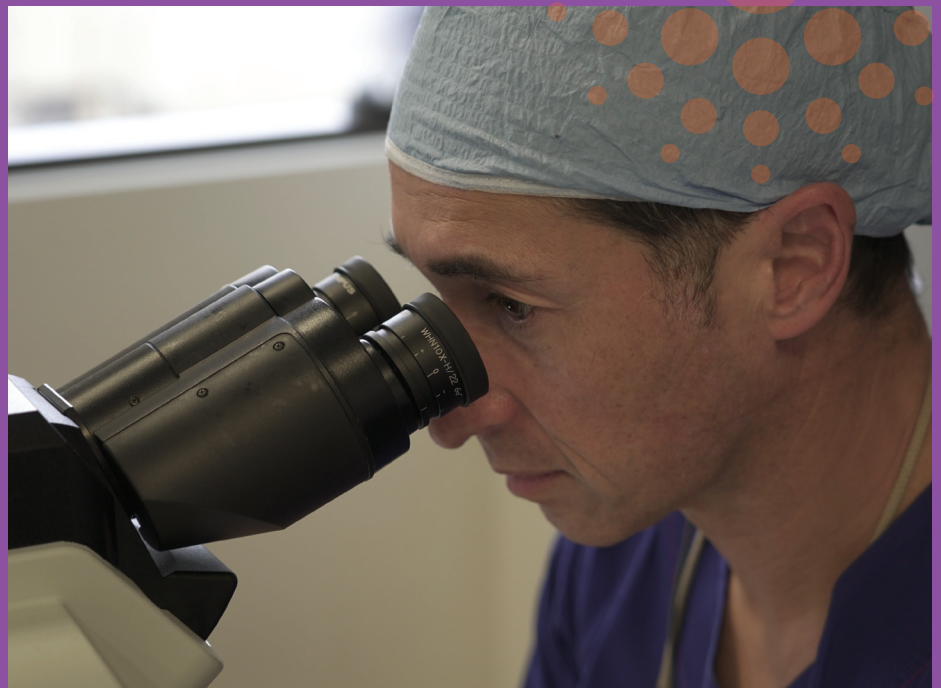
Dr Simon Lee

Mohs practitioner & dermatologist

Approximately 90% of what I do involves me performing Mohs procedures, in which I can ensure the tumour is removed. I also minimise tissue loss and maintain as much normal tissue as I can. This is only possible with the assistance of a laboratory and appropriately trained laboratory technicians who can produce the histological slides that allows me to examine the excised tissue and ensure the tumour is clear of the margins. I have access to microscopes that allow me to examine the slides in the detail I require to make this assessment.

In approximately a third of cases I will work in conjunction with a plastic surgeon when there is a particularly complex repair so they can maintain cosmesis and function.

There are very few areas of medicine that allow any element of creativity and that's something I really love about what I do. We're equipped with surgical skills to help perform surgery but a lot of it involves customising what we do and



there's an element of innovation that I really enjoy.

In addition to dermatologists, plastic surgeons and oculo-plastic surgeons,

we also have a range of sub-specialities at The Skin Hospital who work in areas that dovetail so well with what we do.

Specialty Clinics at The Skin Hospital

As The Skin Hospital is a leading teaching facility, many patients who suffer from a range of complex cases visit our team. There are hundreds of skin, hair and nail conditions, therefore, patients can find it challenging to locate the right dermatologist to assist them. Fortunately, at The Skin Hospital, there are a range of specialists and sub-specialties, plus a team of over 50 dermatologists who cover all skin conditions, even the rarer skin disorders.

The Skin Hospital also offers patch testing which can help to identify causes of skin issues; plus a specialty male and female clinic; acne and paediatrics clinics; and vitiligo and hair/nail clinics.

The Skin and Cancer Foundation (The Skin Hospital) was established to educate the next generation of dermatologists. The Skin Hospital invests its profits into Clinical Trials and Research, to continue to lead the way in finding new and innovative treatments for many skin conditions.

Quality care and high standards are critically important. There is always a huge focus on customer service and this is something we take a huge amount of time to ensure is right. The Skin Hospital has a dedicated Quality Safety & Risk Manager who works side by side with our Customer Services & Relationships Manager and our Clinical Operations Managers to ensure our services meet the highest standards.

The Skin Hospital also has a Patient Quality and Care Forum which is held regularly and has patient representatives at these meetings to ensure that we consider things from the patient experience perspective.

A centralised process for managing all feedback at The Skin Hospital, ensures that we review trends and themes and invest in constantly improving. We also have multiple ways for our clients to provide feedback to allow for a continuous improvement agenda. We are incredibly proud of the work that we do at the Foundation and our investment in training the next generation and forging a path to new and innovative treatments.

Donate to Help Support Research into Skin Cancer & Skin Disease

Your donations play a crucial role in The Skin Hospital's ability to fund new technology and research projects and are invaluable to the wellbeing of our patients.

See our article above which details the world-class Clinical Trials and Research that we are currently undertaking. Your past support has enabled us to be at the forefront of research into the diagnosis

and treatment of skin cancer, as well as provide outstanding training programs for future dermatologists.

If you are in a position to donate, we would appreciate your help in enabling us to continue this vital work in training and research.

Donate at
skinhospital.edu.au/donate



As a **Not-For-Profit Foundation**, we are committed to developing potential treatments and furthering Dermatology Clinical Trials & Research.

We are proud to have Associate Professor John Frew leading the team at **The Skin Hospital's Research Facility**.

MAKE A BOOKING

If you would like to **book an appointment** with one of our dermatologists at The Skin Hospital, speak to your GP to get a referral.
If you would like to **refer a patient** to us, please visit our website or call us. See our contact details below.



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To stay up to date with The Skin Hospital's latest news, events and important announcements, we invite you to follow our social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn and YouTube.

Remember to follow us!

