Dr Tim Hurst from QIMR’s Mosquito Control Laboratory is a man on a mozzie mission.

Along with the Brisbane City Council and Queensland Health, Dr Hurst is evaluating whether changes in water storage behaviour has increased the risk of certain species of mosquito moving into Brisbane.

“Long term drought conditions have changed the way Queenslanders collect and store water. We want to know how these changes will impact on mosquito populations,” said Dr Hurst.

“The mosquitoes that transmit dengue (Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus) are currently confined to north Queensland and the Torres Strait, but under the right conditions, there is potential for them to make themselves at home here in the south-east,” explained Dr Hurst.

“If these mosquitoes move to Brisbane, the dengue outbreaks that occurred in the south-east throughout the early 1900s could occur once again.”

“The best way to avoid mosquitoes is to wear long clothing and avoid the outdoors at around dusk and dawn.”

continued on next page
From the Director

I feel very honoured to be appointed the seventh Director of QIMR.

Leaving my homeland of Ireland was difficult, but when I arrived in Queensland in early January, I was full of excitement for this new chapter in my career.

Within days of my arrival I experienced Brisbane at its very worst and, I have to say, also at its very best.

I was shocked at the magnitude of the flood disaster that engulfed this beautiful city. But, amidst the tragedy, there were amazing stories of hope and goodwill. The path to recovery has obviously been made easier by the tremendous community spirit that was forged in what was described as Queensland’s darkest hours.

I extend my sincere condolences to all those who tragically lost loved ones. I would also like to express my admiration for all those who stepped forward and volunteered in the cleanup. These people showed me the true character of Queenslanders – one of extraordinary compassion and generosity.

Many members of the QIMR community were affected by this disaster – some of our staff, our supporters and our corporate sponsors. Our thoughts continue to be with them as they recover and rebuild.

The year ahead is full of challenges and opportunities. I am looking forward to guiding QIMR through this period of unprecedented growth. The opening of our new building early next year will see our research capacity almost double and with this comes great responsibility. I know that the readers of this newsletter have a keen interest in the Institute, so I have provided some details on my vision for QIMR on page 8.

I hope to meet many of our supporters during the year and personally thank them for the contribution they make to the advancement of medical research through their donations to QIMR.

I look forward to your continued support even in these difficult times.

Professor Frank Gannon
Director - QIMR

Some mosquitoes lay their eggs in water that collects in common backyard containers such as plant pots, bird baths, striking pots or discarded items around your garden.

A recent survey conducted by QIMR and the Brisbane City Council in the suburbs of Chelmer, Banyo and Wakerley revealed that 50% of Brisbane households had one or more rainwater tanks and that up to a third of households were collecting rainwater in buckets and drums.

With this potential threat in mind, the original survey has now been expanded to include every suburb in Brisbane and up to 10,000 houses will be surveyed over the next two years.

QIMR’s Information Technology team are working with the Mosquito Control Laboratory, Queensland Health and local government to develop an internet-based system to help record, analyse and report this data in a simple and efficient manner using portable data entry devices.

“It started as an online tool that local governments could use to identify abnormal increases in Ross River and Barmah Forest virus activity, allowing public health officials to issue area-specific warnings. We now plan on adding our mosquito survey data to this system, which will provide state health and local government with a new tool for identifying high risk areas for disease outbreaks,” said Dr Hurst.

For more information on QIMR’s infectious diseases research visit www.qimr.edu.au

Did you know...

Only the female mosquito feeds on blood

There are over 300 mosquito species in Australia!

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Daily sunscreen use can prevent melanoma

For the first time, QIMR researchers have shown that daily sunscreen use can prevent melanoma in adults.

We have always been told to apply sunscreen to prevent skin cancer but until now the effectiveness of sunscreen’s protection against melanoma, the most deadly type of skin cancer, has been highly controversial.

“This is the first time that a trial has been conducted that can evaluate if using sunscreen prevents melanoma,” explained QIMR’s Deputy Director and Head of the Cancer and Population Studies Laboratory Professor Adèle Green (pictured). “It has long been known to be protective against other types of skin tumours.”

The study found that applying sunscreen every day halved your risk of melanoma, compared to applying it only in certain situations.

Over 1,000 residents from Nambour, Queensland participated in the trial which ran from 1992 to 1996. Half the participants were randomly allocated to apply sunscreen daily and the other half continued to apply sunscreen as they would normally.

Fifteen years later, the group who had applied daily sunscreen had half the number of melanomas than those who chose when they applied sunscreen.

“Even though people know the dangers of sun exposure thanks to regular sun awareness campaigns many people still do not use sunscreen regularly,” said Professor Green.
QIMR at the forefront of Indigenous research

Dr Suzanne Moore from QIMR’s Cancer and Population Studies Group and her colleagues have completed the first study to research Indigenous cancer rates across all of Queensland.

“Our results showed that while Indigenous people were 21% less likely to be diagnosed with cancer than the total Queensland population, they were 36% more likely to die from this disease.”

Using data from the Queensland Cancer Registry, the researchers determined the number of cancer cases and number of cancer deaths from 1997-2006 in the Indigenous Queensland population and compared this to overall figures.

These findings were discussed at a national round table in Brisbane to ramp up the fight against cancer among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

RESEARCHER PROFILE: Dr Patricia Valery

Dr Patricia Valery found Indigenous health research through a maze of possible careers.

She began working as a paediatrician in Brazil before moving to Australia in 1992.

“The thing about working with children is that you can see straight away that they are sick. Their faces don’t lie. They become sick very quickly, but they can recover just as quickly.”

Her interest in medicine led her to a Masters in Public Health and then a PhD in bone cancers in children.

“There is so much illness in Indigenous communities that is preventable. I know we can make a difference. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is wide, but it is achievable. If we can make a small change, the gains in the health of the communities can be huge.”

“I started in Indigenous health with a project on asthma (pictured). That was the largest asthma study on Indigenous children to date. With the help of the Torres Strait community we included over 1,500 children in the study.

“Indigenous health is not always easy. It takes a lot of extra work to ensure that the research is relevant to Indigenous people...”

Now I’m working towards improving health services to Indigenous communities; particularly finding out the needs of Indigenous Australians before, during and after cancer treatment. We are also talking to Indigenous cancer sufferers to find out more about how cancer has affected them and what would improve their quality of life.”

“Indigenous health is not always easy. It takes a lot of extra work to ensure that the research is relevant to Indigenous people, but I find it very rewarding.”

Dr Valery was recently awarded an Achievement Award for Career Development from the National Health and Medical Research Council, one of only seven across the country each year.

She was also involved in achieving a grant worth $500,000 over four years from the Australian Research Council to fund her research into cancers and infectious diseases.
Queensland researchers need you!

QIMR is embarking on the largest skin cancer study ever conducted in Australia and researchers are looking for volunteers to take part.

“Queenslanders have the highest rates of melanoma and skin cancer in the world. So it is important that we find out more about how and why skin cancers develop,” said Professor David Whiteman from QIMR’s Cancer Control Laboratory.

“To do this, we need help from more than 200,000 men and women across Queensland.”

“The QSkin study will examine long-term information about a range of factors that may prove to influence skin cancer risk. Through this knowledge, we hope to gain a better understanding of skin cancer development.”

With the information gathered from QSkin, researchers will develop a tool that doctors and patients can use to predict a person’s future risk of developing melanoma and other skin cancers.

“This tool will have important implications for the prevention of these cancers. For example, doctors may be able to identify people at high risk of developing skin cancer who can be offered regular skin checks.”

“Similar tools have been developed for heart diseases and related conditions and have proven to be highly effective in helping doctors and patients to manage the risks of disease.”

QSkin researchers are asking for Queenslanders aged between 40 and 69 years to take the QSkin survey. If you are interested, please visit www.qskin.qimr.edu.au or telephone 1800 222 600.
The Chief Executive of Rio Tinto Energy, Mr Doug Ritchie, announced recently that they will join forces with QIMR in a three year partnership to support QIMR’s signature fundraising event. The inaugural Rio Tinto Ride to Conquer Cancer benefiting the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR) is a unique two day, 200 kilometre bike ride that will be held in Australia for the first time this year. The event aims to raise significant money and awareness for cancer research and will unite people of all ages, shapes and sizes in one tremendous show of force. The event will take place on 20-21 August 2011, with participants departing Brisbane, and cycling through Queensland’s scenic countryside and spending the night at a festive campsite.

“We are delighted to welcome Rio Tinto as the major sponsor for our signature fundraising event,” said QIMR’s Director Professor Frank Gannon. “It is the largest corporate sponsorship for QIMR and it is great to see two Australian icons united by a common goal of combating cancer.”

“With cancer affecting one in two Australians, half of QIMR’s researchers are working to understand the environmental and genetic causes of this terrible disease that affects so many families. Our ultimate aim is to save lives through the development of new treatments and better detection methods.”

We would like to sincerely thank the team at Rio Tinto for their wholehearted support and their commitment to the advancement of cancer research.

Rio Tinto has been a long time supporter of QIMR’s through our Spotlight on Science program. This annual program is part of our commitment to inspiring young people to consider a career in science. The program brings Indigenous students from regional and remote areas of Queensland to Brisbane for a week of science activities.
Why I am riding in the Rio Tinto Ride to Conquer Cancer

My motivation is simple.
Cancer is common and becoming more common. Cancer is bad. Not just bad, but kick-in-the-guts, life-robbing bad.

My Dad died from cancer when he was way too young. He was my age when diagnosed, and the cancer killed him just three years later. Cancer is beatable. We just need to find how, and research is the only way. That is why I am riding.

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

Think of it as a history-making opportunity for you to do something big about cancer, something epic. Like cycling for two days throughout the picturesque countryside of Queensland on 20-21 August 2011.

Sure, it sounds like a lot... and it’s meant to be. The conquest of cancer is a monumental task and won’t be easy. But make no mistake, this event isn’t just for athletes or cycling enthusiasts. The Rio Tinto Ride to Conquer Cancer® is for anyone who wants to challenge themselves for a great cause. Even people who haven’t ridden since they were twelve.

All you need is motivation, a bike, and a helmet. The rest is history. Be part of it.

To be part of this great event call 1300 11 RIDE (7433) or visit www.conquercancer.org.au

Not able to ride? Why not sponsor one of QIMR’s cyclists?

- Go to www.conquercancer.org.au
- Click on the “Donate” link in the left hand menu
- Choose the “Search for a team” option
- Type in ‘QIMR’
- Donate any amount to a member on either of QIMR’s cyclist teams
Introducing our new Director
Professor Frank Gannon

I come to Brisbane from a career in Ireland, England, the United States, France and Germany. Having moved around I have seen many different research communities, Institutes and medical systems. Over time I have become convinced that research is crucial to solving problems that people and society face. The first step is excellent frontier research, but this research should have an impact on the community that supported it with funds. We should be performing “research with consequences”.

Before coming to QIMR, I was well aware of this great institute. Its standing worldwide is based on the unique combination of strengths. There are many research institutes and universities that have excellent research activities. There are many hospitals where the clinicians extend their care of patients into research in a laboratory context. For many years there were few institutes that combined the two. QIMR was a very early trailblazer in meshing the two worlds and having strong connections between the “bench and the bedside”. Translational research is the new term for this and before it became a world-wide goal, QIMR was actively practising this approach. The term reflects the need to translate or make available in a different context, research that is performed in a laboratory working on a relevant topic. It requires an alliance between the clinicians and scientists and indeed a mixture of the roles of clinicians such that they are also scientific researchers.

QIMR was established to have an impact on public health. It has been fulfilling this duty for decades and the benefit of the work that has been performed here is felt on a daily basis throughout Queensland and the world.

Coming to this well established translational research centre, I look forward to even more significant consequences from the great research that is and will be performed here. The astute use of the scientific disciplines to address the real problems that are presented by society has been the basis of QIMR’s success to date. My goal is to ensure that this continues, becomes more relevant, more pertinent, and more effective at all levels such that the researchers and society will both feel the satisfaction of excellent work performed with the highest possible challenging goals in mind... and the benefits flowing from the laboratories to the community.
2010 QIMR Ambassadors

The QIMR ambassador awards were created to recognise outstanding individuals who are committed to the advancement of medical research and who have been supporters of QIMR for many years. These people are unsung heroes who demonstrate tremendous community spirit and who also inspire others to make a positive difference to the world.

Professor John Hay, Chairman of the QIMR Council presented the 2010 ambassador awards to the following people:

**Mark Newman**

Mark is the Manager of the Aspley Leagues Club. For the last seven years, Mark has supported QIMR by regularly providing a venue and substantial prizes for the Happy Face Cent Auctions organised by Sunny Drescher. His wholehearted support of Sunny and his generous assistance with the cent auctions have been an integral part of their success.

**Denise Schellbach**

Denise has been supporting QIMR for approximately 15 years and has been dedicated to promoting the Institute to other organisations. Denise is a committee member of the Lord Mayor’s Community Trust, Rotary Club of Brisbane Planetarium, St John’s Cathedral and St Joseph’s College. Every morning Denise volunteers on Eddie’s Van and cooks breakfast for Brisbane’s homeless. After losing her beloved son Peter in 1998 when he was 20 years old, Denise became more involved in raising funds for medical research. Denise recently retired after a long career as a court reporter and also a successful business woman having run a boarding house at Spring Hill for 30 years.

**Lorraine Duckwitz**

Lorraine is a community fundraiser and a great friend of QIMR. She combines her wonderful talents and love of the community to produce her famous craft stalls and cent auctions. Keep a look out for Lorraine at northside shopping centres where she sells her beautiful craft items to raise funds for QIMR and the Asthma Foundation – charities that are close to her heart. She has raised almost $15,000 for QIMR and has raised many thousands more through her involvement with the Grand Court of Queensland – Order of the Amaranth.

**Carol Ramsay**

Carol has been a proud Suncorp employee for over 24 years. The fact that Suncorp has supported QIMR over the past 10 years, makes her doubly proud. Carol has been volunteering at QIMR for over five years and is always willing to help out with whatever needs doing. She enjoys supporting the scientists whom she says “are friendly and passionate people and a pleasure to work alongside”. The reason she chose QIMR above all others is because of QIMR’s world-class research in skin cancer. She believes that without this research we would not have the cures or preventative measures that we now have, and we can all do our bit to support this research.
Fundraising events at QIMR

Happy Face Cent Auctions

Happy Face Cent Auction organiser and fundraising legend, Mrs Sunny Drescher is on a mission to raise even more funds for QIMR this year. In just over six years, the Happy Face Cent Auctions have raised almost $80,000 for QIMR thanks to the hard work of Sunny and her wonderful committee.

If you would like a great night out and the chance to win some fabulous prizes, please join us at a Happy Face Cent Auction. Entry is only $2. The dates for this year are: 30 April, 28 May, 30 July, 27 August and 26 November. The auctions commence at 6 pm at the Aspley Leagues Club.

The Happy Face Cent Auctions are held in honour of Janette, a close relative of Sunny’s who sadly passed away from cancer. When her friends and family visited her in hospital she inspired them by insisting that she only wanted to see “happy faces”.

On behalf of QIMR, we thank Sunny Drescher, her volunteers, the prize donors and Mark Newman from the Aspley Leagues Club for their dedicated support. We wish Sunny all the best for another successful year ahead.

SQUIDS musical

SQUIDS is a roving theatrical group who proudly support QIMR. Based in the northern suburbs of Brisbane, SQUIDS has united professional and non-professional actors, singers and musicians to provide great entertainment to audiences across South East Queensland. In 2010, they completed numerous performances of the well known production, The Mikado (pictured below).

On the 27 and 28 May this year, SQUIDS will present its new musical, The King and I. This musical will be held at the Redcliffe Cultural Centre with proceeds again going to support medical research at QIMR.

To purchase tickets, contact organiser, Deanne on 0411 682 577.

Cindy Field Memorial Art Exhibition

Thank you Phoebe Dupont (pictured above) who works tirelessly every year to host the very popular Cindy Field Memorial Art Exhibition on Russell Island. This event is in memory of Phoebe’s daughter who lost her life to Glioblastoma, one of the most deadly forms of brain cancer. This, together with many other cancers are being studied by scientists at QIMR in an effort to find better diagnoses, improved treatments and ultimately cures.
Step for Strep

The Ryan Saunders Foundation was established in memory of a beautiful little boy who tragically passed away in September 2007 due to toxic shock syndrome caused by an invasive strep A infection.

The Foundation, which was established by Ryan’s loving family and friends, has a number of objectives including promoting awareness and assisting in funding research into streptococcal research and vaccine trials through QIMR, and to proactively prevent the streptococcal infection, illnesses and conditions by creating community awareness of it.

The Foundation has provided funding to QIMR to purchase a much needed piece of equipment.

Moran Cup Charity Golf Day

Scott Moran and his two friends Ian and Alistair worked tirelessly last year to organise the second annual Moran Cup charity golf day.

Held in memory of Scott’s father Dave Moran who sadly passed away from pancreatic cancer in 2009, the Moran Cup exceeded the organisers’ expectations and raised $7,000. Over 100 players attended the golf day held at the Colonial Golf Club, Robina.

Approximately half of QIMR’s research is devoted to cancer, including pancreatic cancer which tragically kills 2,000 Australians every year.

The time and hard work contributed by Scott Moran and his family and friends in organising the golf days is greatly appreciated by QIMR. It provides the funds our scientists need for their ongoing research and gives hope to the many people who are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

It takes good friends to keep our research growing

Sherrin Group
Riverfire donation

We would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the Sherrin Group who have once again raised significant funds for QIMR through their Riverfire Charity Gala Dinner.

They quietly go about organising this wonderful event and don’t look for recognition. However, their hard work and dedicated efforts do not go unnoticed by everyone at QIMR. Events like the Sherrin Group Riverfire Charity Gala Dinner are the lifeblood of many research projects at QIMR and help us to be at the forefront of more medical discoveries.

The Sherrin Group (incorporating Sherrin rentals and Sherrin equipment) are a national provider of travel towers and access equipment. They are very committed to giving back to their communities.

If you would like to host your own fundraising event or perhaps you already host a fundraiser and would like to support QIMR, please email us at supportus@qimr.edu.au or phone our toll free number 1800 993 000. Our team is happy to assist.

Jamie Saunders (Ryan’s sister) and Elmo help promote awareness at the Step for Strep day held at St Patrick’s Primary School in Emerald.
Peggy Stephen’s family very kindly requested that donations be made to medical research in lieu of flowers at her funeral service. They chose this as a practical way to honour her memory and also to give hope to the many others who face the same disease that she battled with such courage.

An overwhelming $33,760 in donations was received and will be used to purchase a crucial piece of equipment for the Bone Marrow Transplantation Laboratory at QIMR. This equipment – a new flow cytometer – will allow the researchers to better characterise the cell populations that lead to leukaemia rejection after transplantation. A plaque will be engraved with a dedication to Peggy and placed on the equipment.

Professor Geoff Hill, Head of the Bone Marrow Transplantation Laboratory at QIMR was also Peggy’s physician for ten years. Professor Hill said that it was an honour to look after Peggy, who touched everyone with her strength and kindness.

Peggy was also a great inspiration to his research team and they will continue to work hard to advance this research in her honour.

Professor Geoff Hill heads the team of researchers working in the Bone Marrow Transplantation Laboratory at QIMR. Their research projects include:

- Studying complications to bone marrow transplantation such as graft-versus-host disease.
- Researching the development of white blood cells to understand how they become malignant.
- Establishing a national reference centre for cellular therapy with the ultimate aim of reducing fatalities and side effects associated with stem cell transplants for leukaemia sufferers.

Would you like further information?

- I am considering providing for QIMR in my Will – please send me information.
- I would like to take a free tour of QIMR.

Please post this form (no stamp required) to:
Queensland Institute of Medical Research
Reply Paid 70885
ROYAL BRISBANE HOSPITAL QLD 4029

A receipt will be sent to you shortly.

Thank you. Your generosity is appreciated.