



*Tell us about yourself and how you came to be in your current role(s)?*

After completing medical school, I obtained my post-graduate Membership of the Royal College of Physicians in United Kingdom in Internal Medicine and started my Medical Oncology specialist training at the National Cancer Centre in Singapore. I was granted the opportunity to go to the United States on a government fellowship at Duke University in North Carolina where I was a breast cancer fellow which was followed by a stint at the Washington University, Siteman Cancer Center where I worked as a research fellow. Upon my return, I attained the Fellowship of the Academy of Medicine in Medical Oncology which was equivalent to a subspecialty board exam. Thereafter, I

was appointed to lead the breast cancer service at the National Cancer Centre in Singapore for several years where I was actively involved in phase I – IV clinical trials in breast cancer and also collaborated in national grants on pharmacogenomics and genomic profiling. I was conferred the fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 2009. Having a young family with two children and working full-time kept me very busy.

Looking for a sea change and through serendipity, I was recruited to the role of the Director of Oncology at Goulburn Valley Health in Shepparton in 2012 and was appointed as the Clinical Director of West Hume Integrated Cancer Services afterwards. I was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in Medical Oncology the following year. The opportunity to teach at the Rural Clinical School as a senior lecturer with the University of Melbourne Medical School was opened to me and I am still actively involved in medical student examinations currently.

In 2017, I took on the role to lead the Oncology Unit at Peninsula Health in Frankston Hospital and was appointed as Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor with Monash University. In the same year, I was part of an inaugural class who completed the Specialist Certificate in Clinical Leadership at the University of Melbourne. Not only was the course invaluable for me to reflect on my career up to that point, it helped me hone the various skills crucial for my roles. I currently serve as a board member for Cancer Trials Australia and hold membership on the Medical and Scientific Committee of Cancer Council Victoria. Having presented at national and international oncology conferences as well as authored peer-reviewed publications and book chapters, I have been invited as a reviewer for various journals including *The Breast*, *Internal Medicine Journal* and *Frontiers in Oncology*. Currently, I am a site principal and co-investigator of sponsored and investigator-initiated trials at Peninsula Health and am also a member of the AGITG Lower GI Working Party.

Shortly after starting at Peninsula Health, I was fortunate to be granted a scholarship to undertake the Executive Ready Program at Women's Leadership Australia through the Australian School of Applied Management. Through the course, I got to learn from other women leaders in various fields facing very similar challenges and how they navigated complex circumstances to achieve their goals and desired outcomes. In the last 18 months, I was given the opportunity to co-chair the [Victorian Cancer COVID-19 Network \(VCCN\\*\)](#) Taskforce as well as chair the Telehealth Expert Working Group during the pandemic. This allowed me to work with many like-minded individuals across the cancer sector both within and outside the state. With the rapid uptake and implementation of telehealth, the Telehealth Expert Working Group led a first state-wide survey for consumers and clinicians which is being prepared for publication. During lockdowns in Victoria, I completed the Company

Directors Course from the Australian Institute of Company Directors earlier this year to get myself up to speed with essential board skills and also basic financial knowledge.

### ***What is your connection to SMICS?***

I have been privileged to be appointed to the role of co-Clinical Director of SMICS since June 2018 and worked with the wonderful team at SMICS including A/Prof Andrew Haydon, whom I job-share the role of the Clinical Director and Seleena Sherwell, Program Manager. I am also on the Steering Committee of the Victorian Tumour Summits and have been on the Working Party for both the Colorectal Cancer and Oesophagogastric Cancer Tumour Summits in the past.

### ***What is the most rewarding aspect of your role(s)?***

The most rewarding aspect of my role is seeing patients do well and be able to continue to do what they enjoy. I am highly committed in advocacy for patient-centred care through better access and service improvement initiatives. I led the Victorian Lung Cancer Redesign Project and was a co-applicant for the Victorian Regional Cancer Clinical Trials Network while at GV Health. More recently, I was the lead applicant in the Victorian Cancer Survivorship Project on Geriatric Oncology and the medical lead for Symptom Urgent Review Clinic grant at Peninsula Health. In addition, I have also been successful in obtaining two external grants to support our lung and GI cancer care coordinator roles.

### ***What is it about your work that makes you want to get out of bed each morning?***

Knowing that what I do makes a difference in someone's cancer journey.

### ***What does a typical day at work look like for you?***

An early start with 30 minutes on the treadmill followed by a quick breakfast and preparation to get to work. My work day usually starts at 8.00am with unit meetings or multi-disciplinary team meetings (MDTs) followed by morning or afternoon clinics and meetings in between with hardly time for coffee breaks or lunch. It starts to wind down by 5 pm though on some days I finish well past 6.00pm. This is followed by a dash back home to sort out dinner.

### ***How do you manage work / life balance?***

With great difficulty. There is not enough hours in the day to do all the things I want and have to do. Admittedly, it has been difficult to navigate at best how to strike the balance. It often means working longer hours and over the weekends to finish the tasks at hand or meet deadlines. That is why going on holidays or conferences has been such a big part in striking that balance – something which has been impossible to do with the pandemic.

### ***Are there any patient success stories that you can share?***

One of patients whom I saw earlier on when I started working in Australia was told to have incurable cancer of unknown primary and referred to me for palliative chemotherapy from a tertiary centre. The patient was obviously very distraught with the diagnosis, due to the guarded prognosis and very limited life expectancy. I referred her back after there was a discordant response to chemotherapy to consider surgical excision. A repeat biopsy was taken when contemplating surgical resection and she was found to have melanoma! At that time, first line immunotherapy had just become available on Medicare. Fast forward five years later, she is in complete remission and continues to lead a normal life, working full-time and enjoying the company of her family. This has been one of the many gratifying clinical encounters for the patient and myself.

\* <https://vcccalliance.org.au/victorian-covid-19-cancer-network/>