



MEDIA STATEMENT

Vale Professor Richard Scolyer AO

A Giant of Australian Science and an Enduring Champion for the Brain Cancer Community

The Brain Tumour Alliance Australia (BTAA) and the Australian Brain Tumour Collaborative (ABTC) have lost a giant. Professor Richard Scolyer AO died yesterday, 7 June 2026, after living courageously with Grade 4 glioblastoma.

We honour him today with profound respect, gratitude and admiration for a life that changed the trajectory of cancer research and clinical care in Australia and globally.

Today is World Brain Tumour Awareness Day and it gives this global day of recognition a deeply personal resonance for our community. Richard dedicated his life — and ultimately his lived experience — to improving outcomes for Australians affected by brain cancer. Today, we honour him by continuing that work.

A Brilliant Scientist, A Courageous Patient, A Remarkable Human Being

Richard was one of Australia's most accomplished medical scientists — a world-leading pathologist, former Australian of the Year, and a pioneer whose work reshaped global understanding of melanoma and, later, brain cancer.

But those who knew him, worked with him, or were inspired by him will remember something even greater: his humility.

Every Australian living with a brain tumour shows extraordinary courage — in diagnosis, in treatment, and in the daily realities of a disease whose outcomes have changed too little for too long. We acknowledge and stand alongside every patient, every family and every carer in our community.

Richard was uniquely placed. As a clinician and scientist, he held knowledge, networks and access to research that most patients are never afforded. When diagnosed with Grade 4 glioblastoma, he chose to use that position with purpose — becoming "patient zero" in a bold, experimental approach to brain cancer treatment in the hope of advancing knowledge and creating opportunities for others. His decision was not a measure of greater courage, but a recognition of a rare opportunity, and he used it generously on behalf of a community he loved.

Richard used his diagnosis not as a shield, but as a platform — to advocate, to educate, and to unite a community that has long needed a stronger, more coordinated national response

A Voice That Moved a Nation

The Australian brain cancer community will forever remember Richard's powerful keynote at BTAA's annual Head to the Hill - 2025 in Canberra. Standing before parliamentarians, clinicians and patient advocates, he spoke with unflinching honesty about survival rates that have barely shifted in 40 years. He challenged Australia to do better — to invest, to collaborate, and to refuse complacency.

His support for the Australian Brain Tumour Collaborative, bringing together nine national organisations across research, trials, clinical care and supports, reflected his core belief: Collaboration, not competition, is how we will change outcomes.

A Partnership of Strength, Love and Advocacy

We also acknowledge the extraordinary contribution of Dr Katie Nicoll, Richard's wife, partner, and advocate in her own right. Her strength, intellect and unwavering commitment to both Richard and the broader brain cancer community have been a source of inspiration to all of us.

Today, we hold Katie, their children, and the entire Scolyer family in our hearts.

His Legacy Becomes Our Mandate

Richard's legacy is not only scientific — it is moral. He showed us what courage looks like, what leadership sounds like, and what it means to use one's life in service of others.

We are not diminished by his loss. We are galvanised by it.

The greatest tribute we can offer is to continue the work he championed:

- national collaboration
- research ambition
- patient-centred advocacy
- united sector leadership

So that one-day, Australian families will not hear the words Richard and his family heard.

A Life of Service. A Legacy of Hope.

Professor Richard Scolyer AO was an extraordinary Australian — a man of immense intellect, deep humility and unwavering purpose. Even in his hardest moments, he worked to make life better for others.

Vale Richard. Thank you. We will continue the fight.



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