

Professor Forbes farewells Calvary Mater Newcastle

After 30 years of loyal and dedicated service to Calvary Mater Newcastle, formerly Newcastle Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Professor John Forbes AM, has retired from his clinical practice and his position of Director of Surgical Oncology.

Although Professor Forbes has retired from his clinical role at the hospital, his involvement in breast cancer research will continue through his role as Director of Research for the Australia and New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group (ANZBCTG) which he co-founded in 1978.

Professor Forbes was appointed Director of Surgical Oncology at Calvary Mater Newcastle in 1987. He has been a pioneer of breast cancer research and treatment throughout his career, in particular, with national and international clinical trials to develop new treatment and prevention strategies for breast cancer.

During his tenure at the Mater, Professor Forbes was a driving force for the establishment of the NBN Telethon Mater Institute Building (1987-1993) that facilitated new resources for the Mater. This achievement included the establishment of breast cancer screening (now known as BreastScreen NSW Hunter New England) and two mobile screening units for the Hunter region.

Professor Forbes was the first Director of the screening program for Hunter New England and established weekly review meetings for women recalled in the screening program.

Greg Flint, Chief Executive Officer at Calvary Mater Newcastle, says, "We are grateful for Professor Forbes distinguished tenure and his numerous contributions at Calvary Mater Newcastle. The hospital, our patients and the Hunter community have been very fortunate to benefit from his expertise for so many years and we wish him well for the future."

Professor Forbes says, "Collaboration has been the key to finding new and improved treatments for women diagnosed with breast cancer and the clinical trials research program of the ANZBCTG.

"I would like to thank my colleagues and staff at Calvary Mater Newcastle, who have been a source of inspiration and encouragement throughout my career. Their dedication to world class research and high quality care of patients has been a cornerstone in the provision of health care at the Mater and for the community.

"I have a special appreciation for the women who have taken part in our clinical trials. These women have improved outcomes for thousands of other women at risk of or diagnosed with breast cancer worldwide.

“I would also like to thank the local community and businesses, in particular NBN television, whose support of Calvary Mater Newcastle has led to improved facilities and ultimately improved care for everyone.”

Professor Forbes played a leading role in the establishment of the fundraising department of the ANZBCTG, the Breast Cancer Institute of Australia (BCIA), to support the ANZBCTG’s research program. He also pioneered consumer involvement in cancer trials with the establishment of the first oncology Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP) in Australia which works with researchers in breast cancer clinical trials.

Professor Forbes continues to be a member of the Board of Directors of the ANZBCTG, and Chairs, Co-chairs, or is a Member of Steering Committees for many national and international breast cancer clinical trials.

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Notes to editors

Professor Forbes has received numerous awards throughout his career including:

- Member of the Order of Australia (AM), Commonwealth of Australia (for service to medicine in the field of breast cancer research, to the development of improved clinical practice standards and service to the community) – 2012
- NSW Premier’s Award for Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year – 2015
- Recognition as one of the world’s leading scientific researchers, with the release of Thomson Reuters list of ‘The World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds’: 2014 and 2015

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