

breakthrough



Dr Cecile King and Dr Helen McGuire

In one of the most promising immunology developments in recent years, Garvan scientists Drs Helen McGuire and Cecile King have developed a reagent with the potential to prevent rejection of transplanted insulin-producing cells in people with Type 1 diabetes.

To restore insulin production, people receive transplanted clusters of insulin-producing cells from the pancreas known as 'Islets of Langerhans'. However, factors that impact this process include the fragility of islets, the body rejecting donor cells, and the high-toxicity of anti-rejection drugs. Plus, the person still has Type 1 diabetes. This new reagent was given to diabetic mice for two weeks, starting the day before the islet transplantation. It allowed mice to accept the donor cells as their own with no need for immunosuppressive drugs, and no Type 1 diabetes – permanently.

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making news

➤ Breast cancer cells create conditions for their own survival by communicating their needs to healthy cells around them. Garvan researchers have identified a new way of turning off this communication. A molecule known as 'hedgehog' is at the centre of the switchboard in breast cancer, transmitting biochemical signals between the cancer cells and healthy cells. When this conversation is blocked, tumours shrink and stop their spread. This finding applies to all breast cancers, but is particularly relevant for women with basal breast cancer, for which there is no current targeted therapy. Drugs for silencing hedgehog are already undergoing Phase 2 clinical trials in other cancer types.

➤ Researchers have identified widespread Vitamin D deficiency in pregnant women as well as a strong association between low Vitamin D levels and gestational diabetes.

In a retrospective study of 147 women from a gestational diabetes clinic at Westmead Hospital, 41% were Vitamin D deficient. The study also showed that the lower the Vitamin D level, the worse the woman's blood sugar control. If the deficiency is identified and boosted during pregnancy, it may improve glucose tolerance, and in turn reduce complications like caesarian sections, very large babies at birth, and babies that have low blood sugars.

➤ Two biomarkers have been identified that appear to have the ability to predict patient survival after surgery for pancreatic cancer before the operation even takes place. It is the first predictive tool of its kind for this deadly cancer. The biomarkers are the proteins S100A2 and S100A4. Absence of both proteins results in average post-operative survival of nearly three years. Presence of both proteins results in survival of less than a year.

These biomarkers could help ensure that the right treatment is given to the right patient without delay, and unnecessary side-effects avoided by not using ineffective therapies.

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From the **CEO**

Welcome to the winter issue of the Breakthrough newsletter. You may have noticed that this issue is larger than previous issues. This is due to the increasing number of breakthroughs here at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, and also due to the increasing number of people, companies and organisations offering to support its world-class work. As such, we wanted to profile some of these for you in greater detail.

In my first few months here at the Garvan I have been impressed by the passion of our donors and supporters, as well as their commitment to the quality and depth of the science that is undertaken here.

In this issue we shine the spotlight on our immunology programs and also ask the vital question, can we cure cancer

within twenty years? We also meet one of our researchers, Dr Goli Samimi, who is leading our ovarian cancer team. As you will read, her research into this devastating disease is progressing at a great pace due to a combination of government and community support. This month we are joining with our friends at Research Australia on a new fundraising campaign – Cook for a Cure – a fun way to raise funds to support the vital work of Dr Samimi and her team.

Our donor spotlight is on the wonderful Michael and Joy Foulsham who are not just generous current donors, but have also joined our Partners for the Future program. This means that they have left a bequest to the Garvan Research Foundation in their wills. Such generosity is truly visionary.



To all of our supporters, thank you for your generous and ongoing support. Without your passion and commitment we would not be able to continue our world-class work.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Giles
Garvan Research Foundation

A legacy that lasts

Michael and Joy Foulsham have been donating to the Garvan for many years, and over those years have become increasingly passionate about its research and discoveries. It's a passion that comes from first-hand experience. Since 1989, Mrs Foulsham has been treated for osteoporosis by Professor John Eisman AO, Director of the Garvan's bone research program.

Mrs Foulsham says, "We think it's really important to support the work of the Garvan. We've become more involved in recent years, and we are so impressed by the researchers we meet. They are such hard working and dedicated people."

Mr Foulsham adds, "They seem to be producing really worthwhile research results. Almost weekly we hear something in the news about important research coming out of the Garvan."



Michael and Joy Foulsham

The couple has left a lasting legacy to the Garvan in their will. Mrs Foulsham says that the Garvan has meant so much to them over the years – the decision to leave a bequest was not difficult at all.

"I would say that people need to think carefully about how they go about leaving a bequest," says Michael Foulsham. "As we've seen recently, finances can change in the blink of an eye, so while you might be in a position to bequest a certain dollar figure when you make your will, that situation might

have changed by the time your estate is realised. I personally think it's safer to bequest a percentage of your estate, rather than a set dollar figure."

The Garvan sincerely thanks Mr and Mrs Foulsham for their ongoing commitment to the work of the Institute. If you would like more information about leaving a bequest to the Garvan in your will, please contact Carol O'Carroll on 02 9295 8117, or email c.ocarroll@garvan.org.au



Sneak peek inside the new Kinghorn Cancer Centre

Construction is progressing well on the new Kinghorn Cancer Centre. We are pleased to offer you a sneak peek of the interior of the centre. One of the pioneering design features is that it has been devised from the patient's perspective. In addition to a focus on sunlight and landscaping, the building is designed so the patient treatment areas on the lower floors can see the research activities on the upper levels through the central stairwell. This creates true connectivity between the clinical and research endeavours of the building.

For more information about the Kinghorn Cancer Centre, or to make a donation and play your part in building this world-class facility, visit www.thekinghorncancercentre.org.au



opinion



A month before the recent Federal Budget, the Australian medical research community was extremely concerned about rumoured cuts of \$400m to the National Health and Medical Research Council budget – the primary source of funding for Australian medical research.

Already a highly competitive process with only 30% of grant applications judged worthy of funding being supported, such a budget cut would have had devastating and long term effects of the viability of Australian research.

Fortunately there was a swift and passionate response across the nation with researchers being joined by patients, community groups and the corporate sector to remind government of the critical role played by medical research in underpinning the excellence of our health care system and our quality of life.

In Sydney, Garvan took the lead by organising a rally in Belmore Park on 12 April that was attended by many hundreds of supporters, as well as media. Due in large part to this, and similar rallies around the country, plus an ongoing campaign that included letters, emails, tweets, Facebook updates, petitions, YouTube messages and blogs, the message was received loud and clear. The Federal Government, recognising that a vibrant medical research enterprise is central to health care reform and keeping people out of hospital, maintained NHMRC funding in the budget. The Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, The Hon Mark Butler MP, also announced a review of federal medical research funding, for which the sector will be consulted about the terms of reference. These are to be decided by mid-2012.

Thank you to all who were active in supporting the call to maintain funding. You can be proud that your passion and persistence has made a difference.

Professor John Shine AO FAA
Executive Director

breakthrough



Staff profile: Mara-Jean Tilley

Breakthrough welcomes Mara-Jean Tilley to the Garvan Research Foundation

Can you please give us a brief outline of your recent work history?

Most relevantly, I worked with the Sydney Theatre Company for seven and a half years. During that time, I held a number of roles, including Foundation Executive, Foundation Coordinator, Sponsorship Coordinator, Development Assistant, Sydney Theatre Customer Service Supervisor, and Customer Service Assistant.

What does your role at the Garvan involve?

As Relationship Manager for the Garvan Research Foundation, I have the pleasure of liaising with a broad section of our philanthropic and corporate supporter base alongside Senior Relationship Manager Gabriella Lang, and CEO Andrew Giles. It is our job to ensure our donors, corporate sponsors, trusts and foundations, as well as those interested in becoming supporters of the Garvan, receive the appropriate

communications, proposals and reports. We also aim to create opportunities for engagement so that Garvan contributors can see first-hand the very work their generous contributions enable.

What inspires you about the work of the Garvan?

So many things! It is immensely rewarding to work in an organisation dedicated to improving the lives of others, and one that consistently strives for excellence in all that it does. Unfortunately, almost everyone will be touched (directly or indirectly) by the challenge and upheaval of the diseases that Garvan researches. What really sets Garvan apart is the vast array of diseases it investigates and the collaborative environment it encourages. It really is a true privilege to come to work each day to be surrounded by many of the world's leading medical scientists and to feel I'm doing my small (albeit humble) part for the cause.

What are you most looking forward to in your first six months at the Garvan?

As someone who is personally passionate about philanthropy and medical science, the opportunity to work for the Garvan is the manifestation of my dream job. I'm looking forward to getting to know the Garvan Research Foundation's many supporters as well as to introducing new people to the work of the Garvan. I also plan to continue meeting with Garvan's many scientists to learn more about their disease interests, research groups and projects.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Spending time with loved ones, singing, reading, catching a live show (theatre or music), watching documentaries/films, walking at dawn (often and conveniently impeded by the fact I'm not a morning person).

Donor Profile:

MLC's commitment has significant impact

MLC has been a generous supporter of the Garvan since 1987. Throughout the years, this commitment has had a great impact on Garvan's capacity for significant scientific breakthroughs.

In 2004, when National Australia Bank and MLC merged, MLC Community Foundation continued its commitment to medical science by pledging \$1 million over five years to the Garvan. Then, in 2008, MLC Community Foundation again pledged \$1 million for the

MLC Cell Sorter and Flow Facility.

This facility comprises high speed cell sorters to allow the separation of up to four populations of cell types from any body fluid or tissue suspension. The pure population of cells, separated on the basis of multiple phenotypic and functional characteristics, can then be grown as pure cultures, used to extract RNA or DNA for genetic analyses, or implanted into animal models, for functional assays and therapeutics.

This flow facility is essential to the work of the Garvan, and is used by all five research programs within the Institute, as well as the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, St Vincent's Hospital, University of New South Wales, University of Technology Sydney and St George Hospital. In fact, last year alone, there was an amazing 4,800 bookings for the facility.

All Garvan research groups are extremely grateful to MLC Community Foundation for its generous and ongoing support.

MSD licenses Garvan's Fracture Risk Calculator

Garvan has recently licensed the Fracture Risk Calculator algorithm created by Prof John Eisman and Dr Tuan Nguyen to Merck Sharpe & Dohme (MSD). MSD is preparing an iPad application that will be used as part of its National Bone Health Review

Program in Australia. MSD plans to work with general practitioners using the iPads containing the Fracture Risk Calculator in order to help close the treatment gap that currently exists within osteoporosis.

If you are 60 years or over, you can calculate your personal fracture risk now online at www.fractureriskcalculator.com



Researcher Profile: Dr Goli Samimi



What is the current focus of your work?

The major focus of the Ovarian Cancer Group is early detection of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer is the most lethal gynaecological malignancy and the sixth leading cause of cancer death in Australian women. Unfortunately patients are typically diagnosed late, when the cancer has spread and complete surgical removal isn't possible. The five-year survival time for patients diagnosed at this stage is less than 20%, compared to a five-year survival of 90% if the cancer is diagnosed early, while the tumour is still

confined to the ovary. Cancer screening and early detection have the potential to greatly improve survival.

Our efforts focus on studying alterations in free circulating DNA (fcDNA) in plasma. In cancer patients, fcDNA is derived from, and contains some of the same molecular changes as the tumour. For example, we can detect DNA methylation, an alteration which can occur early during the cancer progress, at the same sites in both fcDNA and tumour DNA of women with ovarian cancer. Therefore, we believe that DNA methylation changes which have occurred in the tumour can be detectable in the fcDNA shed from the tumour into the blood stream. Identifying these alterations may be a promising approach for developing a non-invasive test for ovarian cancer.

What are some of the recent findings of your work?

In collaboration with the Epigenetics Group here at the Garvan, we've evaluated the potential for altered DNA methylation patterns to serve as biomarkers for ovarian cancer. We've examined the DNA methylation patterns in ovarian tumours of 10 genes which are frequently methylated in cancer and found that methylation of the DLEC1 gene was linked to survival. In addition, we found that methylation of two genes (HOXA9 and EN1) may be able to

discriminate between ovarian cancer patients and healthy controls.

Our next step is to see whether we see similar results when measuring DNA methylation in blood, which is a more suitable and direct way to examine and measure potential biomarkers.

What is the biggest challenge in your area of research?

As is the case with most biomedical research, funding is always a challenge. We've been very lucky to receive great support from the Garvan Research Foundation and its supporters. More specifically, we are constantly reminded of the fact that cancer is not a single disease, so no matter how much we learn and how much progress we make, there is always more to understand and achieve.

What do you enjoy doing away from the lab?

I've been taking improv classes for a few years and used to perform with a troupe while I was in the US, so I'm hoping to continue that here. I'm also a big fan of live theatre and cinema. Since arriving in Sydney, I'm learning to surf, and I also enjoy jogging, swimming, spinning and pilates.



Garvan's Ovarian Cancer group has been selected as one of the recipients of Research Australia's Cook for a Cure fundraising campaign. Throughout August friends, family, and work colleagues share a meal to support their chosen research area. To find out how you can become a Cook for a Cure host, and help support Garvan's research into ovarian cancer, visit www.cookforacure.com.au

Collaborating to create new cancer drugs

Garvan has recently entered into an exciting collaboration with Professor Bill Denny's renowned medicinal chemistry team at Auckland University to generate new therapeutics for cancer. Garvan has identified a novel protein which plays an important role in cancer and may be blocked to treat cancer.

Under the collaboration, Auckland University is generating new drug-like compounds that block the activity of this protein which are then tested at Garvan to optimise a potent and safe drug for clinical testing.

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Garvan Shines at Inaugural Gala

The Garvan's inaugural Gala celebrated and honoured the achievements of Professor John Shine, Executive Director of the Garvan Institute, who is retiring later in 2011, following more than 20 years as a mentor and inspiration to countless scientists who have passed through the doors of Garvan.

Guests were in suspense throughout the evening as one-by-one, each guest who had purchased a key to the "locked box" tried their luck, in the hope of winning the contents – a spectacular pair of Paspaley South Sea pearl earrings with pavé set diamonds in 750 white gold, valued at \$5,980.

Bidding was fierce throughout the live auction for money can't buy items. These included having Rockpool, Rockpool Bar and Grill and Spice Temple chef, Neil Perry cooking in your home; lunch with Sir Michael Parkinson CBE on the luxury cruiser, Ghost on Sydney Harbour; a weekend of wining, dining and pampering, courtesy of John Singleton AM; a Leo Robba original artwork and art workshop courtesy of Leo Robba and King Street Gallery on William; and a beautifully framed colour print of your DNA profile, and that of three of your friends or family, courtesy of the Garvan Institute. We extend our sincere thanks to all those who generously donated prizes, products and services for this wonderful evening.

The event raised funds for the John Shine Translational Research Fund to enable clinicians to participate directly in research, which was established to honour Professor Shine's contribution to the scientific community. While he will be retiring as Executive Director of the Institute, he will continue to research and nurture young minds in his lab at the Institute. We wish Professor Shine all the best for this new and exciting chapter.



Mr Simon Mordant (Garvan Institute Board Member) and chef, Mr Neil Perry



Singer and entertainer Bernadette Robinson, accompanied by Paul Noonan, wowed the audience.



Garvan Research Foundation Chairman, Mr Geoff Dixon and chef, Mr Neil Perry



Prof John Shine AO, FAA, The Hon Nicola Roxon MP Minister for Health and Ageing, and Garvan Institute Chairman, Mr William (Bill) Ferris AC



Prof John Shine AO, FAA, Mrs Jill and Mr John Kinghorn, and NSW Premier and Minister for Western Sydney The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Can we cure cancer within 20 years?

Facts about cancer and medical research

In the past 20 years, the burden of cancer in Australia has been reduced through research, education, early detection and improved treatments. However in 2011, cancer still has a major impact on the Australian community through illness, mortality and costs.

So, are we winning the war on cancer?

Over the last 20 years, enormous improvements have been made in the understanding of cancer and in the development of highly targeted treatments. While it is difficult to predict exactly what the next 20 years will bring, we should soon be able to stop the development of cancer in its tracks. While people will still get cancer, they shouldn't die from it.

Cancer survival rate has significantly increased in the last 20 years¹

- Although the incidence of cancer is rising (largely due to an ageing population), the survival rate is increasing. In the 1980s, the five-year survival rate for Australian cancer patients was 47%. In 2004 it was 61%.
- In the last 20 years, the risk of a male dying from cancer by age 75 was significantly reduced from 1:6 to 1:8.
- In 1987, the risk of a female dying from cancer by 75 years of age was 1:9. By 1997, this had reduced to 1:10 and in 2007 we saw a large reduction in risk to 1:12.

The number of treatments has increased

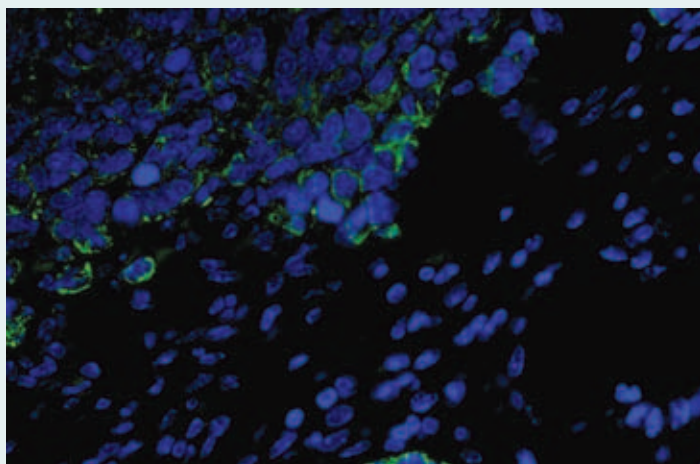
- The growing understanding of the basic biology of cancer in the last 20 years has allowed the development of 'targeted' therapies directed at specific molecular targets or a class of molecular targets in cancer cells.
- This is particularly true for breast cancer. In Australia, five year survival was 88% for women diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006 compared with 73% for women diagnosed in 1987². It is the introduction of new drugs, such as tamoxifen and herceptin, which has contributed most to the reduction in number of deaths from breast cancer³.
- More men are surviving prostate cancer. Improved surgical therapy and the introduction of novel drug therapies have improved survival rates by almost 30% in the last 20 years⁵. In 2007, the risk of a man dying from prostate cancer up to the age of 75 was less than 1%.¹
- With the introduction of novel surgical and therapeutic options, we have seen a 4% decline in the number of deaths from colorectal cancer in the last 10 years with an increase in overall survival from as little as eight months in 1997 to 30 months in 2007⁴.
- A new drug, PLX4032 has shown great promise for some patients with late-stage melanoma. In a Phase I clinical trial of patients with late-stage melanoma, approximately 80% of patients showed partial to complete regression of cancer⁶.

People make a difference

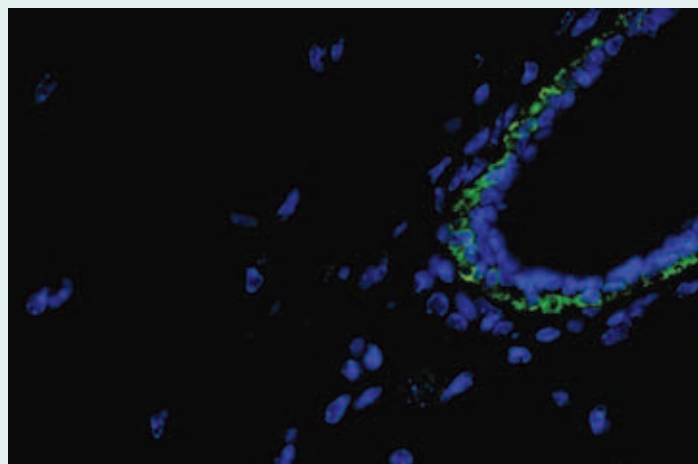
- We all hope that a cure for cancer can be found quickly, but what is slowing our quest for a cancer cure? One key factor is the number of scientists performing the research. Funding for more scientists will significantly increase the rate of discovery over the next two decades.
- In 1986, 5% of the Australian population had attained a university degree or higher⁷. By 2006, this number had grown to more than 11%. In concert with an increase in university graduates, Garvan staff numbers have grown from 230 to just over 500 in the last 10 years. An increase in the number of researchers and students is good news for the Garvan and it is great news for scientific progress.

New technologies are speeding up the discovery process

- 20 years ago, few of the tools that scientists have available today to study genes, proteins and how they interact, even existed. Polymerase chain reaction, a very popular technique that gave rise to the field of sequencing and cloning, wasn't invented until 1983.
- In the late 1990s it became possible to measure the level of expression of thousands of genes at the same time. This technology has allowed us to understand that it is not individual genes that determine cancer, or even a handful of genes, but hundreds or even thousands of genes that form a complex network of interactions.



Breast carcinoma



A normal duct

- Completed in 2003, the Human Genome Project took 13 years and \$2.7 billion US to unravel the complete sequence of human DNA. In recent years, advances in sequencing technology have brought the cost of a single genome sequence down from nearly \$1 million in 2007 to less than \$10,000 in 2011. A complete sequence today can take as little as four weeks.
- Astounding advances have been made in not only the understanding of cancer, but also in the growth of technology. During the next 10 years clinicians will be given tools for detecting the earliest stages of many cancers and suppress them before they have a chance to progress to malignancy.

We can already cure some cancers

- Several leukemias and lymphomas, and some breast, prostate and colorectal cancers can be cured with treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

- Some of the greatest achievements have been in the area of childhood cancers. 20 years ago, childhood leukemia was fatal for more than 40% of the children with the disease¹. Today the five-year survival rate for Australian children is 83%.

The final frontier – fighting metastatic cancer

- We still have limited treatments for metastatic disease. The vast majority of these are not curable and there is so much that remains uncertain about its causes. The challenge now is to improve prognosis, diagnosis and treatments for patients with metastatic cancer.

With ongoing funding, it is possible that by 2031 cancer will no longer be classified as a terminal illness.

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askGarvan

The recent public outcry against rumoured NHMRC budget cuts was phenomenal. How much does Garvan rely on NHMRC funding?

Each year, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) allocates roughly \$700 million in peer reviewed grants. This is shared among universities and designated medical research institutes, like Garvan. Typically, peer reviewed grants represent only 65% of Garvan's total operating income. Therefore, a major challenge facing Garvan and other leading medical research institutes around the country is the 'gap' between the cost of conducting world-class Australian research and the funding allocated by NHMRC. For every dollar of research funding awarded, Garvan needs another 70 cents to carry out its vital research. Many generous Australians help fill this gap each year because they recognise the importance of medical research. The recent rumoured cuts to the NHMRC budget would have ended the careers of hundreds of talented young Australian scientists – potentially one in five. This is why the Government's decision to maintain NHMRC funding in the recent Federal Budget, and the announcement of a review of ongoing medical research funding is warmly welcomed by Garvan and Australia's medical research community.

Sip for Science:

Host a Garvan High Tea

At any time during September, gather your friends, family or colleagues and treat them to a scrumptious high tea. By serving tea and tasty treats, you will be raising funds for the Garvan Institute's research into the prevention and cure of major diseases.

Being the high tea 'host with the most' has never been easier. Simply choose a date during September and a venue, then register online at www.giving.garvan.org.au/hightea and create your personal fundraising page. You'll find everything you need to know, including invitations and delicious recipes at this website.

To secure a place at your table, boardroom or picnic rug, your guests simply make a contribution to Garvan. Then, all that's left to do is to host your high tea and have fun!

That's what Karen Faulkner did last year when she hosted a Garvan High Tea. Karen has been diagnosed with lupus, so her motivation to raise funds for the work of the Garvan was very personal.

"I was off work sick for seven months and saw a postcard advertising the Garvan High Tea. I decided it would keep me

busy and be a worthwhile thing to do," says Karen.

"My message to people hosting a High Tea in 2011 is to have fun and enjoy the day. Knowing that I was doing it for a worthwhile cause made it very important and heartfelt to me and I'm really looking forward to my next one," said Karen.

Karen has also let us in on planning for her high tea this year. She is thinking of having a theme – Alice in Wonderland and the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. All at Garvan thank Karen for her high tea efforts, and look forward to seeing this year's photos.



Karen Faulkner and Dimity Raftos at Karen's 2010 high tea



The Tea Centre for that perfect pot of tea

The Tea Centre, one of Australia's leading retailers of speciality teas and accessories, is proudly supporting Garvan High Tea. If you're looking for that special blend, there's something at The Tea Centre to appeal to even the most dedicated connoisseur, with more than 180 varieties of tea. Go to www.theteacentre.com.au or visit one of their seven retail outlets in Sydney, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Newcastle and Canberra for personalised service and recommendations to help you make your very best High Tea cuppa.

Last chance to support

Garvan at City2Surf

This year's City2Surf will be held on Sunday 14 August. If you are registered to participate, it's not too late to choose Garvan as your chosen charity. If you aren't planning to run, a team of Garvan staff and friends, the Garvan Chang Giants,

will be hitting the road from Hyde Park to Bondi and raising money for the Garvan. Visit www.city2surf.com.au and click on the fundraising gauge to find out how to show your support for Garvan.



Avner Foundation: Turning heartbreak into hope



Avner Nahmani

Before Avner Nahmani was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he was a fit, active 55-year old man living a happy, vital and creative life. Yet, only 13 months after diagnosis, Avner lost his battle with this devastating disease.

During those traumatic months, Avner and his wife Caroline Kelly established the Avner Nahmani Pancreatic Cancer Research Foundation. The aim of the Foundation is to fund research, develop support services and raise awareness of pancreatic cancer.

Considering that pancreatic cancer is the most lethal of all adult cancers, it is shocking to realise that there has been no real progress made with this disease in the last 40-years of research. This is why the funds raised by the Avner Foundation are vital.

The facts about pancreatic cancer are startling.

- Each year, more than 2,000 Australians are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and almost all are beaten by it.
- The median survival rate is between three and six months.

- Fewer than five per cent of those diagnosed with pancreatic cancer will survive beyond five years.

The Avner Foundation provides funds for Garvan's pancreatic cancer research program. This program focuses on improving outcomes for patients by defining molecular phenotypes of pancreatic cancer using biomarkers to guide therapeutic decisions and personalise therapies.

The Garvan group co-leads the Australian Pancreatic Cancer Genome Initiative with the Queensland Centre of Medical Genomics at the Institute of Medical Bioscience in Brisbane. The Initiative is part of the International Genome Consortium and aims to use the latest technology to sequence 400 pancreatic cancers and use that information to inform personalised therapy trials.

Avner's widow, and one of the three Directors of the Avner Nahmani Pancreatic Cancer Research Foundation, Caroline says that choosing to support the research work at the Garvan wasn't difficult. "Garvan's cutting edge research, international recognition and

Government support, together with the expertise of pancreatic cancer group leader, Professor Andrew Biankin, made it an easy decision that was met with universal approval from our committee."

In a relatively short period, the Avner Foundation has achieved a great deal. Caroline says, "Achieving more than one million dollars of donations in the first two years following the launch is something that I am extremely proud of. These funds are already playing a vital role in the commencement of trials into personalised medicine. This achievement was only possible due to the incredible generosity and support of companies such as Woolworths, Coca-Cola Amatil and Wellcom, as well as many other companies, individual donors and the tireless work by volunteers."

As for the future, Caroline hopes the work of the Foundation will continue to make a difference to those affected by this lethal cancer through the funding of research, promotion of support services and building general awareness.

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Clinical studies

Study on Fat Metabolism

We are looking for healthy volunteers: men and postmenopausal women, aged 50-70 years for research into hormones and body fat. This study involves visits over a 14 week period to the Garvan to study the effects of three commonly used medications, oestrogen (women only), letrozole and tamoxifen on the burning of fat in the body. We will investigate how fat is utilised at whole body and liver level. For further information please contact Dr Vita Birzniece (02) 9295 8483, v.birzniece@garvan.org.au or Vanessa Travers (02) 9295 8232, v.travers@garvan.org.au (St Vincent's Human Research Ethics Ref No 09/090).

Diabetes Study

Are you interested in improving the control of your diabetes? We are studying the effect of the amino acid glutamine on glucose control in Type 2 diabetes. We are looking for people with Type 2 diabetes for less than five years, males and females ages 40-75 years, only on Metformin (ie not taking insulin or other diabetes medications). For more information contact Renee Richens on (02) 9295 8215, email r.richens@garvan.org.au (St Vincent's Human Research Ethics Ref H07/059 version 1).

Metabolism – Genetics of Obesity Study

Do you think you could be overweight? Volunteers are needed to screen for a gene that links to obesity at the Garvan Institute. It involves only one visit during which measurements and a blood test will be taken. If you are suitable, you may enter the second part of the study to receive a full metabolic assessment. For further enquiries, please contact Dr Daniel Chen (02) 9295 8557 or d.chen@garvan.org.au or Vanessa Travers (02) 9295 8232 or v.travers@garvan.org.au (St Vincent's Human Research Ethics Ref HREC/10/SVH/133).

Coming up

All Ribbon's Ball

The 2011 All Ribbons Ball will be held on Saturday 20 August, raising funds for the Young Garvan Fellowship.

Entertainment this year includes comedian Wil Anderson, former Wallaby captain Nick Farr-Jones AM (Guest Speaker) and Jellybean Jam, with channel 7's Andrew O'Keefe as MC.

Tickets costs \$175 each, or \$1,650 for a table of ten, with champagne on arrival, a three course dinner, premium wines, beer and soft drinks. To book your place, visit www.garvan.org.au

Toongi Country Gardens Weekend

Four magnificent gardens in the Toongi area of Dubbo will be open 22 and 23 October. A fundraising event for the Garvan, tickets are \$20 per person, per day and can be purchased from the Garvan Institute of Medical Research office located at G2/62 Wingewarra St, Dubbo.

In memoriam:

March – June 2011

We gratefully acknowledge gifts received in memory of:

Gordon Adamson	Toby Metten
John R Barbour	William Millard
Peter Bowyer	Hazel Dawn
Sandra Bradshaw	Montgomery
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