



**Burnet**  
reach for the many

# Thanks to You...

Spring 2025

Thanks to your continued support, we're unlocking new discoveries, changing lives, and sparking the innovations that shape a better future for all.





Message from the CEO:

# Real change, real lives – the power of giving

I'd like to begin with a heartfelt thank you. Your continued generosity drives us to be even more ambitious in our goal to deliver life-changing research and healthcare for all. This Spring edition of *Thanks to You* is filled with stories that highlight how much you've helped accelerate our research, expanding the reach and impact of our work.

Our recent end-of-financial-year appeal was an inspiring reminder of what's possible when we come together. With your help, we've been able to raise more than \$160,000 to bolster HIV prevention and treatment efforts across the Pacific. These vital funds are already helping to develop localised toolkits and a network of peer-led counsellors able to provide much needed support and guidance.

When a powerful earthquake struck Myanmar earlier this year, your generosity enabled a swift and compassionate response to ensure we were able to continue delivering essential health services where needed most. In this edition, we profile Dr Phone Myint Win, Burnet's Country Representative in Myanmar, whose leadership, deep local knowledge and unwavering commitment have been instrumental in guiding both our emergency response and long-term health programs in the region.

We're also pleased to let you know that our 2024 Annual Report is now available. Inside, you'll find stories of progress made possible by your support, from breakthroughs in research to on-the-ground impact in communities across the globe.



In this edition, we also celebrate the commitment of donor Len Dudman. After reading about our work with mothers and babies in Papua New Guinea, Len felt compelled to donate. His ongoing generosity continues to fuel programs that are changing lives in places where support is needed most.

Each of the achievements shared in this edition is a direct result of your unwavering generosity and kindness.

Your support is helping our research to go further. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "B. Crabb".

**Professor Brendan Crabb AC**  
Director and CEO

# Helping children grow strong – from the very start

**With your help, more mothers, fathers and health workers are coming together to learn, share and act – changing the outlook for children across East New Britain.**

In the remote mountain villages of East New Britain, momentum is building. Every month, more parents are attending our workshops on nutrition and child development – delivered through Grow Healthy, Grow Strong, our program to help reduce childhood stunting.

Nearly half of all children in East New Britain are affected by stunting, a condition with long-term effects on growth, learning and health – but your support for the Grow program is helping shift that story.

Thanks to you, Onawuta Kesuwao and Mary Kuam from our Kokopo office can keep making regular trips to these communities – gathering with families under mango trees or in community halls, sharing knowledge about maternal and child health, passing around bilingual factsheets, using educational games, and keeping the conversations flowing over snacks and chilled drinks.

Through regular community workshops like these, as well as training sessions for local health workers, families are gaining the knowledge they need to help their children grow and thrive.

Right: Our Grow project staff engages with families and community members in Raniolo, East New Britain, 2025.

## More parents, more impact

Already this year, over 100 parents have taken part in workshops, with more and more fathers turning up to sit alongside their partners to learn about family nutrition, maternal health and shared parenting. At a recent session, fathers and mothers attended in equal numbers – a first for the project.

"It is so encouraging to see that fathers are prioritising learning about family health, child nutrition and maternal health," says Onawatu. In response, the team is now tailoring workshop content to better engage men – covering topics like responsible alcohol use and the important role fathers play in raising strong, healthy children.

## You're part of this journey

Every trip into the mountains. Every game played. Every healthy child. It's all part of a stronger future for PNG – and you've helped make it happen.

**Thank you for walking alongside us, helping our research to go further.**



# Building hope and health for people living with HIV in Fiji

Thanks to your support, we’re one step closer to seeing a powerful model of care being rolled out in Fiji from December – led by peers, grounded in empathy, and built to last.

Recently, we shared the confronting news that HIV cases in Fiji had more than tripled in just 12 months – the fastest rise in a region already facing a dangerous surge. Your response was to help us raise the vital funds needed to launch Fiji’s first-ever peer-led counselling network – a program grounded in empathy, driven by lived experience, and designed to last.

But your impact hasn’t stopped there. We were blown away by how many of you joined our live information session in May, eager to understand the growing challenge of HIV in Fiji – and what we can do, together, to change it. A recording of the session is available online, simply scan the QR code on page 5.

## A crisis fuelled by silence and stigma

Medical advances have transformed HIV care over the past four decades, but in many communities, the greatest barriers aren’t scientific – they’re social. Stigma, fear, and misinformation still prevent people from getting the care they need.

In Fiji, these challenges are real, but they’re not unique. The country faces the same complex mix of health inequities, prejudices, and deeply held taboos that are seen in many parts of the world.

With cases rising among some of Fiji’s more marginalised communities, the need for practical, community-led solutions has never been greater.

## The power of peers – support grounded in lived experience

Thanks to you, action is already underway. Burnet’s Senior International Health Project Officer, Dean Cassano, who works closely with partners in Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands, spoke passionately at the information session about why peer-led support works – and why your support is making it possible.

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“Peer-led counselling shouldn’t be a matter of luck,” Dean said. “It’s one of the most researched and well-understood ways to support people living with HIV.”

The idea is simple but transformative. Someone who lives with HIV is trained and empowered to provide counselling and support to someone with their HIV diagnosis – guiding them through the different phases of the HIV journey.

“It’s shaped around the shared experience of stigma, but it also de-medicalises HIV care,” explained Dean. “It takes it out of the doctor’s office and into homes, communities, and safe spaces where people feel comfortable opening up.”



The HIV peer counselling toolkit, co-developed by Burnet Institute in collaboration with people living with HIV.

## Building a network of hope

Because of you, Burnet will now work alongside the Fijian Ministry of Health and local organisations like the Fijian Network of Positive People to roll out peer-led support in towns including Labasa, Lautoka and Suva. The long-term vision is to support the broader HIV challenge in Fiji – improving access to testing and treatment, breaking down social barriers, and building community resilience.

Establishing a trusted program of peer-led counselling is the first, most critical step.

“The benefits – as documented in a wide body of global research – are huge,” Dean explained. “It improves personal wellbeing, reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness, helps people stick to their treatment plans, and reduces strain on an already stretched health system.”

## You’re helping our research to go further, so that no one is left behind

Burnet’s work in Fiji draws on decades of global experience – but none of it happens without people like you. As Burnet’s Director and CEO, Professor Brendan Crabb AC, reminded us at the information session, “HIV shaped Burnet Institute more than any other infectious disease. It taught us that technical solutions are essential – but we also have to break down barriers to care.”

That’s exactly what you’re helping to do. By funding this program, showing up to ask questions, and standing beside communities facing HIV, you’re part of a life-changing shift in the Pacific.

**Thank you for playing your part in making sure no one has to face HIV alone.**

Scan to find out more about HIV in the Pacific and our plans



Mark Lal, Founder of Living Positive Fiji



## When disaster struck, you made a difference



In the wake of Myanmar's catastrophic earthquakes earlier this year, you dug deep to help us deliver essential supplies and keep vital health services running for communities facing extraordinary challenges.

When two powerful earthquakes struck Myanmar in March, the destruction was devastating – more than 3,800 people lost their lives, thousands more were injured, millions were displaced, and already struggling services were left in ruins.

The earthquakes were felt across the country, including in Yangon and Magway, where Burnet offices are based. As soon as all staff were safely accounted for, our team mobilised – working alongside trusted local partners to respond to the needs of families affected by power outages, water shortages and the diversion of already limited resources.

Within days of the disaster, you had responded with incredible kindness, funding the distribution of thousands of essential needs packs – including food and nutrition packages. Because of your generous support, we're pleased to report we have successfully distributed over 2,300 menstrual hygiene kits to girls, 1,000 personal hygiene kits to boys, and more than 700 newborn and clean delivery kits to pregnant women and new mothers.

It's now been several months since the earthquakes hit, but humanitarian needs remain acute across the affected areas.

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“Although humanitarian partners scaled up their response efforts, funding remains limited despite the scale and urgency of the needs,” says Dr Phone Myint Win, Burnet's Country Representative in Myanmar. “This underscores the importance of sustained support beyond the immediate relief and early recovery.”

### Your support makes lasting impact possible

Even as our teams responded to the earthquake, your generosity meant that our work on vital, longer-term programs could continue – programs that are more critical than ever.

Mental health support for young people. Inclusive health systems for people with disabilities. Sexual and reproductive health education and services. Hepatitis C testing and treatment. These are the services that help communities stay strong, even when disasters strike.

Because of you, we can stand with communities in Myanmar – not just in times of crisis, but for the long road ahead.

**Thank you for making it possible.**

To learn more about the earthquake response or make a donation, visit: [myanmarresponse.burnet.edu.au](https://myanmarresponse.burnet.edu.au)

## Leading with humility and solidarity in Myanmar

The vital health work under way in Myanmar is led by Dr Phone Myint Win, whose commitment to respect, compassion and solidarity is shaping stronger, more resilient communities.

For nearly two decades, Dr Phone has led Burnet Institute's work in Myanmar with a rare mix of expertise, humility, and deep connection to the communities he serves. As Burnet's Country Representative, he has steered health programs through natural disasters, political upheaval, and ongoing humanitarian challenges – always guided by the belief that lasting change is founded on collaboration, solidarity, and mutual respect.

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“I never work alone. I engage with my colleagues, but also with the community,” says Dr Phone. “We must listen to the voices of the community and other stakeholders. We must build partnerships.”

### Guided by family, grounded in values

This cooperative way of working was established early in Dr Phone's life. As a child, he saw his mother's kindness, empathy, and compassion in action, while his father, a public health specialist, dedicated his career to supporting people affected by leprosy and their families.

“He taught me the principles of respect, equality and inclusion,” says Dr Phone.



Dr Phone Myint Win, Country Representative, Myanmar.

Those values continue to guide him today as he works with his team to bring essential health services within reach of communities across the country, while also responding to urgent health needs in times of crisis – from storms and floods to armed conflict, and the devastating earthquakes of this year.

### Building resilience in challenging times

Under his leadership, Burnet's Myanmar programs address critical issues including HIV, hepatitis C, malaria, tuberculosis, maternal and child health, adolescent health, and mental health – often in hard-to-reach communities facing extreme poverty. Following Myanmar's military coup, Dr Phone championed a new focus on resilience, integrating psychosocial support and mental health care into existing programs. In 2024, his inspirational qualities as a leader were recognised with the Frank Fenner Award, one of Burnet's highest honours. But for Dr Phone, the real reward lies in the future.

“I believe in the potential of my daughter and my son, the next generation, which is why I believe in the future of Myanmar,” he says. “I have radical hope.”

It is the generosity of donors like you that makes this work possible, and powers Dr Phone's dream of a better, healthier, and more equitable Myanmar. Together, we can stand with communities in Myanmar, in times of crisis and for the long road ahead.



# A goal worth standing by: why Len Dudman chose to back Burnet



Len Dudman's fundamental belief in kindness and accountability inspired him to throw his support behind Burnet Institute – and leave a lasting gift.

For Len Dudman, doing the right thing has always been simple – it comes down to love, respect, and compassion for others. Those values guided the life he shared with his beloved wife, Patricia, who passed away last year after 47 and a half years of marriage.

They first met while holidaying in New Zealand in 1967 and quickly discovered they shared much in common: a strong faith, a deep sense of empathy, and a belief in working hard and giving back. A computer operator with BHP at her retirement, Patricia was a professional in the truest sense – and a regular supporter of many charities.

That shared belief in the importance of helping others inspired Len, now in his 80s, to make his very first donation to Burnet Institute a little more than 12 months ago.

"Funds were being sought to stop mothers and babies dying in horrific numbers, particularly in low-income countries such as Papua New Guinea," he recalls. "Being of a compassionate nature, I deemed this research program to be in need of my financial assistance – and my wife strongly encouraged me."

Before making his decision, Len carefully studied Burnet's 2023 Annual Report. As a certified practising accountant and former Queensland Assistant Auditor-General, he was looking for evidence that Burnet had the governance, professionalism, and integrity to deliver on its promises.

"I found a great deal of information on the workings of the Institute in its 2023 Annual Report," he says, with satisfaction.

But beyond the numbers, it was Burnet's purpose that truly inspired him – eliminating disease, improving medical care, and preparing for pandemics, with a clear focus on making sure these benefits flow to all people in need, regardless of their circumstances.

Since that first donation, Len has chosen to become a regular supporter, and recently made the generous decision to remember Burnet with a gift in his Will.

"Given the breadth of its research and the benefit to many, it is very much an organisation worthy of your financial support. I believe my regular donations assist in the endeavour of eliminating, or at least substantially overcoming, many of the physical ailments affecting the human race."

And to Len, that's a goal worth standing by.

## Tell us your story!

We really enjoy hearing from our supporters – the stories of how you first came to support us and why are so varied and so interesting. If you'd like to be featured in an upcoming edition of *Thanks To You*, we'd love to hear from you.

Please get in touch via [giving@burnet.edu.au](mailto:giving@burnet.edu.au)



Philanthropy and Supporter Engagement team.

# Research that goes further – Thanks to you

Every step forward at Burnet starts with donors like you.

Your generosity is the spark that keeps discovery alive. Because of you, scientists are asking bold questions, launching early-stage studies, and pushing forward clinical trials that could change or even save lives. You're not just funding research; you're giving hope to families facing some of the toughest diagnoses imaginable.

Whether it's supporting a young researcher's first big idea or accelerating a critical breakthrough, you are at the heart of it all.

And your impact is felt every day. Messages like these, from our supporters, inspire and uplift our entire organisation:

"Very happy to support our amazing Myanmar team and the incredible work they do."

Nicholas

"Keep shining for others. I think you're wonderful!"

Rosemary

"A very worthy charity"

Gary

"Keep up the good work."

Denton

So today, we want to say it loud and clear:

**Thank you, Nicholas.  
Thank you, Rosemary.  
Thank you, Gary.  
Thank you, Denton.**

**Thank you to every single donor helping move science forward.**

Together, we're helping our research go further.

Thank you for standing with us to make the work we do possible. Watch this heartwarming message of thanks from the team at Burnet.

Scan the QR to see a heartwarming thank you from the team (pictured above).



# Driving innovation and expanding our global impact, at the 2024 AGM

It has been another impactful year at Burnet, defined by significant progress in global health initiatives, innovative research and community-led solutions.

Recently, we published our 2024 Annual Report, presented at our Annual General Meeting, held on 29 May.

In his Director's message, Professor Brendan Crabb AC said he was exceptionally proud of what Burnet had achieved in 2024.

"We have had strong success in our research, publishing more than 300 papers in peer-reviewed journals," he said.

"Our turnover increased and we received many grants, including \$9.87 million from the Victorian Government for our Pathway to Clean Indoor Air project, which has the potential to provide significant health and economic gains.

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"We also made strides in the research translation space, with an initial \$6.5 million invested in Burnext, a landmark accelerator program designed to fast-track research into real-world outcomes."

In her Chair's message, Mary Padbury was pleased to report that Burnet had again achieved full accreditation as a non-government organisation through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

"This process reviews our governance, policies and processes to ensure best practice across

our work, especially in relation to our international operations," she said.

"This year we invested \$94.6 million in improving health for a more equitable world; a sizeable figure at a time when global investment in disease prevention and elimination is under threat.

"We also remain steadfast in our resolve to create a workplace that exemplifies diversity, equity and inclusion as we pursue our health equity purpose."

Some of Burnet's key achievements outlined in the 2024 Annual Report include:

- Improving care for people in prison who use drugs
- Uncovering new treatments for malaria
- Progress on indoor air quality
- Identifying new ways to predict preterm births
- Improving adolescent mental health in Myanmar
- Boosting research translation through a new accelerator program
- An improved syphilis test to provide rapid results

Professor Crabb thanked donors and supporters, staff and partners for their unwavering commitment and collaborative efforts in driving meaningful health outcomes in 2024.

Thank you for helping our research to go further, so that no one is left behind.

Scan the QR code to read the annual report or visit [www.burnet.edu.au/about-us/annual-and-financial-reports/](http://www.burnet.edu.au/about-us/annual-and-financial-reports/)



To request a copy, please contact us at [giving@burnet.edu.au](mailto:giving@burnet.edu.au) or call 03 9282 2221



## Make health equity your legacy



Burnet is pleased to announce we're now offering online Wills in partnership with Safewill. A safe and secure leading industry online platform, Safewill is designed to provide peace of mind and to help secure your legacy. Available to supporters, family and friends, you can now take advantage of a reduced rate of just \$80, representing a 50% discount.

Having a Will in place is important to protect your loved ones. Once they have been provided for, Burnet would be grateful if you would consider leaving a gift in your Will to help ensure a better, fairer, healthier world.

A world where people, no matter who and where they are, have access to life-changing health solutions and programs.

A percentage of your estate, no matter the size, can make a difference of a lifetime.

For more information visit [safewill.com/burnet](http://safewill.com/burnet) or scan the QR code



## You're invited: Planning with purpose – Wills and what matters

Join us at this exciting event where legal, financial and research experts will help you better understand how to plan for the future – for yourself, your family and the causes you care about.

You'll hear from ABC Radio's legal expert, David Whiting, an experienced lawyer who has been called 'better than Google', alongside Clementine Lucas from Morgan Stanley Australia. Dr Clarissa Whitehead will also present on how gifts to research lead to medical breakthroughs.

**Time:** 10.00am  
**Date:** Thursday 9 October, 2025  
**Venue:** The Alfred Centre, Level 7, 99 Commercial Road, Melbourne (Corner Punt & Commercial Road)

Followed by a light lunch at 12 noon

Visit [plan\\_with\\_purpose.eventbrite.com.au](http://plan_with_purpose.eventbrite.com.au) to secure your place or scan the QR code.



For more information, please contact Bronwyn Sugden, Planned Giving Manager on 0412 871 919. **Family and friends are welcome.**



# We want to hear from you – Supporter Connection Survey 2025

In 2024, 326 supporters shared their thoughts – helping us better understand what matters to you. Your feedback shapes how we communicate and the stories we tell.

Now, we'd love to hear from you again through our 2025 Supporter Connection Survey.

If you have already received your survey in the post and not had a chance to send it back, we'd love to hear from you.

Simply scan the QR code provided or complete it online at [surveymonkey.com/r/25BISurvey](https://surveymonkey.com/r/25BISurvey) by Friday 31st October 2025.



## Burnet Supporter Connection Survey 2025

Your opinion matters. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us. We look forward to hearing from you.

### Q1.

Thank you for your interest and support of Burnet's life-changing research and health programs. What first inspired you to support Burnet? (select all that apply)

- ☐ I first heard of Burnet Institute during COVID
- ☐ I've been personally impacted by infectious diseases
- ☐ I have a science/medical background and follow your work
- ☐ I believe medical research makes vital contributions to people's health
- ☐ I've seen the impact of inequity in communities at home and overseas
- ☐ I've supported Burnet Institute's work since the days of Fairfield Hospital
- ☐ I had a connection with Mac Burnet himself
- ☐ In my own words:

### Q2.

Your support helps change our world so all people, no matter their status, location or background, have access to life-changing research and health programs. You are supporting our goal of health equity: a better, fairer, healthier world, with no-one left behind. Would you mind telling us what motivates you to continue supporting Burnet today? (select all that apply)

- ☐ A belief in health equity
- ☐ A desire to help communities living with disadvantage
- ☐ An interest in medical research and innovation
- ☐ Personal experience with health challenges
- ☐ A sense of global responsibility
- ☐ In my own words:



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### Overseas

Burnet has offices in Papua New Guinea, Myanmar and Vanuatu, and also contributes to research and public health programs in many other countries across Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Europe, and North America.

