Among his many positions, Professor Paul Bannon is dedicated to a life of surgery and research – taking discoveries from the laboratory bench to the patient’s bedside. Professor Bannon completed his surgical training at Royal Prince Alfred and, under the guidance of the late Professor Douglas Baird, was encouraged to take up research and has never looked back.

Professor Bannon’s interests are extensive and have the potential to result in major breakthroughs for the early detection, prevention and treatment of heart and lung disease.

The aorta is the main supplier of blood to the body. If weakened or enlarged, it can cause a rupture, or aneurysm, which is life threatening. Professor Bannon is investigating how the aorta works and whether the conditions that cause aneurysms are inherited. The aim is to predict ruptures before it is too late, and allow surgery to be performed at the best time so that it is low risk.

Professor Bannon is also overseeing exciting developments in the creation of ‘off the shelf’ blood vessels made of biocompatible materials. The materials used are compatible with the human body so that the vessel is not rejected when inserted. If successful, these devices can be used to replace damaged vessels and improve heart function with very few complications.

Together with the Bernie Banton Centre, Professor Bannon is working towards a breakthrough in the management of one of the most devastating forms of lung cancer – mesothelioma. The team has made great surgical progress to improve survival rates, but there is much more to do.

He is also working on innovative heart surgery to determine the best course of action for high risk patients and to reduce the risk of stroke during surgery.

Underpinning these areas is a dedicated research group at Royal Prince Alfred, which reviews leading evidence from around the world to get better outcomes for research and surgery.

Professor Bannon is also committed to developing young surgeons into thinkers and leading researchers.

Success in these areas may allow him to reach his ultimate goal – to be out of a job.