



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 12, 2022**

### **An Australian first: Newly accredited diagnostic tool to transform diagnosis of children with brain cancer.**

From December 2022, molecular profiling developed through ANZCHOG's AIM-BRAIN PROject (Access to Innovative Molecular Diagnostic PROfiling for Paediatric Brain Tumours) will become an accredited diagnostic test for brain cancers in Australia and New Zealand.

ANZCHOG (Australian and New Zealand Children's Haematology and Oncology Group) is pleased to announce that the AIM-BRAIN PROject team, based at ANZCHOG and Victorian Clinical Genetic Services (VCGS), have secured NATA accreditation for a pivotal diagnostic tool for patients diagnosed with brain cancer. This means that every Australian or New Zealand child with a brain tumour can access the accredited diagnostic test, building the clinical team's detailed diagnosis of each child's brain tumour and helping to tailor treatment accordingly.

Despite the outstanding success in the treatment of many childhood cancers in the past two decades, curative treatment for many children with brain cancers remains an ongoing challenge. In Australia, brain cancer kills more children than any other disease each year. Recent studies have shown that brain cancers can be classified into distinct tumour sub-groups via molecular profiling, and each of these tumour groups respond differently to various treatments.

The AIM-BRAIN PROject was established in 2017 as a research study to develop methylation array profiling for Australian and New Zealand children diagnosed with brain tumours. Initially, children were enrolled on the German-led research program, Molecular NeuroPathology 2.0 study (MNP2.0), which provided immediate access to this cutting-edge platform, while the technology was established and validated in Australia via the AIM-BRAIN PROject. The achievement of NATA accreditation is a huge milestone in the transition from a research project to a certified pathology test, placing Australia alongside the United States, Canada and United Kingdom as one of the few countries world-wide to offer clinically validated methylation profiling.

"NATA accreditation is a fundamental step to provide confidence around accuracy and consistency of the results, as well as longer term sustainability of the platform here in Australia," said Professor Nick Gottardo, Chair of ANZCHOG and Co-Chair of the AIM-BRAIN PROject. "We have leveraged our connections with our international colleagues at the German Cancer Research Centre (DKFZ) so our children have access to the latest, world-leading diagnostic tools."

"Clinically, these results complement our traditional tests and are invaluable for determining the best treatment for a child, particularly if they have a complex brain tumour. Around 20% children enrolled in the AIM-BRAIN PROject had their treatment altered due further information obtained through AIM-

BRAIN. This means we are giving the most appropriate therapies to minimise the burden of treatment side-effects and give our children the greatest chance of long-term survival.”

“The success of AIM-BRAIN demonstrates the value of methylation profiling,” said Dr Meg Wall, Acting Chief Executive Officer of VCGS, a wholly owned subsidiary of Murdoch Children’s Research Institute. “It is so important to develop the expertise and capacity to undertake this testing in Australia, as it will enable us to future-proof our ability to quickly and accurately diagnose children with brain cancer and ensure Australian researchers remain at the forefront of paediatric cancer diagnostics.”

The Robert Connor Dawes Foundation, Carrie's Beanies for Brain Cancer and the Australian Government through Cancer Australia have supported the establishment and conduct of the AIM-BRAIN PROject.

The AIM-BRAIN PROject will close to recruitment from December 2022, with patient outcomes to be followed up for a further 10 years.

~ Ends ~

*ANZCHOG is a non-profit organisation committed to ensuring Australian and New Zealand children receive world-class cancer care. We are the peak professional body for paediatric oncologists and health professionals who care for children with cancer, spearheading national initiatives to enhance clinical care through communication, research, networking and education. We are also the national cooperative clinical trials group for childhood cancer, actively working with trial consortia around the globe to ensure Australian and New Zealand children have the opportunity to access the latest promising cancer treatments.*

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