



Garvan Institute of Medical Research

# Leaders in Science & Society



## Prof Jane Visvader

Joint Head of the Division of Stem Cells and Cancer and the Breast Cancer Laboratory  
The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

# “Unravelling breast cancer using the mammary epithelial hierarchy”

**Monday 2 November 2015 12:00PM, AUDITORIUM**

**HOST: DR ALEX SWARBRICK**

Jane Visvader is Joint Head of the Division of Stem Cells and Cancer and the Breast Cancer Laboratory at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research. She carried out PhD studies in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Adelaide, and held subsequent positions as a postdoctoral fellow at the Salk Institute, San Diego, and Research Associate/Instructor at the Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston. Here her work focussed on identifying transcription factors important for determining cell-fate in the haemopoietic system. In 1998, she made a transition to a new field and was appointed to the Victorian Breast Cancer Research Consortium as a group leader in the area of mammary gland development and cancer at The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research. She is the recipient of an Australia Fellowship and was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 2012. She currently serves as a Director at the Cancer Council Victoria.

Important contributions that her group has made to the breast cancer field have been the prospective identification and isolation of the mammary stem cell in mouse and human, elucidation of the functions of key transcriptional regulators in cell fate decisions and differentiation, and identification of the luminal progenitor cell as the likely 'cell of origin' for basal-like breast cancers including those arising in BRCA1 mutation carriers. Current efforts are directed towards further dissecting stem cells and identifying pathways that modulate their activity using a combination of transplantation and cell lineage tracing studies. Her laboratory has also generated an extensive bank of human breast cancer xenografts that are serving as important preclinical models for testing new therapeutic drug combinations in the treatment of breast cancer.