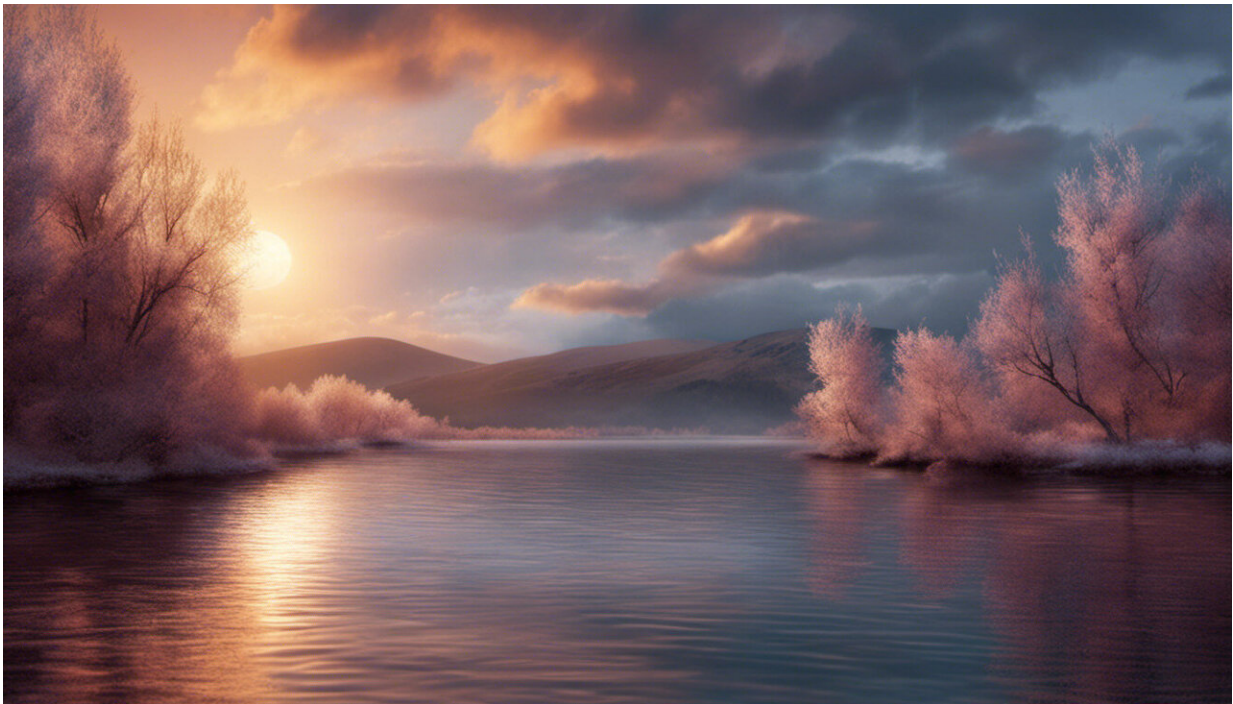


Patients with challenging cancers to benefit from genomic sequencing

February 12 2020



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

More than 1,000 Victorian cancer patients are set to benefit from real-time genomic testing in the next three years, aiming to improve diagnosis and provide more targeted and effective treatments for cancers of unmet need.

The initiative is targeting the most challenging to treat cancer cases including rare or aggressive tumors; those resistant to standard therapies; or those that are traditionally difficult to diagnose.

University of Melbourne Centre for Cancer Research Director and Bertalli Chair of Cancer Medicine, Professor Sean Grimmond, is leading the program.

"We are bringing next-generation whole-genome sequencing technologies closer to the clinic, integrating patients' genomic data into routine clinical decision-making for cancers of unmet need," Professor Grimmond said.

"While the overall outlook for people with cancer has almost doubled in recent decades, this initiative targets those classes of cancers that have not seen these improved outcomes, such as pancreatic and brain cancer.

"It is providing these patients with rapid diagnostics from a biopsy or simple blood test, and a gateway to better cancer care and targeted clinical trials."

The initiative will boost the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre's (VCCC) \$1.5 million Precision Oncology pilot program, and has attracted additional support from the PMF Foundation.

"Using the state-of-the-art facilities at the University of Melbourne Centre for Cancer Research, patient genomes will be sequenced, interpreted, and fed back in [real-time](#) to clinical teams at partner hospital sites," Professor Grimmond said.

Illumina Vice President and General Manager for Asia Pacific and Japan, Gretchen Weightman said: "We are immensely proud of Cancer of Unmet Need Initiative and our long-standing partnership with the

University of Melbourne.

"Through our collaboration efforts, we aim to fuel initiatives that improve health outcomes for Australian patients. This project demonstrates how genomics research is making a real difference to people's lives."

VCCC Executive Director Grant McArthur said the collaboration is a great example of global leadership in transformative cancer care.

"This partnership brings together research, industry, clinicians and patients and demonstrates the power of collaboration in delivering tangible patient benefits," Professor McArthur said.

"We believe it will help pave the way for genomics to become standard care for cancer patients in Victoria."

Sequencing is now available to suitable [cancer](#) patients across VCCC alliance sites, including Austin Health, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Royal Melbourne Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital, The Women's, and Western Health.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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