

Grant helps centre ease cancer pain

by michael gill

PROVIDING complementary therapies to cancer patients has become a lot easier for SolarisCare centres, thanks to a vital grant from the State Government.

The centre at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital first offered therapies such as acupuncture and reflexology in 2001, helping patients better cope with the physical and emotional side effects of oncology treatments like chemotherapy.

A grant of \$1.5 million will enable SolarisCare to expand its programs at SCGH and at an additional centre at St John of God in Subiaco, which opened last year.

SolarisCare chief executive David Oliver said running the centre at SCGH purely by donations and fundraisers had proved "a hard road" and the many volunteers involved were the real heroes.

"My immediate thought is thanks a million and a half to the State Government, as the hard work from volunteers over the years has now come to fruition," he said. "It's a sense of relief for us, and an acceptance."

The centres help about 1000 cancer patients each year through the efforts of 60 volunteer therapists, 40 volunteer administration staff and a handful of paid employees.

"The therapies are not a cure and they can't prolong life but we're seeking to ease their journey and support

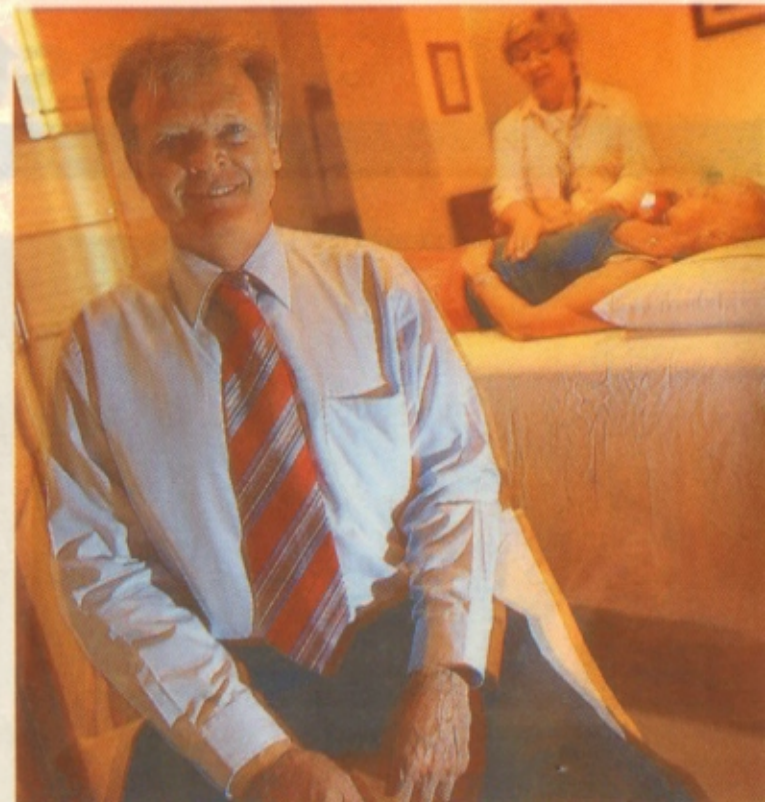
patients through diagnosis, treatment and recovery," Mr Oliver said.

The funding will ultimately give the city centres more stability and allow for the possibility of rolling out the service to regional WA, as discussions with Bunbury Regional Hospital are already under way.

"We can also expand our research process, through more research we can show that it works," he said.

Health Minister Kim Hames said SolarisCare had become a pioneer in the complementary therapy field in WA, improving the quality of life for cancer patients and the funding would benefit many more West Australians.

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SolarisCare Foundation chief executive David Oliver, therapist Beverley Taylor and patient Pamela MacIntosh