

## SA Pathology Newsletter

March 2022

## SA Pathology Breakthrough Saves Lives



This month, SA Pathology's Professor Hamish Scott and his colleagues were widely published after making an incredible breakthrough in partnership with Uni SA.

Their work identified a genetic mutation - responsible for a lymphatic disorder that may cause stillbirth or severe chronic disease in children.

Prof Scott specialises in inherited blood cancers and the journey of this discovery was a "long process with serendipity involved".

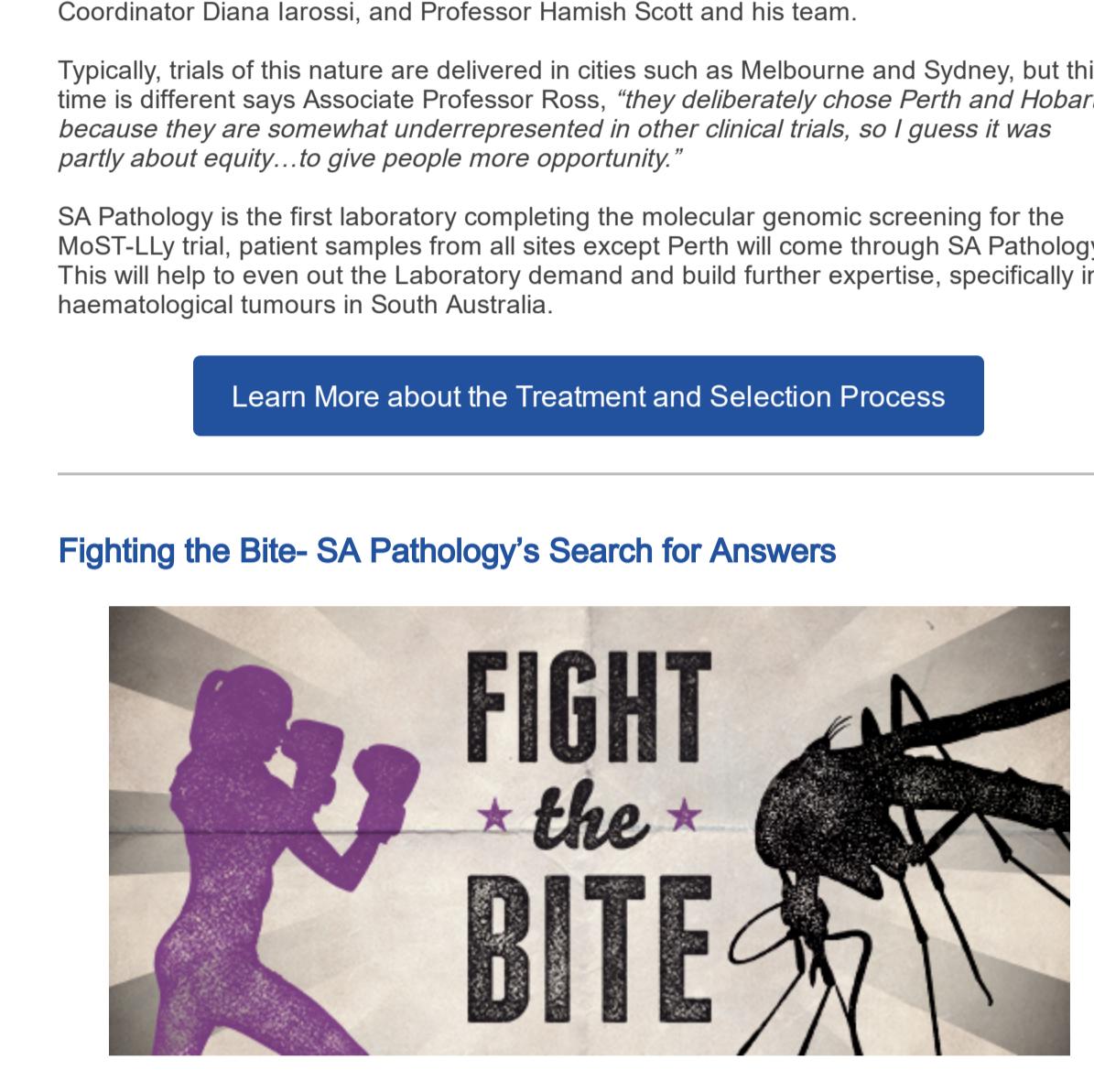
After linking these cancers and cases of lymphatic defects – the team also discovered that patients with the lymphatic defect were having stillborn babies.

"From this, we discovered more and more babies who had this defect, and we found a new gene which can cause this defect, which can be fatal for kids in utero, but it can also be treated in utero."

Professor Hamish Scott.

[Read More about Prof Scott and the Team](#)

## MoST-LLy Cancer Trials Provide Fresh Hope for Patients



L-R: Dr Danielle Blunt, Trial Coordinator Diana Iarossi and Associate Professor David Ross.

New blood cancer and genomic trials have just opened at the RAH in collaboration with SA Pathology. The trials provide fresh hope for those who are out of standard-of-care options.

MoST-LLy is a sub-study specifically for Leukemia and Lymphoma and uses the experience and platform of MoST - Molecular Screening and Therapeutics already running in SA with Prof Michael Brown (RAH) and GMP. [MoST-LLy was established by Professor Steven Lane at the Royal Brisbane Clinical Unit](#), with Professor Hamish Scott as Scientific lead and SA Pathology's GMRI as the lead molecular testing site and seeks to help those living with rare or unrecruited blood disorders. This trial could be vital in securing new targeted treatments for patients suffering from high-grade lymphoma and myeloid malignancies and has been generously funded by [The Leukemia Foundation](#), [Tour de Cure](#) and [The Medical Research Future Fund](#) (MRFF).

Adelaide joins Brisbane in the trial, and Perth and Hobart are expected to come on board at a later date.

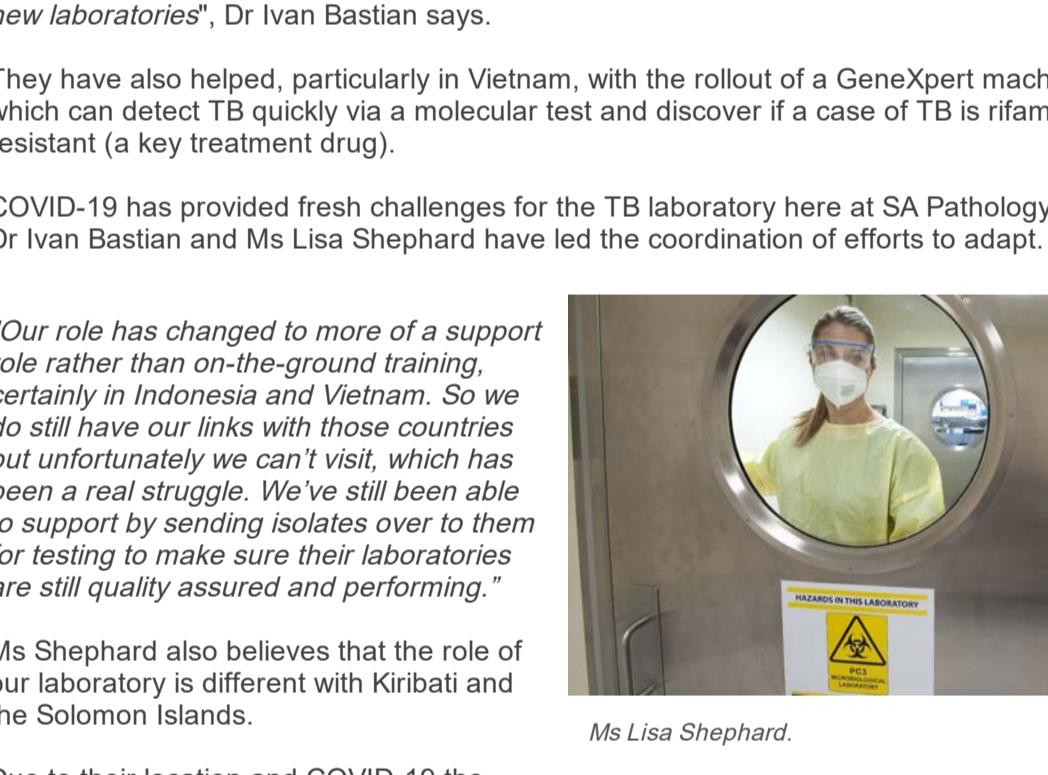
Leading the Adelaide trials are Associate Professor David Ross, Dr Danielle Blunt, Trial Coordinator Diana Iarossi, and Professor Hamish Scott and his team.

Typically, trials of this nature are delivered in cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, but this time is different says Associate Professor Ross, "they deliberately chose Perth and Hobart because they are somewhat underrepresented in other clinical trials, so I guess it was partly about equity...to give people more opportunity."

SA Pathology is the first laboratory completing the molecular genomic screening for the MoST-LLy trial, patient samples from all sites except Perth will come through SA Pathology. This will help to even out the Laboratory demand and build further expertise, specifically in haematological tumours in South Australia.

[Learn More about the Treatment and Selection Process](#)

## Fighting the Bite- SA Pathology's Search for Answers



Currently within South Australia there are eight confirmed cases of Japanese Encephalitis.

SA Pathology has been helping with diagnostics, and [earlier this month we spoke with Dr Chuan Lim about the Laboratory's involvement](#).

**Firstly, what is Encephalitis?**

"Encephalitis is inflammation of the brain tissue, so the most common cause of that is viral infection..."

However, what's special about the current situation is that there is a cluster of people with Encephalitis all occurring within a short time, over the last month or so that have all recently visited the Murray River in the preceding 2-3 weeks. So that has alerted the Department for Health and Wellbeing that there could be a common source of infection, and that's triggered a nationwide investigation, including a lot of coordination for testing in SA Pathology.

**How is your role at SA Pathology contributing to 'Fighting the Bite'?**

"My role is to coordinate the samples for testing to the reference labs and finding the right samples, and at the same time investigating if some of these encephalitis cases are due to Japanese Encephalitis Virus or whether there's some other flavivirus that's causing this because there are a number of viruses that can cause similar presentations."

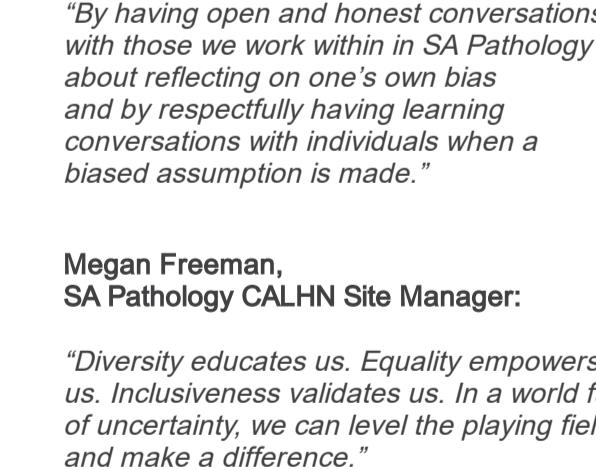
**That's Incredible- how about the Laboratory?**

"From the laboratory point of view - we have a bio-threat section who are rapidly developing new PCR assays so they can be used to test people for Japanese Encephalitis Virus. We also collaborate with interstate laboratories for serology testing and PCR testing and contribute to the national quality assurance programme for Japanese Encephalitis serology testing."

We're also exploring next-generation sequencing methods called the metagenomics approach to see if there are any novel viruses in those patients."

Thank you, Dr Lim, and the team, for your continued efforts.

## World TB Day



Did you know that The Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory (TRL) at SA Pathology is recognised by WHO as an expert TB Laboratory, and it is the international reference laboratory for Indonesia, Vietnam, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands?

SA Pathology's comprehensively illustrated expert information for technicians overseas. *The Handbook*, was also chosen by WHO and the International Union against TB and Lung Disease when they wanted to consolidate their training documents in 2014.

For over twenty years, Lisa Shephard, and her predecessor, Richard Lumb, have provided ongoing support to overseas laboratories.

"[They've been] making visits and helping them improve their laboratory services, both for microscopy and TB culture and susceptibility testing - to see which drugs work against the TB. Because of the requirements of those countries, we have also helped them design their new laboratories", Dr Ivan Bastian says.

They have also helped, particularly in Vietnam, with the rollout of a GeneXpert machine which can detect TB quickly via a molecular test and discover if a case of TB is rifampicin-resistant (a key treatment drug).

COVID-19 has provided fresh challenges for the TB laboratory here at SA Pathology, and Dr Ivan Bastian and Ms Lisa Shephard have led the coordination of efforts to adapt.



"Our role has changed to more of a support role rather than on-the-ground training - certainly in Indonesia and Vietnam. So we do still have our links with those countries but unfortunately we can't visit, which has been a real struggle. We've still been able to support by sending isolates over to them for testing to make sure their laboratories are still quality assured and performing."

Ms Shephard also believes that the role of our laboratory is different with Kiribati and the Solomon Islands.

Due to their location and COVID-19 the locations have been highly inaccessible, and it has become harder to provide support. Ms Shephard has come up with innovative solutions in the meantime but looks forward to travel resuming so that our connections with the laboratories can be re-established.

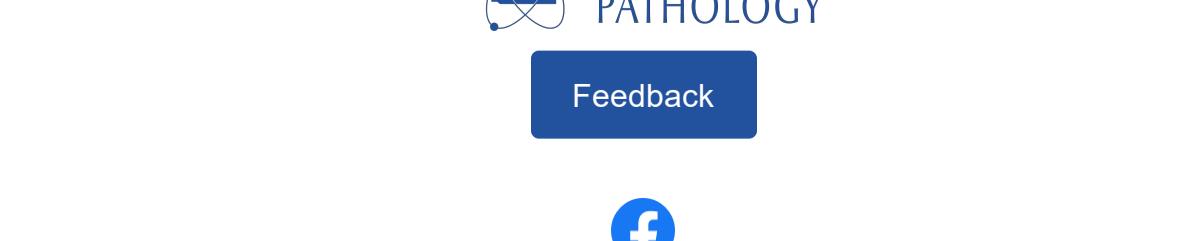
[World TB Day 2022](#)

## International Women's Day

Tuesday, March 8 was International Women's Day and this year's theme was #BreaktheBias.

At SA Pathology, we are proud to foster an environment that supports and uplifts women. We also strive to continue improving our commitment to breaking biases in the workplace.

We asked some of our female-identifying leaders how they think SA Pathology helps to break bias.



"Some of our leaders gathered to celebrate Breaking the Bias by crossing their arms to show solidarity."

L-R: Genevieve Sturman, Rosemary Velardo, Megan Freeman, Adelaide Musolino, Rachael McKinnon, Sharon Bain, Suzanne Conn.

Rachael McKinnon, Acting Director of Pathology Operations:

"Equality starts from within by believing in ourselves and striving for the best and being supported to achieve our full potential regardless of gender or race.

I am proud to work for SA Pathology whose values promote equality and a culture free of stereotypes."

Genevieve Sturman, Director of Nursing:

"By having open and honest conversations with those we work within in SA Pathology about reflecting on one's own bias and by respectfully having learning conversations with individuals when a biased assumption is made."

Megan Freeman, SA Pathology CALHN Site Manager:

"Inclusiveness educates us. Equality empowers us. In a world full of uncertainty, we can level the playing field and make a difference."

Adelaide Musolino, Call Center Manager:

"My experience here at SA Pathology has always been positive and progressive for women. The fact that SA Pathology has women in so many key management positions is a testament to SA Pathology's willingness to break the glass ceiling and celebrating International Women's Day is a perfect demonstration of breaking the bias."

We're proud of our bias breaking team here at SA Pathology.

## Follow us on Facebook



Following us on Facebook is a great way to get to know the SA Pathology team and find out more about the work we're doing in the clinical and research space.

[Follow us](#)



SA Pathology has been at the forefront of the response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Our team of dedicated clinicians, scientists, technicians, nurses and support staff are working 24/7 to ensure the health and wellbeing of all South Australians.

Visit our COVID-19 webpage to find the latest information, health updates and resources on COVID-19.

[Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

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