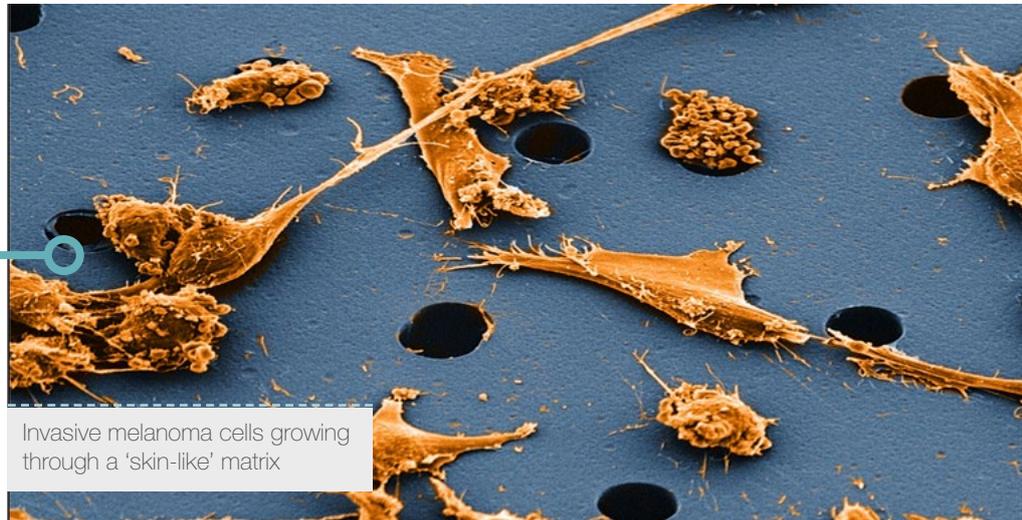


## Melanoma progression measured by a blood test



Invasive melanoma cells growing through a 'skin-like' matrix

People diagnosed with melanoma may soon have a better understanding of whether or not their tumour could spread or reoccur, thanks to QIMR Berghofer scientist, Mitchell Stark.

Mitchell has found new markers for melanoma which may allow the disease to be accurately monitored by a routine blood test.

The new biomarkers could be ideally suited for monitoring tumour progression in patients diagnosed with early metastatic disease, which is the spread of a cancer or disease from one organ or part to another not directly connected.

'This panel of markers could be useful in tracking melanoma progression or recurrence in patients being monitored by their treating clinician,' Mr Stark said.

'They are highly sensitive and specific, and are significantly better than markers currently being used.'

Mr Stark said better monitoring may improve a patient's chance of survival by detecting melanoma progression before the spread of the disease is evident and allow treatment to start sooner.

'Survival rates for patients with metastatic melanoma differ greatly

depending on the extent of spread,' he said.

'Patients with stage III melanoma, with spread confined to regional lymph nodes, have a five-year survival rate of about 50%, compared to less than 15% if metastases are wide spread.'

The blood test would look for elevated levels of the markers, tiny molecules which regulate the amount of protein a gene can produce.

The study compared samples from 255 melanoma patients from the Melanoma Institute of Australia and Germany's University of Tubingen to 102 participants with no evidence of melanoma at time of collection.

'In specimens from stage IV patients, the new biomarkers confirmed tumour progression in 100% of cases,' Mr Stark said.

Mr Stark is now validating the research in an independent group of melanoma patients. ■

## Upcoming events



### FREE PUBLIC FORUM

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Tuesday 7 July 2015 | 10 am

### RIO TINTO RIDE TO CONQUER CANCER

15-16 August 2015

### FREE PUBLIC FORUM

Looking to nature for answers  
Tuesday 15 Sept 2015 | 4 pm

### WEEKEND TO END WOMEN'S CANCERS

24-25 October 2015

### QIMR BERGHOFER GALA DINNER

Saturday 31 October 2015

For more information  
phone 1800 993 000.

# It's time we understood dementia



At QIMR Berghofer, we have been moved by the many stories that have been shared with us by families who have been touched by dementia and Alzheimer's disease, following the launch of our tax appeal. We wanted to take this opportunity to not only thank you for helping us raise funds for our research into dementia, but for sharing these stories with us. You're the reason we do what we do. Our researcher, Dr Christine Guo (pictured above) would like to especially thank you. It's stories like these that keep our dedicated scientists motivated and working to better understand this unforgiving disease.



We would also like to say thank you to long-time QIMR Berghofer supporter Ms Robyn Holdway (seated above) for allowing us to feature her very personal story. Robyn's mother, Phyllis, passed away from Alzheimer's disease in 2011. Today, Robyn is passionate about creating communities which better support people either suffering with the disease, or caring for a family member with it.

Although the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's disease is increasing age, and the majority of people with it are 65 and older, it is not just a disease of old age. Up to five percent of people with the disease have early-onset Alzheimer's (also known as younger-onset), which often appears when someone is in their 40s or 50s. Contrary to popular belief, Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of ageing. ■



## Better start for premature babies

Premature babies could have a better shot at a healthy life thanks to QIMR Berghofer's Michael Breakspear.

Scientists combined physics with physiology to analyse the brainwaves of pre-term babies just hours after they were born in order to anticipate mental development problems as far as two years away.

Professor Michael Breakspear (pictured) says infants born very early have a high likelihood of developing

mental disability or have a reduced capacity for learning physical skills.

'We wanted to develop a tool to predict problems for these tiny babies sooner, because early intervention is their best chance at a full life,' Professor Breakspear said.

'This research could provide crucial guidance for frontline workers in neonatal intensive care units who have to decide treatment options immediately after birth.' ■



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# Your monthly gift, our next research breakthrough

A message from Professor Frank Gannon, Director and CEO – QIMR Berghofer



Our special 70th anniversary edition of *LifeLab* is coming soon and we'd like to include you as an integral part of our history. We'd love to receive photos or hear any anecdotes, comments or personal stories about why you support QIMR Berghofer, or how you've been involved with the Institute in the past. Call Felicity on (07) 3845 3969, email [felicity.ivers@qimrberghofer.edu.au](mailto:felicity.ivers@qimrberghofer.edu.au) or send us a note in the post. Make sure you contact us by 30 September to be included!



Over the past 70 years QIMR Berghofer has produced some extraordinary medical research discoveries.

We have uncovered the link between Epstein Barr virus and numerous cancers; discovered the Ross River virus and the causative agent for Q Fever; proved that sunscreen reduces melanoma risk, and established human trials to accelerate the discovery of drugs to combat malaria.

Now we are on the cutting edge of immunotherapy, mental health including dementia to depression and vaccine trials, and much of our research is moving to clinical trials (e.g. multiple sclerosis, leukaemia, brain cancer and head and neck cancers).

However, our work requires immense commitment, time and, most importantly, resources, including ongoing funding. This is why giving regularly is so important to us. Your monthly gifts mean we can strategically plan ahead and push our research to new heights by taking calculated risks. Please tick the regular giving option on the enclosed donation form. Together we can invest in the future of medical research for the benefit of our community and the health of the world's population. ■

## QIMR Berghofer star supporter, Mrs Joan Addison



more, but at this time in my life, I can only do so much'. She adds, 'I know exactly when my regular donation is debited from my bank account and I receive a receipt at the end of each financial year.'

It's with great joy we introduce one of our longest serving regular giving donors. Mrs Addison has been supporting QIMR Berghofer for 25 consecutive years, beginning in 1991. Joan's interest in our work was prompted by the passing of her late husband Ken in 1991 from cancer and multiple sclerosis.

Like many of our loyal donors, Joan's support extends to other charities. As Joan explains, giving every three months means she can easily track and manage her donations. 'I would love to do

Joan has been a Redcliffe Peninsula resident since 1993 and welcomes her children, Deb and Gary for regular visits from Katherine in the Northern Territory and Melbourne, respectively. She also knits mittens and socks for the small and big children receiving paediatric services at the newly opened Lady Cilento Children's Hospital at South Brisbane. In the donor support team we are constantly amazed and overwhelmed by the support of our loyal donors. Thank you all for your support, we truly appreciate it. ■

## MBT - Malaria breath test

Joint research between QIMR Berghofer, CSIRO and the Australian National University has made a significant discovery that could lead to a simple breath test for diagnosing malaria.

Scientists found distinctive chemicals present in the breath samples well before malaria parasites could be spotted in the subjects' blood. The research could lead to a simple breath test being developed that could save lives and make diagnosing malaria less invasive and quicker. ■

# Supporters' corner

Celebrating the extraordinary efforts of some of our most dedicated community fundraisers



## The Brothers Reid

Dylan and Lawson Reid are brothers on a mission. Embarking on a three-year motorbike ride around the world raising awareness and vital funding for our research into depression. The brothers are riding in memory of their sister Heidi and aim to raise \$200 000 for an innovative early diagnostic tool.

Follow Lawson and Dylan's journey at [www.brothersreid.com](http://www.brothersreid.com)

*Pictured above: Lawson and Dylan Reid meet the local authorities in Indonesia.*



## Val Ireland

Award winning patchwork and quilter Val Ireland has left a lasting legacy in more ways than one— donating her beautiful handmade quilts to charitable organisations close to her heart. We were very grateful to receive two of these stunning quilts and will be auctioning them to raise funds for research. Val sadly passed away in 2013. Thank you to Val's family and friends for making sure the quilts were safely received.



## The Thompson Family and the Townsville Community

Bob Thompson, wife Deborah, son Damien and the Townsville community raised an impressive \$50 000 at a vintage high tea in March. The funds raised will support Professor Geoff Hill's graft-versus-host disease research. Damien is currently being treated for the disease.

*Pictured above: Damien and Bob Thompson welcome Professor Geoff Hill to the high tea event in Townsville.*



## Jan Brown and Buck Off Melanoma

Jan Brown and her army of supporters have raised an amazing \$20 000 for our research into personalised cancer vaccines. Under the heading of 'Buck Off Melanoma', Jan and friends have organised rodeos, sold merchandise and held a March for Melanoma walk in March, attracting an impressive 300 participants.



## Share your celebration with us!

Whether it's Christmas, your birthday, wedding, anniversary or any other special occasion, celebrate it by encouraging friends or family to give to a cause that you're passionate about.

1. Order your personalised celebration envelopes call us on 1800 993 000 Monday to Friday between 8:30am to 4:30pm (AEST).
2. Distribute them to family and friends to donate on your behalf in lieu of a gift.
3. We take care of processing the donations, issuing receipts and thank you letters.

*Allow 10 working days for us to prepare and send your personalised envelopes. An online version is also available for the more tech savvy.*

**Call us on 1800 993 000 today to find out more!**

Support our community fundraisers at these upcoming events

### Happy Face Cent Auction

Saturday 25 July from 5pm  
Aspley Leagues Club,  
29 Kirby Rd, Aspley, Qld, 4034

Contact Sunny on (07) 3261 5185

### The GPT Charity Golf Day

Friday 4 September from 10.30am  
Brookwater Golf Club  
1 Tournament Dr, Brookwater, Qld, 4300

Contact GPT Management on (07) 3222 8111