



# RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

Office of Medical Research, UNSW Medicine

July 2011

Never Stand Still

Medicine

## NanoMedicine Launch

ACN was officially launched by UNSW at a ceremony on July 20<sup>th</sup> in which UNSW's Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) Professor Les Field noted that "the marriage of nanotechnology and medicine offers consequences far reaching, with many of those potential consequences still unknown to most of us". Two keynote speakers spoke at the launch event, Professor Margaret Sheil, Chief Executive of the Australian Research Council and new Chief Scientist for Australia, Professor Ian Chubb AC.

Following on from the great tradition Australia has in the two diverse areas of research - science and nanotechnology, ACN joins these strengths to build research teams working to create an improved future through better drug delivery technologies, better diagnostics and better imaging agents therapies that are translated from the scientific bench to the clinic.

ACN involves researchers from the UNSW Faculties of Medicine, Science and Engineering in conjunction with The Children's Cancer Institute Australia, the Lowy Cancer Research Centre and the Centre for Advanced Macromolecular Design, to deliver therapeutic solutions to research problems in medicine.

ACN has three directors leading a team of multidisciplinary researchers that already sees 20 researchers working together. Professor Tom Davis (Engineering), Professor Maria Kavallaris (Medicine) and Professor Justin Gooding (Science) lead the team which has already established collaborations in diverse areas including the eye disease uveitis, liver fibrosis, the childhood cancer neuroblastoma and liver cancer.

ACN recently hosted an International NanoMedicine conference that attracted 200 attendees from 10 countries providing presentations on chemistry, biology, polymerisation through to translational success stories, including a presentation by former Australian of the Year, Professor Ian Frazer on the creation of the HPV vaccine against cervical cancer.

ACNs desire to continue building national and international collaborations continues in August with ACNs first visiting professor joining the team. Professor Molly Stevens of Imperial College London, a world expert whose research in biomedical materials and regenerative medicine and biomedical Material Sciences has attracted considerable attention.

For further information on the ACN visit [www.acn.unsw.edu.au](http://www.acn.unsw.edu.au).



Prof Ian Chubb AC  
Chief Scientist for Australia

## NSW Cancer Survivors Centre

The newly announced NSW Cancer Survivors Centre brings together researchers and care providers to combine their expertise, to coordinate efforts to identify and meet the needs of cancer survivors, and to increase research focused on survivorship issues – so that we can prevent, or at least better manage, complications and improve outcomes.

Both earlier detection and improved treatments mean an increasing number of people with cancer are successfully treated. It is estimated that there were more than 655,000 cancer 'survivors' or people 'living with cancer' in Australia at the end of 2004 (about one in 23 Australian adults).



Survivors experience a range of physical and psychological consequences of both the cancer diagnosis and its treatment. Although some treatment effects, such as hair loss or nausea, pass quickly after treatment ends, some develop months or even years later. These 'late effects' include serious conditions such as cancer recurrence, development of a second cancer, cardiac toxicity, diabetes and other metabolic disorders, neurotoxicity, osteoporosis, premature menopause and fertility issues.

Although a growing body of evidence indicates that early intervention for some of these issues improves both short and long term outcomes, many of these challenges are not well addressed by current cancer services.

The Centre has been established by a consortium of leading clinical research groups affiliated with the University of New South Wales. It has been established in collaboration with the Lifestyle Clinic, which offers exercise and lifestyle therapies for people with chronic disease, and in partnership with the Childhood Cancer Long-term Follow-up Clinic at the Sydney Children's Hospital, the longest running survivorship program for adult survivors of childhood cancer in Australia.

The Centre will facilitate placements for Medical and Science undergraduates, as well as opportunities for research higher degree students. Students will benefit from exposure to the range of services and research provided and/or coordinated by the Centre, broadening their expertise and understanding of the issues facing people with cancer after their treatment ends.

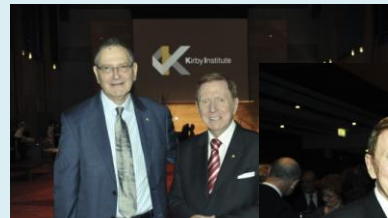
*Professor Andrew Lloyd (UNSW Director)*

*Associate Professor Richard Cohn (Paediatric Program Director)*

*Professor David Goldstein (Adult Program Director)*

## Kirby Institute

It was no coincidence that the launch earlier this year of The Kirby Institute coincided with the celebration of twenty five years of the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, established (as one of three National Centres in HIV Research) in the mid 1980s at federal government level in response to the emerging pandemic.



Professor David Cooper & Mr Michael Kirby



Mr Michael Kirby & Professor Fred Hilmer

As the original name described it, HIV was the organisation's first focus. Of course HIV remains both a clear and present danger, and a key focus of the work of the Kirby Institute. However, the focus on infectious diseases broadened after a few years to include viral hepatitis and other sexually transmitted infections. The hard-won lessons from the National Centre's strong and valuable (and ongoing) collaboration with the gay community were applied to work with injecting drug users, young people, indigenous people, highly sexually active gay men, people born outside Australia, people in the prison system, sex workers, and other groups whose circumstances put them at high risk of infection.

The Kirby Institute was named after the former Justice of the High Court of Australia, Michael Kirby, whose well-known and enduring support for health and human rights, both at home and internationally, fits perfectly with a research focus on the vulnerable communities who make up our patient and client populations, the often disadvantaged groups most likely to suffer the infectious diseases which are the focus of the Kirby Institute.

Scientia Professor David Cooper AO FAA was appointed the inaugural director of the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research in 1986 and is the director of The Kirby Institute. The Institute has eleven programs and groups ranging from clinical and laboratory work, in both HIV and viral hepatitis, to a broad public health perspective including a specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

## Advances in Public Health and Health Services Research

### 3rd Annual Research Symposium 2011

The keynote speaker this year is Dr Tom Calma, former Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner who will talk on closing the gap between the physical and mental health enjoyed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.



Dr Calma is an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and the Iwaidja tribal group whose traditional lands are south west of Darwin and on the Coburg Peninsula in the Northern Territory. He has been involved in Indigenous affairs at a local, state and national level and has worked in the public sector for over 38 years. Dr Calma has broad experience in public administration, particularly in Indigenous education programs and in developing employment and training programs for Indigenous people from both a national policy and program perspective. He has been actively involved in the formation of the Close The Gap for Indigenous Health Equality Campaign and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples. He delivered the 2009 Mabo Oration; has continued to advocate for members of the Stolen Generations; and delivered the formal response in Parliament House on their behalf to the Prime Minister's National Apology. In 2007 Dr Calma was named by Bulletin Magazine as the Most Influential Indigenous Person in Australia, in 2008 he received an award from GQ Magazine after being named GQ Magazine's 2008 Man of Inspiration for his work in Indigenous Affairs and in 2010 was named by Australia Doctor Magazine as one of the 50 most Influential people in medicine in Australia. Dr Calma will be presenting at the 3rd Annual SPHCM Research symposium held on **Friday 5th August** at the John Niland Scientia building, Kensington Campus.

If you would like to attend, please **RSVP** by the 1<sup>st</sup> August to <http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medevents.nsf/RSC>

Further information about this conference can be found at

<http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/page/showcurrentevent?OpenDocument&LinkID=8B001BA602>

## Welcome to UNSW

### Professor William Ledger

Professor William Ledger recently started as the Head and Professor of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology in the School of Women's & Children's Health, based at the Royal Hospital for Women. He is a senior fertility specialist, obstetrician and gynaecologist and was most recently the Chair and Head of the Academic Unit for Reproductive and Developmental Medicine at the University of Sheffield, UK. He was a Member of the UK Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and Chair of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Examinations and Assessment Committee.



Professor Ledger focuses on research in human reproductive biology and medicine, involving the study of fertilisation and implantation of the embryo using IVF as a model. He is interested in the molecular basis of early embryonic programming and genomic activation, failed implantation and early pregnancy problems, such as miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy, studies wider aspects of reproductive medicine, from endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome to early ovarian failure and health economic aspects of assisted reproduction. He has long been interested in methods of training and assessment in surgical specialities and is now involved in developing lifelike simulations of obstetric and gynaecological procedures for teaching purposes. He can be contacted at [w.ledger@unsw.edu.au](mailto:w.ledger@unsw.edu.au) or via 9382 6515.

## 2011 Faculty of Medicine 3 Minute Thesis Competition

The 2011 Faculty of Medicine 3 Minute Thesis Competition was held on the afternoon of Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July. The 3 Minute Thesis requires presenters to explain their research project to an intelligent lay audience in three minutes, with single PowerPoint slide. The 15 presentations were of a very high standard, and the Competition provided a fascinating overview of a range of research projects in the Faculty.

The competition was judged by:

*A/Prof Claire Vajdic, Lowy Cancer Research Centre;  
Susi Hamilton, UNSW Media and Communications Office;  
Helen Francombe, a science journalist who works for the National Prescribing Service.*

The winners are:

*Jia (Jenny) Liu, Prince of Wales Clinical School, who spoke on “Low folate, DNA and bowel cancer”;*

*Siong Meng Lim, St George Clinical School, who spoke on “Starving tumours to death: the “Biggest Loser” approach”;*

*John Ng, Prince of Wales Clinical School, who spoke on “A chemical proteomics approach for the detection and analysis of protein 3-nitrotyrosine.”*

Jenny and Siong Meng were selected by the judging panel, and John won the “People’s Choice” award, voted by the audience members. The three winners will give their presentations at the UNSW competition on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September. The winner of this final will represent UNSW in the grand final at the University of Western Australia later in September.

*A/Prof William Sewell, Director of Graduate Students*

## NHMRC Project Grants Workshop – 4 August 2011

**Date:** 4 August 2011

**Time:** 10-12

**Venue:** Old Main Building (G31) Map Reference K15

**Target Audience:** This workshop is highly relevant to biomedical and clinical researchers seeking success in this scheme including those who have traditionally sought ARC funding. The NHMRC Project Grant workshop will provide a comprehensive overview of this scheme including the application process, evaluation criteria and dealing with priority areas. It will outline how to approach the construction of a competitive application including the development of the scientific plan. Presented by Prof Andrew Lloyd, the workshop will provide tips and hints for all researchers intending to apply to the NHMRC Project Grant Scheme in the next round.

**Webpage (incl link to registration)**

<http://research.unsw.edu.au/events/nhmrc-project-grant-workshop>

**Registration only**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LNKKS6Q>

*The last workshop in the series will be:*

**8 December \*:** NHMRC Project Grants #2 : Speaker TBA - Venue : TBA

*\*Date to be confirmed. Please note these dates in your diary and check the Faculty website regularly for updates*

## Faculty Research Grants/Early Career Researcher Grants

The Faculty Research Grants Program (FRGP) and the Early Career Researcher Grants Scheme are designed to support research by Faculty members which meets the following broad objectives:

- Support to develop a competitive application to an external research funding agency;
- Support areas of research strength or emerging research strength;
- Support cross-disciplinary research.

Applications may be lodged electronically by **17 October 2011** to Wendy Wartho ([w.wartho@unsw.edu.au](mailto:w.wartho@unsw.edu.au)). Please see Guidelines and download application form from the Faculty website:

<http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/page/researchne#grants>

## Major Equipment Grants - 2011

The guidelines and application form will be placed on the Faculty website during the first week of August. Please go to <http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/page/researchne> for these items.

The closing date for applications to Wendy Wartho on [w.wartho@unsw.edu.au](mailto:w.wartho@unsw.edu.au) will be posted on the website.

## Grants Management Office Support for Researchers

**NHMRC Response to Assessors and Rejoinders** : The NHMRC Project Grants response to assessors and ARC Future Fellowships rejoinders are currently open. NHMRC Project Grants assessor reports will be released in three periods. The NHMRC have published a list of which reports will be available in each of the three periods. See the NHMRC website for details: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/projects/index.htm>

**Research Strategy Office support for preparing your Response:** A/Professor Laurent Rivory will provide support (through email) during the Response to Assessments period. Availability is limited, and you are encouraged to access support provided at the Faculty/School level where available. For those wishing to register for RSO support, please contact A/Professor Laurent Rivory (email: [l.rivory@unsw.edu.au](mailto:l.rivory@unsw.edu.au)).

**Editorial Support:** Deirdre McKay will be available throughout the period to respond to general queries. In addition Deirdre can provide editorial review of your response to assessments, once you have accessed strategic advice from the Faculty or RSO. Please advise Deirdre in advance at [deirdre.mckay@unsw.edu.au](mailto:deirdre.mckay@unsw.edu.au) if you would like to make use of this assistance, letting her know your APP #(s) and which response period your Assessments fall within.

**Grants Management Office support for checking your Response:** Grants Management Office staff can complete a compliance check on your response if provided in Word format prior to submitting your response through RGMS. Email [mygrants.gmo@unsw.edu.au](mailto:mygrants.gmo@unsw.edu.au) for assistance. Please see our [Rejoinders and Response to Assessors](#) page on the Research@UNSW Gateway for more information. All lead CIs have been sent information containing key dates, support available and strategic advice for preparing rebuttals. If you have any queries please email [mygrants.gmo@unsw.edu.au](mailto:mygrants.gmo@unsw.edu.au)

**Current Funding Opportunities:** There are a number of funding opportunities relevant to researchers in the Faculty of Medicine currently open for applications. These include the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Leukaemia Foundation, Royal Australian College of Physicians, Sleep Health Foundation, Macular Degeneration Foundation, amfAR, and the Cancer Institute of NSW. Details of these and other funding opportunities are available on the Research@UNSW Gateway via the Grants and Contracts dropdown menu: <http://research.unsw.edu.au/current-funding-opportunities>

## Awards – Professor Robyn Richmond

Professor Robyn Richmond has received a prestigious National Drug and Alcohol Award. She was inducted into the Honour Roll's Hall of Fame at the National Drug and Alcohol Awards night held on 24th June at the Four Seasons Hotel.

Professor Robyn Richmond has also been awarded the Public Health Association of NSW 2011 Award for Public Health Impact. The Public Health Impact Award 2011 recognises outstanding contributions to a public health issue by a dedicated public health professional working to improve the health of the population and reduce health inequalities. The PHIA recognises health professionals who have made a significant impact on an important public health issue in Australia, particularly in NSW; who have developed innovative solutions to problems; demonstrated a high degree of excellence; overcome substantial barriers in the design, implementation or evaluation of a program of work; communicated their efforts so others may benefit; generated public and/or professional enthusiasm and support for a public health initiative; and who have promoted the concept of public health.

Congratulations Robyn!

## Paper of the Month

Emily S. Stoddart, Sevvandi Senadheera, Iain J. A. MacDougall, Renate Griffith, Angela M. Finch, "A Novel Structural Framework for  $\alpha 1A/D$ -Adrenoceptor Selective Antagonists Identified Using Subtype Selective Pharmacophores", *PLOS ONE* 6(5): e19695.

### **Contact us:**

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