

# Around the universities and medical institutes



**Burnet Institute** Deputy Director Professor Margaret Hellard has been appointed to chair the Viral Hepatitis Forum at this year's World Innovation Summit for

Health (WISH) in Qatar. Viral hepatitis has just been announced as one of nine research topics that will form the focus of the WISH 2018 conference, an initiative of Qatar Foundation (QF), from 13-14 November. The group's findings will be presented in a report that will be published in time for WISH 2018 and will feature during a panel session, chaired by Professor Hellard. The aim of the report is to produce policy recommendations that can have a positive impact on the management of viral hepatitis and support global efforts being made to prevent transmission – particularly in vulnerable populations. Professor Hellard boasts more than 2 decades of clinical and research expertise, including using new technologies, such as social media, for health promotion and prevention interventions.

[https://www.burnet.edu.au/news/924\\_eliminating\\_viral\\_hepatitis\\_a\\_major\\_focus\\_at\\_wish\\_2018](https://www.burnet.edu.au/news/924_eliminating_viral_hepatitis_a_major_focus_at_wish_2018)

**Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute** has announced the sale of its clinical research subsidiary, Nucleus Network – which operates Australia's leading phase one clinical trial facility -- to Australian private equity firm, Crescent Capital Partners. The sale will enable the Baker Institute to invest more funds in medical research to tackle the greatest health challenges facing Australians today. Start-up funding and the foresight of the then Labor Government in Victoria helped establish Nucleus Network in 2003 through the provision of establishment grants. Nucleus Network has since conducted more than 500 early phase and first-in-human clinical trials for global pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Crescent Capital Partners is one of the most active and experienced investors in the Australian health care sector, including through its investments in National Dental Centre, skin cancer clinic owner Sun Doctors, MyHealth Medical Centres, pathology provider Australian Clinical Labs and previous interests in National Hearing Care and ASX listed device company,

LifeHealthcare. The Baker Institute will continue to take an active interest in Nucleus Network, with an option to maintain up to 20% of the business. Nucleus Network employs more than 100 full-time and part-time employees, with the company conducting trials for a wide range of global biotechnology and pharmaceutical clients. Nucleus Network is based in the Alfred Medical Research and Education Precinct in Melbourne's inner south-east, adjacent to the Baker Institute. The company, which operates an 80-bed clinical trials facility, has extensive experience evaluating new therapeutic treatments including vaccines and devices in both healthy volunteer and patient populations for a variety of early-stage clinical trials.

<https://www.baker.edu.au/news/media-releases/MR-nucleus-network-sale>

A multidisciplinary team of scientists from research institutes across Australia, Israel, the UK and the USA has been shortlisted to the final stages of Cancer Research UK's Grand Challenge – an ambitious series of £20m global grants tackling some of the toughest questions in cancer research. The project aims to demystify the phenomenon of “cell dormancy” – where cancer cells not killed by initial treatment can “go to sleep” for months or years, only to wake later and start to form a new cancer. The reawakening of dormant cells often happens without warning, making the returning cancers hard to predict and treat, often with devastating effect. The researchers seek to accelerate understanding of cancer cell dormancy and to answer questions once thought impossible to solve: Why do cancer cells become dormant? And what causes them to wake up and form a new cancer? Their Grand Challenge project aims to create a map of the biological environment around dormant cancer cells in space and time, and to uncover the processes that control them – with the ultimate aim of stopping an individual's cancer from returning. Led by Professor Peter Croucher (**Garvan Institute of Medical Research**, Sydney), the international team involves researchers at Garvan, **QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute** and the **University of Adelaide** in Australia, as well as Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science, the Babraham Institute (UK), University of Oxford (UK), Yale University (USA) and Washington University (USA).

<http://www.qimrberghofer.edu.au/2018/02/australian-led-team-shortlisted-cancer-research-uks-grand-challenge-award/>



A team of researchers, led by Professor Rod Hicks from the **Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre**, has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the US-based Neuroendocrine

Tumour Research Foundation (NETRF) to study new treatment approaches for this rare and difficult to treat cancer. The international NETRF grant will allow a team of Peter Mac-led researchers to investigate new ways to tackle neuroendocrine tumours (NETs) using cutting-edge peptide receptor radionuclide therapy (PRRT) combined with different types of drugs in the hope of improving survival of people with NET. The new study will build on previous work into the use of drugs to sensitive cancers to PRRT, established by Prof Rod Hicks, Peter Mac's Director of the Centre for Cancer Imaging, Head of the Molecular Imaging and Targeted Therapeutic Laboratory and Co-Chair of the Neuroendocrine Service, and Dr Shahneen Sandhu, clinician researcher and Medical Oncologist at Peter Mac. The project will bring together experts from across Australia and New Zealand, including Dr Price Jackson whose medical physics program will provide tools that allow the accurate measurement of radiation dose to tumours, and Dr Richard Tothill and Associate Professor Kaylene Simpson who will perform sophisticated genomic studies to identify genetic signatures associated with response to PRRT. These studies will be supported by the expertise of the University of Melbourne's Professor Sean Grimmond, a world authority on NET genomics, and genomics and clinical experts from the University of Auckland, Professor Cris Print and Dr Ben Lawrence. In parallel, pre-clinical testing of new drug combinations with PRRT will be undertaken by Dr Carleen Cullinane, and a clinical trial of a novel combination therapy will be led by Dr Grace Kong from Cancer Imaging and Associate Professor Michael Michael from Medical Oncology at Peter Mac. Dr Sandhu will provide her expertise for the final design and implementation of the clinical study.

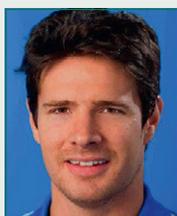
<https://www.petermac.org/news/research-rare-cancers-receives-funding-boost>

A total of 17 finalists have been shortlisted for the 24th Victorian Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research.

For Public Health Researcher, the finalists are:



Dr Peter Azzopardi (**The University of Melbourne/Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Wardliparingga Aboriginal Research Unit**), *The health of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents;*



Dr Paddy Dempsey (**Monash University/Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute**), *Sitting on a ticking time bomb: preventing and managing type 2 diabetes in a sitting-centric world;*



Dr Daniel Engelman (**The University of Melbourne/Murdoch Children's Research Institute**), *Novel strategies for the prevention of rheumatic heart disease;*



Dr Jason Kwong (**The University of Melbourne/The Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity**), *Whole-genome sequencing to enhance the public health control of infectious diseases in Australia;*



Ms Kerry Moore (**The University of Melbourne/Burnet Institute/Shoklo Malaria Research Unit**), *The impact of malaria in pregnancy on birth outcomes in Asia.*

For Basic Science Researcher, the finalists are:

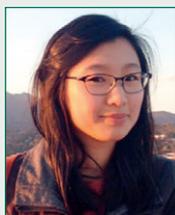


Dr Nicholas Gherardin (**The University of Melbourne at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity**), *Understanding immune cells that respond to vitamins: How they work, and how we can use them to fight cancer;*



Dr Hui-Fern Koay (**The University of Melbourne/Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity**), *How our mucosal associated invariant T (MAIT) cells develop;*

Dr Tan Nguyen (**The University of Melbourne/Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research**), *Love thy neighbour: how uninfected cells help combat viral infection;*



Dr Ashleigh Poh (**The University of Melbourne/Oliva Newton John Cancer Research Institute**), *Understanding the role of Haematopoietic Cell Kinase (Hck) in gastric and colon cancer;*

Mr Dean Sydney Tyler (**The University of Melbourne/Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre**), *Preclinical evaluation of targeted epigenetic therapies.*

For Clinical Researcher the finalists are:



Dr Ada Cheung (**The University of Melbourne, Department of Medicine, Austin Health**), *Muscle effects of hormone therapy in men with prostate cancer;*



Dr Ingrid Hopper (**Monash University, Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine**), *Reducing medication in patients with heart failure;*



Ms Aya Mousa (**Monash University, Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementations**), *Vitamin D and cardiometabolic risk factors and diseases;*

Dr Benjamin Teh (**The University of Melbourne/Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre**), *Improving the care of infections in patients with blood cancer multiple myeloma treated with new generation therapies;*

Dr Paul Yeh (**The University of Melbourne/Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre**), *Non-invasive testing for blood cancers using liquid biopsy.*

For Health Services Researcher, the finalists are:

Dr Gabrielle Haeusler (**Sir Peter MacCallum Department of Oncology, The University of Melbourne**), *Improving the quality of research and the delivery of care for one of the most common complications of cancer treatment in children;*



Dr Jason Trubiano (**The University of Melbourne/Department of Medicine, Austin Health**), *The impact of antibiotic allergy on the safe and appropriate use of antibiotics in Australian hospitals.*

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/clinical-trials-and-research/premiers-award>

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