

Mediaportal Report

21/02/2011

▶ **Plucky Olivia still fighting to beat the odds**

Canberra Times, 21/02/11, General News, Page 1
By: Ewa Kretowicz

Article Information

Item ID: 00092737658
Circulation: 32,116
Number of words: 518

Advertising Space Rate

AUD: 2,498

19/02/2011

▶ **It's Operation Re-build**

Townsville Bulletin, 19/02/11, General News, Page 10
By: None

Article Information

Item ID: 00092591310
Circulation: 26,563
Number of words: 388

Advertising Space Rate

AUD: 757

▶ **Nuclear family opts for Canberra lifestyle**

Canberra Times, 19/02/11, General News, Page 8
By: Christopher Knaus

Article Information

Item ID: 00092590786
Circulation: 32,116
Number of words: 390

Advertising Space Rate

AUD: 2,396



Plucky Olivia still fighting to beat the odds

By Ewa Kretowicz
 City Reporter

Olivia Lambert is back in Australia and fighting for time after a trip to Germany for specialist cancer treatment gave her a lifeline.

But the brave seven-year-old is resigned to losing her long blonde locks again. She's planning to use bandannas and hats to hide the tell-tale signs of intensive chemotherapy.

Olivia was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma, a rare and aggressive cancer, five years ago.

She's been in remission twice, but last year Australian doctors gave up on the little girl. The family travelled to Germany in August, after Canberrans donated more than \$300,000 to give Olivia a chance.

Parents Kirsty and James Lambert had hoped to return home with Olivia in remission but the day before her seventh birthday, scans showed another lesion had formed on her left thigh. Previous tests had shown the immunotherapy treatment was working, and the bad news devastated the family.

Olivia returned to Australia last week. She is in Sydney and Australian doctors have now taken

up the fight. Olivia is five weeks into an eight-week course of intensive chemotherapy and inhibitors.

Fighting back tears, her father James said going to Germany had been the right choice. "We would be in a worse situation if we hadn't gone," he said. "[The immunotherapy treatment] appears to have had some effect on her bone marrow and if we hadn't gone, we wouldn't have all these other options."

Doctors in Australia had only offered palliative care when Olivia relapsed in 2010. Her chances of survival after her first remission were given as less than 0.01 per cent. Olivia beat the odds and this time doctors said she was unlikely to see her seventh birthday. Olivia's strength has proved them wrong again. She celebrated her birthday on January 15.

Mrs Lambert said Olivia is fighting for more time. "We are realistic, we know what we're in for, it's a very grim prognosis," she said.

"But who knows, if we get a couple more years, who knows what's around the corner, who knows what

can be developed treatment-wise for her, in a couple of years."

The intensive treatment is not a curative program but could halt the cancer's spread. If it is successful in shrinking the lesion, the family will return to Germany where doctors are hopeful of remission.

"I couldn't just sit back and watch her deteriorate from one spot on her thigh," Mrs Lambert said. "There is potential for her to go into remission. If she was riddled with disease, we would have to think about what we're doing. But it's just one spot."

For now, Olivia is overjoyed to be back in Australia. "It's a dream, it's a dream, it's a dream," she said.

A sleepover with her best friend Ella, playing with the family dog and the resumption of ballet lessons are at the top of her to-do list.

A charitable foundation in Olivia's name was set up by the family to raise funds for Olivia and other children living with neuroblastoma. For information or to donate visit www.olivialambertfoundation.org.au



TOUGH: Cancer sufferer Olivia Lambert, 7, with her mother Kirsty, has come back from Germany and is continuing her battle in Sydney. Photo: KARLEEN MINNEY



It's Operation Re-build

by Rachel Toune



rachel.toune@townsvillebulletin.com.au

CONSTRUCTION has started on the third stage of the \$437 million redevelopment of the Townsville Hospital which will open up two new operating theatres for patients.

The project has been funded by the State and Federal Governments and will increase the number of beds available in the hospital to 719. The redevelopment is scheduled to be finished by 2014.

The first stage of the project, the \$94 million North Block, is expected to be completed by the end of June and will house the largest emergency department in the state, along with an expanded intensive care unit

and a 34-bed maternity unit.

The second stage of the project, to be finished by mid 2012, will increase the number of cots in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit from 32 to 50, along with upgrading medical imaging facilities.

The third stage of the project will boost the number of operating theatres as well as include a new central energy facility and the expansion and upgrade of the pathology laboratory.

Mundingburra MP Lindy Nelson-Carr said demolition and preparatory works had started on stage three.

"We made an election commitment to deliver additional beds and services for the Townsville com-

munity and this development is showing that we are on track to provide this," Ms Nelson-Carr said.

Townsville MP Mandy Johnstone said the first part of stage three would expand the operating theatre suite from 10 to 12 operating theatres.

"These new theatres will increase surgical capacity and throughput, taking pressure off existing services and allowing more elective surgery for patients," Ms Johnstone said.

"The two new operating theatres (will be) for cardiac and orthopaedic services and are due to be completed by mid-next year."

Ms Johnstone said the hos-

pital's 10 existing theatres would still be in use throughout the construction of the additional theatres, which meant there would be no disruption to elective surgery.

She said the third stage also included a new 66-bed ward block, known as the South Block, which was expected to be finished in 2014.

The fourth stage of the project will expand the existing Cancer Care Centre with three new radiotherapy bunkers, clinics and support spaces, as well as more therapy treatment places.

The fourth stage is scheduled to be completed in 2013.



REBUILD: Dr Vic Callanan at the new theatre section of the Townsville Hospital

Photo: MEGAN TAYLOR



Nuclear family opts for Canberra lifestyle

By Christopher Knaus

For most medical professionals and researchers, a choice between working at the world-leading Cambridge University Hospital and the comparatively unknown and internationally obscure Canberra Hospital would be a no-brainer.

One of Britain's leading nuclear medicine physicists, Farshid Salehzahi, was faced with just such a choice and, luckily for Canberra, the reputation and standing of Cambridge couldn't compete with the sunny skies and laid-back lifestyle of Australia.

"[Cambridge] was one of those dream jobs, that any medical physicist would like," Dr Salehzahi said.

"It was a difficult time of my life to decide, Canberra or Cambridge, that was a very tough decision to make."

Medical physicists, who use physics for diagnosing, treating and preventing disease, are in extremely

short supply across the world and most are able to snap up jobs at any location across the world with ease.

His decision to work in Canberra has been greeted with joy by ACT Health, the Canberra Hospital and Canberra's thousands of cancer patients.

Without Dr Salehzahi, the hospital would be unable to run its new state-of-the-art PET/CT nuclear imaging scanner, which uses radiation to help provide precise cancer imaging services.

The scanner has been a godsend for the hospital, and has meant that this year about 1000 cancer patients will no longer need to travel to Sydney for scans.

Dr Salehzahi's presence also ensures the hospital is entitled to Medicare funding for the scanner.

There is a huge shortfall of nuclear medicine physicists across Australia, with just 17 working in the nation,

well below the 80 required to fully staff hospitals.

Dr Salehzahi said his decision to move to Canberra was motivated by the needs of his family.

"Me and my wife had already decided that we didn't want to retire in England, with the cold weather, grey skies and rain," he said.

"I thought I would like to give an opportunity to my family to live in a country with great nature and great opportunities."

Canberra Hospital's chief medical physicist, Sean Geoghegan, said that meant that Dr Salehzahi was "absolutely critical" for the functioning of the PET/CT suite.

"His expertise is required to do the quality assurance and quality control of the processes we use," he said.

The family is applying for permanent residency in Australia.



IN DEMAND: Farshid Salehzahi with his wife, Azita, and children Shahrzad, 14, and Darren, 7, outside his new workplace, Canberra Hospital. Photo: ANDREW SHEARGOLD