Families who need to move to Brisbane for life-saving blood cancer treatment will have somewhere new to call home next month after we pick up the keys to 11 units in the heart of the city.

Construction of the units located at The Green, part of a larger development at the Brisbane Showgrounds, is almost complete, with furniture and fittings on order to ensure the finished units cater for the unique needs of patients.

For the majority of people living in rural and regional Queensland, a blood cancer diagnosis means they have to immediately move to Brisbane or Townsville to begin treatment. To relieve the stress and financial burden, we offer them free accommodation.

We already have four accommodation villages in Brisbane and Townsville, and the new units at The Green will help us cope with growing demand.

Increased building costs and a lack of suitable land close to treating centres means we can’t continue to meet demand by building purpose-built villages. The Green is an innovative yet simple model that will provide a cost-effective way of helping more Queenslanders.

Our CEO Bill Petch said the Leukaemia Foundation’s commitment to providing patients and their families with free accommodation during treatment has been a critical part of our work for 40 years - and will not change.

‘THE GREEN’ AT THE BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS
“We were wrong. The blood test results were fairly conclusive and that night I knew we had a long, difficult road ahead.”

As soon as the leukaemia diagnosis was confirmed Melissa and Lizzie flew to Brisbane and, after a series of tests, Lizzie started chemotherapy.

“Soon after we arrived in Brisbane the Leukaemia Foundation offered us a unit at its ESA Village – completely free of charge and for as long as we needed it,” Melissa added.

“We arrived from Atherton with just a few clothes and basics, but the village provided everything we needed in a home. It was brilliant.”

Melissa and Lizzie have recently moved out of ESA Village and will settle in Brisbane as Lizzy continues treatment for the next 18 months.

Melissa has started a new job at a local hospital.

“When people talk about your life being turned upside down, that is so true with leukaemia. I will never be able to thank the Leukaemia Foundation enough for giving Lizzie a home through this tough time. It has made the world of difference.”

Melissa Fry packed a bag and left her life in Atherton in August last year when she received the devastating news her daughter Lizzie had leukaemia. It was a month before Lizzie’s 2nd birthday.

“I remember sitting in the hospital in Brisbane, 1700km from home, feeling totally overwhelmed and thinking about how quickly we had to leave home. The bin was full and needed emptying, my half-finished glass of wine was still on the coffee table and the dirty dinner dishes were in the sink. We have not been back since,” Melissa said.

Being one of the local doctors in her north Queensland home town, Melissa knew Lizzie’s symptoms were suspicious, although her daughter’s boundless energy kept her optimistic that it must be something less serious than cancer.

“Lizzie was pale and began to show some bruising, but when her gums began to bleed when I brushed her teeth I decided to take her to the emergency department in Cairns,” Melissa said.

“She was so bright; the staff were saying she couldn’t possibly be sick.

“When we talk about your life being turned upside down, that is so true with leukaemia. I will never be able to thank the Leukaemia Foundation enough for giving Lizzie a home through this tough time. It has made the world of difference.”

Mr Petch said despite the new approach, families will still be provided with much more than just a roof over their head.

“Like our villages, there will be on-site support staff at The Green to ensure patients feel safe and secure as they face the difficulties of blood cancer treatment,” Mr Petch said.

The first stage of development should see 11 units available to patients in October. Three more units will be released in January 2016, ready for patients shortly after.

Thank you to everyone who gave a donation to support Project:Home. For accommodation enquiries, visit leukaemiaqld.org.au/accommodation or call 1800 620 420.
For the first time, Queensland doctors and blood cancer patients will have access to information about the latest breakthrough treatments at the press of a button on their mobile or tablet.

We have worked with Haematology Clinical Research Network NSW to create a free mobile application that connects patients and doctors to clinical trials across Queensland.

The ClinTrial Refer Qld app allows users to search for suitable trials by blood cancer type and hospital location, with results displaying summary information, sponsor and location details, and whether a trial is active or pending.

According to our CEO, Bill Petch, funding these types of innovative resources is another way the Leukaemia Foundation of Queensland can improve outcomes for blood cancer patients.

“Based on its success in other states, this simple tool will give time-poor haematologists a list of blood cancer related clinical trials in Queensland as well as inform patients about trials which they may not know about,” Mr Petch said.

“ClinTrial Refer apps in other states have already been shown to boost cross referrals and trial recruitment.

The ClinTrial Refer Qld app includes details of inclusion and exclusion criteria, making it easier for doctors to refer their patient to trials from another hospital should their patient meet the criteria.

ClinTrial Refer Qld is available for download from the App Store (iPhone, iPad users) or Google Play (Android users). Find it by searching ‘ClinTrial Refer Qld’.

With two close family members living with blood cancer, Renee Sinton would love you to join her at one of our breathtaking Light the Night walks to help raise funds and awareness about the enormous impact of blood cancers.

The highlight of this year’s special event, held across Queensland on Friday 9 October, is a leisurely sunset walk that sees participants carrying coloured lanterns – white for your own blood cancer journey, blue to show your support and gold for those remembering a loved one lost.

Renee, from Innisfail, knows only too well how funds raised during Light the Night provide patients and families with free support, including a place to call home during treatment.

Earlier this year Renee took part in our World’s Greatest Shave event raising an incredible $25,000.

“This was my way of giving back to the Leukaemia Foundation after they came to our rescue when two much-loved members of my family were diagnosed with blood cancers,” Renee said.

In 2012 Renee’s father-in-law, Bill Sinton, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) and was forced to move with his wife, Loretta, to Brisbane for 15 months – around 1800km away from their Innisfail home.

“The day after Bill arrived back home, we surprised them with the birth of our twin girls. It was quite a homecoming.”

Like a bad dream, Renee’s whole world came crashing down again earlier this year when her own father, Alan Granich, was diagnosed with myeloma.

“Just like my in-laws, mum and dad left Innisfail for Brisbane and were provided with accommodation at the Leukaemia Foundation’s ESA Village – completely free-of-charge.

“I’m not sure when they’ll be home to see my brother, sister and me and their six grandchildren, but we’re so grateful to know they’re being so well looked after in Brisbane.

“The Leukaemia Foundation has done so much for my whole family and being involved in Light the Night is another way I can say thank you, from the bottom of my heart.”

Light the Night is now in its eighth year with walks being held in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Caboolture, Cairns, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Mackay, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Townsville.

There are also several smaller community events scheduled, all helping to raise $200,000 in Queensland to beat blood cancers.

To register for a Light the Night near you, visit www.lightthenight.org.au or call 1800 500 088.

IT’S TIME TO LIGHT THE NIGHT

CLINICAL TRIALS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

MARC, RENEE AND THEIR CHILDREN DECLAN, TRAVIS, HANNAH AND SOPHIE
HELPING OTHERS IS IN MY DNA

Helen has no idea how many kilometres she has walked with her beloved pooch Prinnie over the last 15 years of collecting for our annual Doorknock.

But she does know every step has been worth it to help save the lives of children with blood cancer – like her young friend, Rachel, who was diagnosed with leukaemia in 1991.

“Rachel was the daughter of my good friend, Brenda, who I met at Masonic Care where I nursed for 37 years,” Helen said.

Sadly Rachel only survived a few months but the courage shown by her and her family inspired Helen to do what she could to raise funds for the Leukaemia Foundation and help others affected by a blood cancer.

“I was devastated when Rachel was diagnosed. She was such a happy girl and I still marvel at how bravely she faced her leukaemia treatment.”

“Rachel and her family experienced leukaemia first-hand – it’s not too much for me to give up a few hours every year to encourage people to give to a great cause. My mum and dad were always helping others so it’s in my DNA,” she added.

A self-confessed poodle lover, Helen said having Prinnie by her side when she knocks on doors is a great ice-breaker and has helped her collect more than $4,500 over 15 years.

Helen’s commitment to beating blood cancers continues with her decision to leave a gift in her Will to the Leukaemia Foundation. She says it’s another way of remembering Rachel and ensuring research continues to find better treatments and cures.

If you would like more information on leaving a gift in your Will to the Leukaemia Foundation of Queensland please contact our Donor Liaison Officer Emma Quigley on 07 3318 4459 or email equigley@leukaemia.org.au.

PEER SUPPORT FOR GENERATION Y

People in their 20s and 30s affected by blood cancers can now benefit from their own unique support group in south east Queensland.

Our Support Services Coordinators Nicole Douglas and Kate Arkadieff said they wanted to form the 20/30 Chat to provide a relaxed environment for younger people with blood cancers to meet up, chat and share their experiences with each other.

Twelve people came along to our first 20/30 Chat in Brisbane’s West End in June.

“While our support groups have always been open to people of all ages, we know Generation Y blood cancer patients face some unique issues and might feel comfortable sharing those with their peers,” Nicole said.

“It was a great first meeting and it seemed to be enjoyed by everyone who attended. If you missed out, don’t worry, we’ll be running some further groups throughout the year and will keep you posted about upcoming dates and venues.”

Acute myeloid leukaemia patient Martin Leicht went along with his wife Alysse.

“It was so great to talk to people our own age who were living with blood cancer. Some people were newly diagnosed and others were much further down the track like me. I felt like I was able to share some of my experiences and also learn things from other people in a really relaxed, fun atmosphere. We will definitely go again!”

ALYSSE AND MARTIN
What if the cure for cancer has been in our bodies all along?

Researchers have long tried to understand how to get the immune system - the body’s natural defence mechanism - to recognise cancer cells as the enemy and destroy them.

And now we may finally be getting closer to what promises to be a new era in cancer treatment.

So-called immunotherapies are showing great potential in enabling a patient’s immune system to fight cancer like it might an infection, with longer lasting results and fewer side effects.

Many of the latest developments in cancer treatment focus on boosting the body’s natural immune system to control cancer, some of which is being funded by the Leukaemia Foundation.

The Leukaemia Foundation of Queensland Chair in Blood Cancer Research at UQ Diamantina Institute, Professor Maher Gandhi, says harnessing the patient’s own immune system is showing ‘striking activity’ for a range of blood cancers such as leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma, with the side-effects comparing favourably to chemotherapy.

The problem with cancer cells is they can disguise themselves from immune attack and effectively ‘switch off’ the immune system.

Researchers are counteracting this by developing antibody drugs that target key switches on immune cells, and either remove the cancer’s ability to turn the immune system off or promote stronger immune responses from the body.

Using the immune system in this way can help deliver durable and potentially life-long responses to cancer.

This is because the immune system:

» patrols the entire body and recognises cancer cells wherever they are

» evolves and adapts to changes in cancer cells

» has memory. Many cancer treatments only work for as long as they are being given but an immune response can potentially last a lifetime in the same way as a vaccination works

» can be ‘immunised’ against the cancer cells and able to detect and destroy them if they return.

“Many challenges remain as to how best to incorporate immunotherapy to treat patients. But undoubtedly immunotherapies are one of the most exciting therapeutic developments we have seen in years,” Professor Gandhi said.

A researcher in Brisbane, supported by the Leukaemia Foundation and Bridgestone Australia Ltd, is developing laboratory tests to predict whether a lymphoma patient’s immune system is capable of eradicating their tumour with standard therapy.

If not, Dr Colm Keane at UQ Diamantina Institute postulates a new type of cancer therapy that works to boost the immune system’s anti-tumour response, called immune checkpoint therapy, can benefit patients who fail the standard treatment.

Over at QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, immune–based therapies are also on the agenda for PhD student Rebecca Austin who, with recent funding support from the Leukaemia Foundation, is looking to identify how acute myeloid leukaemia affects the immune system in order to develop targeted immunotherapeutic treatments against this cancer.

Immune-based therapies have already been successful in improving survival for melanoma patients.

Professor Gandhi spoke about the significance of immunotherapy at our Beating Blood Cancers research forum in Brisbane on 23 July.
CELEBRATING HOW RESEARCH IS BEATING BLOOD CANCERS

The latest advances in blood cancer research were shared with supporters at our recent Beating Blood Cancers research forum held in partnership with UQ Diamantina Institute in Brisbane.

As part of our 40th anniversary celebrations, approximately 250 supporters gathered to hear from leading experts discussing promising new findings giving hope to patients.

Speakers included Professor Maher Gandhi, haematologist and Leukaemia Foundation of Queensland Chair in Blood Cancer Research at UQ Diamantina Institute, who outlined the benefits of immunotherapy in lymphoma and other blood cancers, which are proving more effective and less toxic for patients.

Paediatric oncologist and group leader of the Childhood Leukaemia Research Laboratory at UQ Diamantina Institute, Dr Andrew Moore, gave insight into childhood leukaemias and the important work being done in genomics to try to keep patients in remission.

Our Board member, Associate Professor Paula Marlton, head of Leukaemia and Lymphoma Services and Deputy Director of Haematology at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, highlighted the recent breakthrough therapies in improving outcomes for patients with chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL).

Young father Jeremy Morris also shared his experience following a diagnosis with a rare blood cancer. He outlined his ongoing commitment to raising funds for research through events such as our $5for5 hike.

WHAT’S ON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>World Lymphoma Awareness Day</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>10.30 am –12.30 pm</td>
<td>41 Peter Doherty Street, Dutton Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>CML Seminar – Dr Tony Mills</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>2.30 pm –4.00 pm</td>
<td>41 Peter Doherty Street, Dutton Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>20/30 Chat</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>To be advised</td>
<td>To be advised</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCTOBER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring for the Carer</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>10.00 am</td>
<td>41 Peter Doherty Street, Dutton Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>GVHD seminar – Prof Geoff Hill</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>11.00 am</td>
<td>41 Peter Doherty Street, Dutton Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gold Coast Coffee cake and chat</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>2.00 pm –4.00 pm</td>
<td>50 Fairway Drive, Clear Island Waters</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waldenstroms Macroglobulanaemia</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>To be advised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee cake and chat</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>2.00 pm</td>
<td>41 Peter Doherty Street, Dutton Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myeloma Coffee cake and chat under 50s</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>Jindalee Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPN Coffee cake and chat</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>41 Peter Doherty Street, Dutton Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amyloidosis lunch – Prof Nikky Isbel</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>To be advised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myeloma Coffee cake and chat</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>Coffee Club, Boundary Street, West End</td>
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<tr>
<td>CML Coffee cake and chat</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>To be advised</td>
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THANK YOU FOR KICK-STARTING OUR TRIALS ENABLING PROGRAM

Thank you for helping to raise $324,000 for our Trials Enabling Program. Your generosity will give 64 patients the opportunity to be part of an internationally-led clinical trial through our Trials Enabling Program, without leaving Australia. Hospital sites across Australia have been signing up to be part of the first AML trial and doctors will soon be able to access the new treatment to offer to their patients. But we won’t stop here, attention is now also being given to the next blood cancer trial that will be funded through the program. Every dollar you donated is helping to beat blood cancers!

1800 620 420
leukaemiaqld.org.au

Would you like to receive this newsletter or invitations to our seminars via email? Phone 1800 620 420 or visit leukaemiaqld.org.au