



Top cancer research prize in NSW goes to Professor Rob Sutherland

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Professor Rob Sutherland has been awarded this year's prestigious Cancer Institute NSW Premier's Award for Outstanding Cancer Researcher.

Premier Kristina Keneally presented the \$50,000 prize at a black-tie dinner on Friday night at Australian Technology Park in Sydney.

Director of the Cancer Research Program at Sydney's Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Sutherland is internationally recognised for his research into cancers that are dependent on sex steroid hormones for their development and progression, particularly breast and prostate cancer.

"It's a great honour to receive this award," Professor Sutherland said. "The recognition that it brings should help us secure the ongoing support we need to translate medical research discoveries into better outcomes for cancer patients."

The largest program at Garvan, Cancer has six translational research groups that investigate a number of the most commonly diagnosed and most lethal cancers. With access to unique tissue banks and world-class genome sequencing facilities, particularly through the recently established International Cancer Research Consortium, researchers have developed a strong translational research capacity.

Sutherland's own reputation is based on a succession of groundbreaking discoveries spanning a 25-year career during which he has specialised in breast, prostate and latterly pancreatic cancer research.

Initially focusing on breast cancer research, he is particularly proud of his achievements in that area. "Basic research allowed us to understand at a molecular level why the female sex hormone oestrogen drove breast cancer cells to proliferate and was a major factor in the cause of breast cancer," he said.

“That basic biology led in turn to the application of tamoxifen and other agents that have been used very effectively in the treatment of breast cancer.”

“The overall focus of our current research is in the area of personalised medicine – what we’re trying to do now is identify features of both the patient and the tumour to better deliver therapies. The goal is to give the right therapy to the right patient at the right time.”

“The future is looking bright for our program and for cancer research in this State. Garvan and St. Vincent’s hospital will be making a significant contribution through The Kinghorn Cancer Centre, a translational research facility expected to open in early 2012.”

The Cancer Institute NSW Premier’s Award for Outstanding Cancer Researcher recognises the potential for Professor Sutherland’s research to impact cancer treatment and improve the survival of patients.

ABOUT GARVAN

The Garvan Institute of Medical Research was founded in 1963. Initially a research department of St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, it is now one of Australia's largest medical research institutions with nearly 500 scientists, students and support staff. Garvan's main research programs are: Cancer, Diabetes & Obesity, Immunology and Inflammation and Neuroscience. Garvan's mission is to make significant contributions to medical science that will change the directions of science and medicine and have major impacts on human health. The outcome of Garvan's discoveries is the development of better methods of diagnosis, treatment, and ultimately, prevention of disease.

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