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**Kristy Ricks**  
Lylah’s mum

it’s there as an option to treat that. It will give us an understanding of how patients react and respond to the medication, their heart rate and blood pressure and so we can start to gather data,” he said.

Prof Fraser said his team was seeking \$10m in extra funding to complete the trial.

“I hope this trial will stimulate international interest and then bring in the big bucks, which will allow us to start doing the work to get the product to market and produce jobs in manufacturing for Queensland and Australia,” he said.

“If we can get this device into people’s hands, I’m so very hopeful that an Aussie product will save lives – not just here but across the globe.”

Prof Fraser said Australia punched well above its weight in medical research but had “dropped the ball” when it came to device development.

Biomechanics engineer Dr Daniel Timms turned to the US for start-up funding for the world’s first permanent artificial heart replacement, which he created in his Brisbane home. The heart implant from BiVACOR, a company Prof Fraser helped co-found more than a decade ago, was developed in the early 2000s by Dr Timms in a desperate bid to save his father, who was suffering heart failure and has since died. After years of work in Queensland, Dr Timms found funding support for his invention in the US, who now lay some claim to the device.

This week it was revealed that, in November, doctors completed Australia’s first BiVACOR heart implant surgery on a man in his 40s at St Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney.

The patient then received a donor heart transplant in early March and is recovering well, the longest time a patient has lived between receiving an ar-

tificial heart and a donor transplant.

Prof Fraser said the BiVACOR example showed why Australia needed to better support and fund its own medical technology developments. He said there needed to be a movement to “Make Australia Make Again”.

“What we realised during Covid was that we make almost no med-tech products. As someone with five kids, I want good jobs in Queensland. I also want to see this as something that Queensland has given to the world,” he said.

“Let’s use our ability, innovative spirit and translate that world leading research into dollars and jobs.”

DMC CEO Peter O’Neill said his team were proud of the company’s Australian and Queensland heritage. He said the intention was to establish DMC’s global hub in Brisbane to continue development efforts to fully utilise the technology and its potential.

“We’ve had great support here, and now, because we’re on the international radar ... it is important to entertain that if it’s going to sustain your business,” he said.

“We’d prefer to avoid the situation, where everyone looks back in five or 10 years’ time and says, ‘why didn’t we just support that ourselves locally, because look at where they’ve got to now.’”

Mr O’Neill said the company aimed to secure US Food and Drug Administration approval first before seeking approvals from other countries, including Australia’s Therapeutic Goods Administration.



Lylah Ricks, 4, has several severe food allergies and has been saved by an EpiPen three times. Picture: Nigel Hallett

# Each bite could be fatal for Lylah

## Allergies a daily struggle

**EXCLUSIVE**  
Rachel Riley

Lylah Ricks is lucky to be alive. The almost five-year-old is allergic to eggs, peanuts and dairy and is still undergoing tests for more.

Her life has been saved three times by a painful EpiPen injection after suffering potentially deadly anaphylaxis.

Her mother Kristy Ricks remembers the first time well. The then eight-month-old was undertaking a peanut allergy trial when things took a terrifying turn as she started to swell up.

“I called the ambulance so terrified,” she said. “I should have administered the EpiPen before even calling 000.”

“When the paramedics arrived, I was taught how to do it and I was given a stern talking-to.”

“I was lucky that it wasn’t too late to help her by the time they got there. It was a pretty traumatic experience.”

Lylah has had to have an EpiPen shot two more times since then, including about 18 months ago after accidentally tipping cold coffee over herself, with the milk covering her skin, entering her mouth, ears and eyes.

“The look on her face when it happens is the most heartbreaking,” Mrs Ricks said.

“I cry pretty much every time I have to do the EpiPen.”

“Even if she knows what’s going on, it’s horrible to watch.”

Lylah’s allergy journey began when she just was four months

old and diagnosed with eczema, which gave her a higher chance of developing food allergies.

Until the age of one, Lylah couldn’t eat banana, potatoes, chicken or acidic or juicy fruits. Thankfully she outgrew those but her allergies to eggs, peanuts and dairy remain.

Lylah has to follow a strictly controlled diet. Vegetables are among her favourite foods, even for breakfast, because she knows they are safer to eat.

Even a recent lunch with friends posed risks everyone at the table had to be ready for, including who would call the ambulance and who would administer the EpiPen if something went wrong.

“We try so hard to give her a normal life, but unfortunately, it’s not normal,” Mrs Ricks said.

“She can’t just go to a shop and buy any food, or go to a restaurant and eat anything. Everything has to be planned, and it has to be checked and triple checked and mistakes sadly do happen.”

Mrs Ricks said she carried multiple EpiPens and up to 10 when the family were on holidays or further away from medical help.

She said short expiry dates and the need for them to be temperature controlled meant they spent a lot of time and money keeping multiple EpiPens on hand.

She said if a needle-free adrenaline inhaler became available, it would be life-changing.

“Anything that would be less painful and less invasive would be just the best thing for us and anyone who has an allergy,” she said.

“I think it would really change our life and I think it would also change the lives of a lot of other allergy parents and kids. It really does impact our life daily.”

## Nurse on drug charges

A veteran Queensland registered nurse has been banned from practising after she appeared in court on more than 50 charges including producing drugs, stealing, fraud and possessing opiates or other drugs of dependence.

Debbie Lee Royal, who works from Southport on the Gold Coast, was slapped with the ban by the state’s Office of the Health Ombudsman

(OHO) which announced it on their website on March 6.

It came weeks after Ms Royal had her charges mentioned in Southport Magistrates Court on February 4 and December 11.

She is facing assorted drug, stealing and fraud charges.

She is due back in court on April 1, and is not yet required to enter a plea.

She was first registered in the profession in 2008.

## Court grants actors secrecy

Adella Beaini

A federal judge has granted Blake Lively’s request to keep certain sensitive details under wraps in her legal battle with It Ends With Us director and co-star Justin Baldoni.

The actors have been locked in a contentious legal fight for months. Lively, 37, filed a lawsuit against Baldoni in December, alleging sexual harassment and claiming he

created a “hostile work environment on set.”

In response, Baldoni, 41, launched a \$US400m (\$A633m) counter-lawsuit against Lively and her husband, Ryan Reynolds, 48. With the trial set for March 29, 2026, all parties have denied the allegations.

Judge Lewis Liman approved Lively’s request to restrict certain discovery materials to “attorney eyes only.”

Since the case involves ce-

lebrities and their publicists, Lively’s lawyers warned that sharing certain information with clients could lead to leaks.

The information that only the lawyers can see includes “trade secrets,” such as business and marketing plans and ideas for upcoming creative projects. It also includes security measures, medical information and “highly personal and intimate information about third parties.”



Actor Blake Lively