White Coats Foundation – A Message to Our Community

It is with mixed emotions that the White Coats Foundation announces that, after eight years of service, the Foundation will be closing its operations.

This has not been an easy decision. Since our establishment in 2018, we have been committed to improving awareness and understanding of clinical trials and medical research, recognising the contribution of research participants, and creating greater opportunities for consumer and community involvement.

While the need for the work we have championed remains as important as ever, ensuring its long-term sustainability in the current fiscal environment has become increasingly challenging and is impacting our ability to fully deliver on its mission. We do not wish to compromise the quality, integrity, or purpose of the work for those it is intended to serve.

Reflecting on eight years

We are immensely proud of what the Foundation has achieved with limited resources. What began as a concept inspired by the "Thank You" campaign grew into an independent voice connecting patients, consumers, clinicians, researchers, industry and government around the importance of clinical research.

Over the past eight years, the Foundation has:

- Established an independent platform focused on clinical trial participation, consumer and community involvement, education and awareness.
- Launched the "Thank You" campaign and Thank-You Sessions, bringing patients, clinicians, researchers and industry together to recognise the important contribution of research participants. Our sessions at St Vincent's Hospital and Royal Melbourne Hospital brought together more than 150 people.
- Developed educational resources, webinars and the "Behind the White Coat" series, helping make clinical research more understandable and accessible.
- Created "Your Voice, Your Story", providing patients and community members with an opportunity to share what clinical trials mean to them through storytelling and imagery.
- Delivered the "Power of One" awareness and fundraising campaigns, with campaigns generating significant community engagement and funding for medical research.

- Provided funding to support medical research, including research at the University of Newcastle exploring a culturally safe cognitive screening tool for Aboriginal people with brain cancer, and research supporting Australia's first stem cell therapy clinical trial for newborn stroke.
- Built a communication and education network through our website, newsletter, webinars and social media channels, with our video content generating more than 120,000 views.

The Foundation was also proud to receive international recognition as a finalist for both the original "Thank You" concept and the Keep Cup campaign, as well as achieving Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

Looking ahead

Over the next six months, we will gradually wind down our operations. During this period, we will no longer undertake new projects, participate in any new initiatives, or accept any donations.

While the White Coats Foundation will be concluding operations, we are proud of the awareness we have raised, the relationships we have fostered, and the important conversations we have helped initiate. We hope these efforts will continue to support the advancement of clinical research and meaningful patient engagement across Australia.

We trust that the resources, knowledge and initiatives developed by the Foundation will continue to be of value. We welcome the opportunity to share our experience, resources and learnings with government or other organisations that may wish to build on this work in the future.

We extend our sincere thanks to our members, supporters, partners, patients, consumers, clinicians, researchers, organisations and individuals who have supported the Foundation and shared in our vision over the past eight years.

Thank you for being part of the White Coats Foundation Journey

Christine Zahren & Fiona Cameron

Directors

White Coats Foundation Ltd