QIMR Director wins 2009 CSIRO Eureka Prize

Director of QIMR, Professor Michael Good has won a prestigious award for his research on malarial vaccines. Professor Good won the 2009 CSIRO Eureka Prize for Leadership in Science.

He received the award at a ceremony in Sydney on 9 September and is humbled by the acknowledgment of 15 years of research.

“It’s an honour,” said Professor Good, “but it’s the recognition of the work of many people. You can’t do this stuff alone.”

The malaria vaccine produced by Professor Good’s laboratory team will begin preclinical trials soon. Malaria kills millions of people in developing countries each year and Professor Good hopes that the vaccine can help prevent this.

Malaria vaccines previously used a single protein to produce an immune response against the parasites. This new vaccine uses another strategy.

“It’s a very different approach because it uses the whole organism, as opposed to a single protein,” said Professor Good.

“Our research has shown you can use a very small number of parasites to get a very strong immune response.”

Professor Good has been Director of QIMR since 2000 and in that time has led the Institute to become one of Australia’s largest and most successful medical research centres.

According to Sir Gustav Nossal, “[Michael Good’s] leadership of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research has made it a veritable powerhouse of Australian medical and health research.”

As well as his research career, Professor Good also juggles life with a large family. He and his wife Paula have eight children – Matthew, 27, Sarah, 25, Elizabeth, 23, Daniel, 21, Patrick, 19, Mary, 16, Timothy, 14, and Naomi, 12.

QIMR Director, Professor Michael Good with Professor Nick Smith from the University of Technology, Sydney at the Eureka Award ceremony.
It is hard to believe that another year is coming to an end. As I reflect on our wonderful achievements over the past 12 months, I feel tremendous pride in the hard work and dedication of all our staff.

QIMR’s research program continues to be busy. We have made some significant headway in the past year including commencing of a number of Phase I clinical trials for treatments and vaccines for cancers, serious infectious diseases and autoimmune conditions. We have identified environmental risk factors for some cancer types, and have made significant discoveries in determining the success of bone marrow transplants. Lastly, we have conducted preclinical studies showing the success of a drug that leads to healing of spinal cord damage.

Successes like these have been published in many major international journals. Nearly 50 of these were in the highest ranked scientific journals such as Nature, Nature Genetics, and New England Journal of Medicine.

Much of what we do would not be possible without the support of the community. For example, The Knights of the Round Table event has raised $85,000 so far this year. Thank you to all the Knights and in particular, Sean Ryan who is the driving force behind this event. All our donors play a part in our successes; if you are one of our valued friends, please accept my sincere thanks.

May I also take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and I look forward to another great year in 2010.

From the Director

Professor Michael Good AO

Another successful Riverside Golf Day

The picturesque Brookwater Golf Club opened its links to help raise funds for QIMR.

The stunning Brookwater Golf Course was the venue for this year’s Riverside Golf Day. Over 150 golfers escaped from Brisbane’s CBD to take advantage of the beautiful weather and raise money for our research. Thank you to Bob Rice and Robyn Bailey from Jones Lang LaSalle who are the coordinators of this brilliant event. Thanks also to all the tenants of the Riverside Centre for their wholehearted support of QIMR. Congratulations to Deloitte who once again won the prize for the most teams entered on the day.

Thanks to Rosevale Church of Christ

Rosevale Church of Christ Committee organised a trail ride to fund medical research.

Many thanks to the hard-working members of the Rosevale Church of Christ Committee (pictured above) who organise a hugely popular trail ride every year to raise funds for charity. Their efforts have resulted in over $15,000 being donated to QIMR. Organiser extraordinaire Lyndelle Christensen and her team work tirelessly to ensure the success of this unique event that attracts over 1,000 horses and motor bikes (and their riders) who converge on Rosedale every Anzac Day.
“Alzheimer’s affects so many of us,” says Dr Corinne Lendon, an Alzheimer’s researcher at QIMR. “It causes suffering for the patient and for their family and friends.”

“It also has a great impact on the economy because the cost of institutionalised care is so high. At the moment there is no cure for this disease. It causes so much suffering and ends in death.”

Cheryl Filippich, also a researcher at QIMR, has also been personally affected by Alzheimer’s: her mother and grandmother were both diagnosed with this disease. “It’s worse than death, because you see them losing all their faculties,” says Cheryl.

Recently, Dr Lendon’s laboratory, in collaboration with scientists in France, have discovered two genes that are linked to Alzheimer’s.

“We believe the genes are involved in the inflammation and immune responses that occur in the Alzheimer’s brain as well as the formation of the brain lesions,” says Dr Lendon.

The cause of Alzheimer’s disease is not known, but it is associated with an inflammatory response and a build-up of proteins in brain lesions called plaques and tangles. These lesions disrupt normal brain function by killing brain cells and interfering with the connections between brain cells.

“We with the world’s ageing population, the prevalence of dementia is projected to rapidly increase over four fold in the next 40 years. We need to prevent this disease otherwise we won’t have the resources to look after so many people who need dedicated, compassionate full-time care”, says Dr Lendon.


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**How to reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease:**

- Eat and drink antioxidants (e.g. dark chocolate and red wine)
- Monitor cholesterol levels
- Avoid smoking
- Be physically active and maintain a healthy weight
- Manage diabetes and high blood pressure
- Keep an active mind – have hobbies, do crosswords and puzzles

*Do our anti-Alzheimer’s Sudoku on page 6!*
Research Australia recognises champion Queenslander

Clive Berghofer AM will be awarded the prestigious Great Australian Philanthropy Award by Research Australia at a black tie event in Melbourne on 20 November. Mr Berghofer was recognised for his outstanding contribution to cancer research through his support of QIMR. Previous winners include Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, Lady Mary Fairfax and the Myer Family. Everyone at QIMR sends their heartiest congratulations to Clive on a well deserved award.

2009 QIMR Award winners announced

The QIMR Humanitarian Award recognises outstanding individuals who dedicate their time to support medical research. These people are often unrecognised but they exemplify the qualities of humanitarianism and inspire others to make a positive difference to the world. The 2009 winners are Michael Gambaro and Del Fitton.

Each year QIMR also recognises dedicated supporters who are invited to become QIMR Ambassadors.

Congratulations to the following people who joined the ranks of our most dedicated supporters: Bob Rice, Robyn Bailey, Joy Fear, Norma Schwarz, Ailsa Zinns and Don Johnsson.

Mamma Mia! It’s the Fitton Insurance Charity Race Day!

From Pierce Brosnan look-alikes to fabulous fashionistas, people came from all over to attend the Fitton Insurance Charity Race Day at the Toowoomba Turf Club.

This year’s Mamma Mia themed event had a twist – it was held for the first time at night! Another first was the vibrant colours and the thunder of the magnificent thoroughbreds as they raced past the marquee on the new cushion track. Thanks to Fitton Insurance Brokers and all the wonderful sponsors.
QIMR scientists have found that many small alterations in genetic sequence contribute to the risk of schizophrenia.

Although each variation contributes only a very small portion of risk, the overall cumulative effect explains at least a third of the risk of inheriting the disease.

By studying nearly 7,000 individuals, Drs Naomi Wray and Stuart Macgregor and Professor Peter Visscher found the genetic variations that are associated with schizophrenia.

“We also found that the schizophrenia-related variations are common in people with bipolar disorder but not in people with non-psychiatric diseases,” said Dr Wray.

This study gives strong evidence in support of theories about the underlying causes of schizophrenia. Firstly, that schizophrenia is caused by the combined effect of many small genetic variations and secondly, that schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are related disorders within a spectrum of psychiatric illnesses.

Schizophrenia is a common and often devastating brain disorder characterised by persistent delusions and hallucinations. It affects about one in every 100 people throughout the world and usually strikes in late adolescence or early adulthood.

Despite the availability of treatments, the illness is usually chronic, and response to treatments is often not sufficient to eliminate symptoms entirely, leading to prolonged disability and personal suffering.
The Knights of the Round Table event began in 2006 with a group of passionate fundraisers who made Brisbane corporate history when they raised enough money to give 34 late stage cancer patients the chance to be part of a clinical trial of a groundbreaking cancer therapy.

This year’s event has been another great success. Each Knight hosted a fundraising lunch to support QIMR, enabling glioblastoma patients to take part in clinical trials. Glioblastoma is a deadly form of brain tumour that affects over 1,500 Australians each year.

Fellow Knight Sean Ryan, General Manager of Nova 106.9 has given wonderful support to QIMR. “Together we can give back some hope to the many courageous Queenslanders who are battling brain cancer. This is what being involved in Knights is all about.”

This year, over $85,000 has been raised through the Knights lunches. We would like to thank the Hon. Santo Santoro, John Gambaro (Gambaro Restaurant), David McAdam (Thiess), and Christine and Werner Raspotnik (Spaceframe Pty Ltd) for hosting a lunch. We wish the rest of our Knights the best of luck with their upcoming lunches.

Melanoma Information Night at QIMR
Wednesday 18 November 6:00 – 7:30pm
RSVP by Friday 13 November
To book, please call 1800 993 000.

Sudoku
How to play: Place numbers in the blank squares so that there is one of each number (1-9) in each small box, and across each horizontal and vertical line.

4 9 6 1 2
5 1 9
6 5 1 9
7 2 6 8 3
1 3 2
2
5 8 7
8 9 3 1
9 6

This year’s QIMR Ekka stall was a huge success. Below are some comments we received from parents visiting the stall.

“Thank you for inspiring our daughter - she now just loves mixing colours and seeing how things work!”

“It’s wonderful to see science accessible to such young children.”

“My son had a great time. Thank you and your work mates for making the time to open my son’s eyes to science.”
New Chair for QIMR Council

Professor Emeritus John Hay AC has been appointed by the Queensland Government to chair the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Council.

“We are delighted with the recent appointment of Professor Hay,” said the acting Chair Mr Christopher Coyne. “Professor Hay is one of Queensland’s greatest ambassadors for education and medical research and QIMR will benefit greatly from his guidance.”

“On behalf of the QIMR Council I would like to welcome Professor Hay. I look forward to working with him to achieve our mission of better health through medical research.”

Professor Hay will take the place of Sir Bruce Watson AC who chaired the QIMR Council from September 1998 and held that position until his retirement, due to ill health, on 17 October 2008.

“Sir Bruce’s passing on 1 November 2008 was a tremendous loss to QIMR. He was a great man who contributed much to the Institute and will be greatly missed,” said Mr Coyne.

Professor Hay was Vice Chancellor of The University of Queensland from 1996-2007. In that time he led the development of many major new research institutes including the Institute for Molecular Bioscience and the Queensland Brain Institute. He was also instrumental in securing funding for the Translational Research Institute to be built at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. He has led both Deakin University and the University of Queensland to be named Australian universities of the year by the Good Universities Guide.

According to Professor Michael Good, “This appointment comes at an exciting time in QIMR’s history as we move into a period of accelerated growth.”

“I would like to join with Chris Coyne in welcoming Professor Hay to QIMR.”

Did you know...
that you can view LifeLab online?

www.qimr.edu.au/LifeLab

All British Day
Medical research and classic cars: A winning combination

For the past six years motoring enthusiasts have supported QIMR by attending the RACQ Batteries All British Day. Sunday 20 September marked 30 years for this annual event which featured hundreds of British-made cars on display, ranging from the luxurious Rolls Royce to the fashionable Mini. All proceeds went to QIMR and RACQ CareFlight. The event was organised by the All British Classic Car Club.

Pink and White Tea

On Wednesday 2 September, the Wavell Heights Slimmers Club held their second annual Pink and White Morning Tea in support of QIMR’s breast cancer research. More than 30 ladies attended the themed morning tea which included plenty of pink and white goodies and an address by QIMR Community Relations Officer, Jeremy Gill. Thank you to Wavell Heights Slimmers who raised $500 for QIMR.
Donate today

☐ Yes, I will help the scientists at Queensland Institute of Medical Research with their world class research

☐ Mr  ☐ Mrs  ☐ Miss  ☐ Ms  ☐ Other ..................

Name ........................................................................................................................................

Address ....................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

Postcode ..................................................................................................................................

Phone number .........................................................................................................................

Email ........................................................................................................................................

Donation Amount:

☐ $10  ☐ $20  ☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ Other $ ..................................................................................

☐ I have enclosed a cheque payable to QIMR

or

☐ Please charge  ☐ Visa  ☐ Mastercard  ☐ AMEX

CARD NUMBER ......................................................................................................................

CARD HOLDER’S NAME ........................................................................................................

EXPIRY DATE  CARD HOLDER’S SIGNATURE ..............................................................................

☐ I would like to donate regularly

Please deduct a monthly donation of $ ...................... from my credit card until I advise otherwise.

Signature ..................................................................................................................................

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please ensure that you have also filled in your contact details above.

☐ I am considering providing for QIMR in my will – please send me information.

☐ I have already made provision for QIMR in my will.

☐ I would like to take a free tour of QIMR.

  The next tour is on 24 November. For bookings, please call 1800 993 000.

Please post this form to:

Queensland Institute of Medical Research
Reply Paid 70885
ROYAL BRISBANE HOSPITAL QLD 4029
No stamp required.

THANK YOU.
YOUR GENEROSITY IS APPRECIATED.

Order your Christmas cards today and support us!

Charity Greeting Cards have a beautiful and wide range of Christmas cards, with 40c from each card sold donated directly back to QIMR. You will also have the chance to win a fantastic Christmas hamper – three orders per week will win!

To receive a 5% discount, order online today at www.christmascards4charity.com.au/qimr

Not sure what to give family or friends this year?

You can also support QIMR by purchasing a delicious range of 2009 Christmas hampers. Each one is filled with a gourmet selection of Christmas treats. Order online today at www.charityhampers.com.au/qimr

Lions’ Christmas cakes on sale at QIMR.

The Lions Club is supplying fruit cakes for sale, with the proceeds donated to QIMR. Prices are $10 for 1kg cake and $13 for 1.5kg.

To order, call Margie O’Hara on (07) 3362 0285