Welcome to the first issue of breakthrough, Garvan’s new flagship magazine for supporters. Breakthrough reflects a number of new initiatives, which involve ‘breaking through’ to new audiences and showcasing our ‘breakthrough’ research. With the appointment of several key new staff members, this launch issue provides the opportunity for you to meet the people who will look after you. You can read about us on page 6. We look forward to your feedback.

Garvan research has been making headlines lately. Most recently, we publicised our potential new anti-inflammatory drug that has been used to prevent and treat rheumatoid arthritis in the laboratory. The importance of this discovery was highlighted by a recent agreement with a Danish healthcare company that will enable the treatment to enter clinical trials in 2007.

In January, we revealed the discovery of a risk gene for bipolar disorder by Professor Peter Schofield’s group. Clinical collaborator Professor Philip Mitchell from UNSW and Dr Ian Blair, first author on the research paper, gave an exclusive interview to Channel Nine News. There were also stories in The Australian, New Scientist, SMH, Australian Doctor and more.

We also had a story on how stress affects the immune system, making us more susceptible to bacteria and viral infections, which arose from the December publication of Julie Wheway’s PhD research (see pg 3). Fronted by Associate Professors Fabienne Mackay and Herbert Herzig this research made National Television News and was extensively covered on radio, and in print.

Our press release also had international reach and was picked up by online news sites and print media in France, India, and the US amongst others! Professor Lesley Campbell appeared on Channel Seven’s Sunrise program debunking the detox diet myth. This followed on from an article in the SMH on January 12 in which she was quoted. Finally, the Sunday Telegraph ran an exclusive article on our research into the development of a test for detecting the illicit use of growth hormone in athletes, work funded by the World Anti-Doping Agency and the Federal Government.

Making other news, the Garvan Institute was named as one of Australia’s 2005 “50 most beautiful exports” by First Charlton Communications and Austrade. Other winners included Collette Dinnigan, Kosta Zyu and Ripcurl.
In memory of Pamela Edith Crawford

Donor Profile: In memory of Pamela Edith Crawford

Thanks to the love and admiration that family, friends and colleagues bore to a very special woman by the name of Pam Crawford, Garvan research has recently benefited from our most generous in memoriam gift ever.

After ups and downs fighting the very serious illness of bladder cancer, Mrs Crawford passed away late in 2005, not long after celebrating her 50th wedding anniversary in rock and roll style with her beloved husband, Col. Pamela and Col met in kindergarten at Bondi Beach Public School in 1939, were separated by World War II; and as fate would have it, met up again eleven years later at a party back in Bondi and were married at 21.

Pamela was a Director and Company Secretary of the family motor vehicle dealership business, Col Crawford Lifestyle Cars situated in Sydney’s Northern Beaches. When the business started in 1967, Pamela would do the books and banking and anything else that was required. She was a very active woman, enjoying snow and water-skiing, driving speedboats and ocean racing, playing tennis, golf, mah jong and bridge. She also found the time to support many charitable causes, including two of her own Labrador guide dogs and two young children through World Vision.

Pamela was a loving mother to Carol, Stephen and Sharyn, and a doting grandmother to Emma, Jade, Harrison, Jake and Will. During her illness large volumes of people extended their support and best wishes. The inner strength and courage she showed in her final months was typical of her character.

Garvan wishes to pay our respects to Mrs Crawford’s memory, express our sadness at her family’s loss, and thank all those whose contributions have provided $7,480 to advance research into bladder cancer.

Researcher Profile: Julie Wheway

Q. How did you get to where you are today?

I was working as a research assistant, after completing a Science degree. I had a fascinating project studying a molecule that we know is key to development of immune diseases like arthritis and lupus. I realised then that I could enrol in a PhD and further advance my research career.

Q. What is the most important lesson you have learnt in your career?

To really make it in science you need to collaborate and be capable of working in a team. My theory is that you can’t be successful at something unless you really enjoy it.

Q. What do you do on a day-to-day basis?

Literature, forming testable hypotheses, conducting experiments, and interpreting data. No two days are exactly the same.

Q. What is the most important lesson you have learnt in your career?

Successful at something unless you really enjoy it.

Q. What type of people are Garvan researchers?

Garvan researchers are people with a passion for solving problems, and for creating a better future. Garvan has about 280 staff, and around 240 of those are researchers. Most of our researchers are women (70%), and most of them are young. The average age is 26. Between them, the members of our research community represent 30 different countries.

Q. What do you do on a day-to-day basis?

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Q. What do you enjoy the most about your work?

The chance to be creative and independent and, of course, the double helix structure of DNA, which is central to the research that we conduct at Garvan. Our staircase, designed by the famous Sydney architect Ken Woolley, has been used in a number of advertisements, most recently in a Vodafone commercial where our galleria and staircase was transformed into a nightclub.

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The chance to be creative and independent and, of course, meeting fellow researchers from across the globe at great locations!

Quiz

1. What proportion of osteoporotic fractures occur in men?

2. In what year did the Garvan become an autonomous research institute?

3. Which leading Garvan scientist was involved in research leading to development of the breast cancer drug tasardeflenin?

4. In Australia, up to one in four children show signs of asthma. True or False?

5. Which hormone, involved in diabetes, is produced by the pancreas?

Dr. Veronique de Sa’s research at the Garvan Institute is supported by the Mr. Abstract. Foundation. The Garvan Institute was named in memory of James Patrick Garvan (1854–1936) and family in recognition of a generous gift of $100,000 pounds by his daughter Mrs Helen Mills to the St Vincent’s Hospital Centenary Appeal. James was also the founder of the life insurance industry in Australia.

Where are the new Garvan locations?

The Garvan Institute is a place of discovery and breakthroughs. Our mission is to change the world of medical research and fight disease.

In 2023, the Garvan Institute announced the opening of two new research locations in Singapore and China. These new locations will enable Garvan researchers to collaborate with local institutions and access new patient populations, allowing for broader and more diverse research opportunities.

What does the Garvan Institute do?

The Garvan Institute is a world-renowned biomedical research institute. We are dedicated to understanding the complex mechanisms underlying human health and disease, and to applying this knowledge to develop new treatments and cures.

The Garvan Institute has made significant contributions to the understanding of diabetes, cancer, and autoimmune diseases. We are home to some of the world’s leading research facilities, including our own research hospital and our own research library.

What is the Garvan Institute's research focus?

The Garvan Institute's research focus is on understanding the complex interactions between the environment, genetics, and the body's immune system. We are particularly interested in diseases that are caused by an overactive immune system, such as diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis.

The Garvan Institute has a number of ongoing research projects, including research into the genetics of diabetes, the role of the immune system in cancer, and the development of new treatments for autoimmune diseases.

Who funds the Garvan Institute's research?

The Garvan Institute is supported by a combination of government grants and private donations. Our research is also funded by a variety of corporate sponsors, including Novo Nordisk, Amgen, and Genentech.

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What is the Garvan Institute's impact on society?

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Get involved

School, community group or workplace presentations about Garvan’s work are available to you! For more information, just contact our PACE Managers on 02 9295 8101 or email pace@garvan.org.au.

“The Bannockburn Lions Club was very interested to hear about the breakthroughs in medical research that are being conducted at Garvan. The items covered in the presentation were fascinating and are relevant to us all. It opened our eyes as to what is being achieved in our own country and what goes on quietly in the background of research, as most of us only hear snippets on the news once in a while. It is nice to know that the future of medicine is being well looked after! As a club we felt moved to support the fantastic work of Garvan.”

Lynette Fischer, Treasurer of the Bannockburn Lions Club

Garvan’s New 2006 Public Seminar Series

Garvan would like to invite you to our new 2006 Public Seminar Series. These seminars provide a unique opportunity to interact with leading scientists and clinicians as well as hear personal insights from people affected by common disorders. As in previous years, they will be held at Garvan but we will also be holding another series of seminars, generously sponsored by Nestlé Australia, in and around Sydney.

The in-house seminars are held in our National Australia Bank Auditorium and are generously sponsored by Nestlé Australia. Venues for the external seminars are still being confirmed, but topics and locations are:

- Type 2 Diabetes & Obesity
- Depression & Mental Illnesses
- Pancreatic & Prostate Cancer
- Osteoporosis & Healthy Ageing
- Anorexia

The in-house seminars are held on the first and third Wednesdays of every month, subject to availability. Tours are made available towards morning tea would be available to you! For more information, please email us at pace@garvan.org.au or phone 02 9295 8116.

Yoga Fundraiser

Suzi Uhin at the Yoga Centre Kings Cross has been teaching Iyengar yoga to Garvan staff for over five years. In December she decided to give something back to research and donated all the proceeds from a special fundraising yoga session to the Garvan Arthritis & Immunology Program. The Yoga’s raised $125. Thank you Suzi!

Young Business Forum Dinner

Dr Darren Saunders was a guest speaker at the Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce Young Business Forum Dinner held at the Hilton Sydney on November 18. The main speakers representing ‘High Flyers of the Online Generation’ were Martin Hoffman, CEO of ninemsn, Cliff Rosenberg, MD, Yahoo! Australia & NZ; and Simon Smith, MO, eDay the FHA-Charity auction, held after the dinner, raised $19,400 for Young Garvan.

Garvan cancer researcher recognised for her work on cancer genetics

Dr Vanessa Hayes recently received support from IHN! Panbasa to commemorate their 125 years in Australia. Vanessa is interested in cancer genetics, in particular what gene variants predispose people to prostate cancer.

Science as Art Exhibition

Luke Anderson, a PhD student in the Cancer program won first prize for his photograph entitled ‘Looking into the past’ (Left). ‘Vascularita’ (Right) by Joseph Daniel won the People’s Choice Award.

Winners from Garvan’s ‘Science as Art’ exhibition, held in the Galleria, were announced at a function on September 14, 2005. Judges included NOW Art Gallery Director, Adrian Capon AM OBE; Gene Sherman, Director of Sherman Galleries in Paddington; Roslyn Uxley, Director of Roslyn Oxlion Y Gallery; and Art Consultants Sally Dan Guthbert, Michael Whitehorn, and Bill Wright.

Tour Garvan

Ever wanted to see what a state-of-the-art medical research facility is really like? Interested in finding out about the latest research into causes and treatments of some of the most common diseases that plague our society? Come on a tour of Garvan!

Take a firsthand look at the fascinating design of the building and learn about the history of Garvan. Experience what goes on in a laboratory and learn about some amazing technology that is enabling medical research to progress at a rapid rate.

Garvan is home to some of Australia’s leading scientists and you will have the opportunity to meet and question some of them.

Tours start at 9.30am and run for approximately 1.5 hours. They are held on the first and third Wednesdays of every month, subject to availability. Bookings by groups or individuals are essential and can be made via email at pace@garvan.org.au or by phoning 02 9295 8101. Tours are made available at no charge, but a gold coin donation towards morning tea would be appreciated.

“Hidden Treasure” Party at Ruby Rabbit nightclub

[Above] Young Garvan committee members Sally Cowan, Cassie Lapointe, Lauren Heiser, and Lauren Abraham at the Hidden Treasure fundraiser. (Right) Zoe Naylor from McLeod’s Daughters dishes out the raffle prizes, including an Aprilia Scooter valued at over $600! that was won by our own Garvan scientist, Dr Rhonda Kwag.

Young Garvan’s goal is to heighten awareness about medical research amongst 25-35 year old professionals, and raise funds to support a young scientist. Funds are raised through annual membership, forums, and an end-of-year party. Over $18,000 was raised at the Hidden Treasure party on November 18.

Vanessa Hayes, who is currently completing a PhD at the University of Sydney and is a Garvan’s Young Garvan member, is the recipient of the $10,000 Young Garvan Science and Art Prize which was awarded at the Hidden Treasure party.

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Garvan Cancer Research Centre is the only facility in Australia that is dedicated to cancer research on a large scale. The Centre’s work focuses on understanding the causes and mechanisms of cancer, translating research findings into clinical practice, and providing a centre of excellence for training medical professionals.

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Gregory started obsessing about his weight when he was just eight. When most boys his age would be begging their parents to take them to McDonald’s, Gregory would be dreading the next mealtime. The fear of food and of gaining weight started to consume his mind. He became irritable, depressed, and began obsessing about the smallest things such as the colour of his socks. While Gregory is a fictional character, his experiences are not. They will be familiar to many who suffer from anorexia nervosa.

We now know that the body’s starvation response can set in motion changes in the brain that lead to abnormal behaviour, depression and, in some cases, suicide.

Surprisingly, one in three young children with anorexia nervosa are boys. Yet, when they hit puberty something changes; the number of boys suffering from the illness decreases dramatically. The sex ratio of sufferers becomes one boy to every nine girls.

A huge worry for parents of young girls, in particular, is the possible development of an eating disorder (anorexia or bulimia nervosa). And for girls who start dieting in adolescence the risk of developing an eating disorder is twenty times higher than for those who don’t diet.

Anorexia – the starving brain

Professor Herbert Herzog, who leads the weight loss & energy balance and research group, has spent the best part of his career studying a hormone called neuropeptide Y (NPY). This brain-signalling molecule has a variety of effects including helping to regulate energy balance and appetite. NPY enhances appetite and induces the feeding response, while other factors such as leptin act as a satiety factor.

Abnormalities in the neuropeptide system have been reported in people suffering from anorexia nervosa, so Herbert’s team want to understand how appetite control works. They are looking at this from two opposing angles: over-eating and under-eating. Their long-term goal is to find defects in the mechanism that stimulates appetite.

Sarah McGuire, Psychologist and Eating Disorder Consultant for NSW, says that until very recently eating disorders were not recognised as a mental health problem in NSW. “We know that worldwide, there is not nearly enough research into anorexia nervosa,” she said. “It’s great that an outstanding research institute such as the Garvan recognises how important it is to investigate the underlying cause of this serious health issue.”

The anorexia research project, led by Associate Professor Herbert Herzog and Dr Amanda Sansbury-Sally, was initiated in 2006.
Enlist in our clinical trials

At Garvan, the knowledge we derive about our bodies comes primarily through studies of cells, tissue, and animal models. Much information is gained in this manner – however, it can only take us so far. Clinical trials are essential as they are an important source of evidence on the safety and effectiveness of health interventions. They also provide a more accurate method of understanding how things work in the human body.

From time to time, different clinical trials will come up with various prerequisites to be a volunteer. If you are interested in helping us with our research in this way, please regularly check our website [www.garvan.org.au] for details.

Current trials include:

**Type 2 Diabetes Project** Healthy volunteers (females between the ages of 45-55 years) with no personal or family history of diabetes.

**Anti-doping Research Project** Females who are fit and active (at least 2 exercise sessions/week) aged 18-40 years.

**Pituitary Disorder Research Project** Male volunteers aged between 20-75 years with (a) Hypopituitarism (with growth hormone deficiency and testosterone deficiency) or (b) isolated Hypogonadism (only testosterone deficiency).

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Competition

To win two free sets of ten beautiful Garvan all-occasions cards and a classic Garvan black and silver pen, please submit your most creative and humorous caption for the above image by post or email by April 30.

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Be part of progress

I’m proud to be part of the Garvan community, helping to build a healthier future. Please find enclosed my tax deductible gift of:

[ ] $50  [ ] $75  [ ] $100  [ ] $200  [ ] $500  [ ] $1000  [ ] Other choice $ ______________________

[ ] My cheque is enclosed OR please debit my:  [ ] Visa  [ ] Mastercard  [ ] Bankcard  [ ] Diners  [ ] Amex

NAME ______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS __________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

CARDNUMBER _____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

CARDHOLDER’S NAME ______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

EXPIRY DATE __________ TELEPHONE NUMBER __________ EMAIL ADDRESS __________________________________________________________________________

CARDHOLDER’S SIGNATURE __________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

[ ] I am interested in making a bequest to Garvan. Please send me some information. Thank you!