

Humans of Medical Research

MEET DR ANGELA FONTAINE

Angela has always been captivated by the ocean and has spent considerable time exploring the spectacular world that exists beneath the waves.

“Being underwater fascinates me,” says Angela.

“It’s an enthralling and special place filled with colour, beauty and life.”

As an experienced dive master, snorkeler and swimmer, Angela enjoys capturing the marine world with her camera and [sharing](#) her shots for others to see.

“I like to take photos to show the diversity that exists on our planet. The majority of all life is found beneath the waves yet we still have so much to learn about the ocean and the amazing and differing habitats that exist within it.”

More recently, Angela has become a volunteer photographer for a whale-watching company in Sydney. She goes out on their boat on weekends and when time permits.

“Humpback whales migrate along the NSW coastline every year,” she says.

“I like to take close-up photos of the whales as they surface near the boat.



Whales can be very inquisitive and curious and sometimes you get the feeling that they’re studying you! To capture them breaching (jumping), you have to be very focused and fast.”

One of Angela’s most memorable experiences was witnessing a mega-pod of hundreds of whales feeding, 3km offshore near Merimbula.

“Whales were everywhere, slapping their tails and jumping. It was an incredible experience. I’ve never seen so many

whales in one place and didn’t know where to point the camera next!”

At Centenary, Angela’s imaging expertise is also held in high regard where she works as the Institute’s bioimaging specialist. She’s an expert in microscopy and immunology (the study of the immune system in the fight against disease).

“I train our scientists on the best use of our microscopes, maintain the instruments, help with research and also collaborate on specific projects.”

Imaging, she says, is a critical component of medical research.

“It allows us to visualise the biological processes taking place in the body, at the tissue, cellular and molecular level, helping us better understand the disease environment as well as to test potential new treatments and cures.”

Imaging it would appear, has taken a real hold over Angela’s life, both personally and professionally.

“Yes! It’s extremely fulfilling capturing hidden worlds—whether it be deep inside the human body or beneath the ocean surface.”

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

CANCER

Cancer is a disease of the cells, which are the body’s basic building blocks.

1 in 2 Australians will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85.

INFLAMMATION

Inflammation is the body’s natural response to protect itself against harm. There are two types: acute and chronic.

1 in 9 Australians have asthma, around 2.5 million people.

CARDIOVASCULAR

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is a collective term for diseases of the heart and blood vessels.

Almost 1 in 3 deaths in Australia are due to cardiovascular disease.