

research thanks to you



Heart attack survivor Tom Burley
and his wife Helen Burley



An affair of the heart

Cardiovascular disease, the term used for heart disease, stroke and blood vessel disease, is Australia's biggest health problem. It affected one in six Australians in 2004, and touched two out of every three families.

Cardiovascular disease is a killer. In addition to being a killer, it prevents people from living a full life because of disability.

Thanks to the work of health and medical researchers like those at the Menzies Research Institute, our community now has access to a range of technologies to prevent and assist recovery from cardiovascular disease, such as prescription drugs to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and anti-platelet drugs to prevent clotting.

The Menzies Research Institute has a large research program that is devoted to understanding the causes and improving the lives of those with heart disease, stroke and blood vessel disease.

Researchers recently released results from a study that investigated ways to improve the management of high blood pressure in general practice.

High blood pressure, sometimes called hypertension, is the commonest problem managed in general practice, and it can be difficult to control. Hypertension can be a serious problem if not managed properly. Any change in standard management practices that leads to improved blood pressure control is likely to save lives.

The CRAB study examined the management of adults with hypertension in 21 general practices in southern Tasmania. In particular, the study compared the clinical effectiveness of using a manual instrument to measure blood pressure versus the use of a digital, automated machine.

The researchers found that the automated measurement devices gave slightly higher readings of blood pressure than the manual devices (this is likely due to GPs rounding down readings rather than a true difference). The digital devices' ease of use also meant that GPs were more likely to take more blood pressure readings and detect blood pressure problems requiring treatment in more patients, reducing the risk of harm from the disease.

Manual, mercury-based devices are likely to be phased out over coming years due to concerns about mercury toxicity. This study shows that the introduction of digital devices to measure blood pressure may improve management of hypertension in general practice, resulting in better health outcomes for the community.

Heart attack survivor Tom Burley is living proof of the effectiveness of medical research in improving the health outcomes of everyday people. After suffering a heart attack at work in 2006, he admits he wouldn't be here today if not for the advances made over the last century.

"I had a bypass operation in March this year, and it's been an incredible change. I've been given an amazing second chance to have a long and healthy life," said Tom.

"When I think of all the advances in medical science over the last 100 years, the advances that have been made in just one generation are truly amazing. I think in the future there could be some incredible breakthroughs in this area."

No bones about prize-winning research

Menzies' research made waves at the recent *Australia and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society (ANZBMS) Annual Conference* in New Zealand, with researchers taking out two of the major prizes on offer.

Research Fellow Dr Tania Winzenberg and PhD student Stella Foley were two of a large group of Menzies staff from the Musculoskeletal research group who attended the conference in Queenstown, where their work attracted interest from around the world.

Dr Winzenberg was awarded the *Kaye Ibbertson Award* for the best five papers published in scientific journals in the last five years.

"My research over the past five years has concentrated on aspects of osteoporosis prevention, in particular those that are most relevant in childhood and young women," said Dr Winzenberg.

"It is pleasing to have my work recognised by the research community in this way. We have a talented group of researchers working in this area at Menzies and the impact of our research continues to grow," she said.

PhD student Stella Foley won the *Young Investigator Award* for the best clinical presentation by a young investigator at the conference.

"The research that I presented at the conference concerns how childhood bone mass, which is related to osteoporosis risk, changes over time," said Ms Foley.

"My study has shown that bone mass tends to 'track' from childhood to adolescence, which is when the majority of adult bone mass is determined.

"With this finding in mind, it is possible to identify children at an early age who will be at risk of osteoporosis later in life," she said.

Osteoporosis is a major public health problem, particularly in women, and low bone mineral density is an important risk factor for osteoporotic fractures. Bone density worsens for women after the menopause, so intervention in childhood to maximise peak bone mass by improving factors such as diet and physical activity can minimise the impact of bone loss related to age.

Dr Winzenberg's research was supported by a Dick Butfield Research Fellowship.

\$12 million grant boost to Menzies

The Menzies Research Institute was awarded almost \$12 million in research grants by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in September this year.

In a first for Tasmania, the funding includes \$8.1 million for a prestigious program grant that will help researchers better understand diseases like prostate cancer, leukaemia, MS, malaria and epilepsy.

The multi-disciplinary program includes research between genetics, bioinformatics, ethics, law and clinicians, and involves multiple institutions including Menzies, the University of Tasmania's Faculty of Law, the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute.

Additionally, nine project grants were awarded a total of almost \$4 million in funds, while Associate Professor Steve Rattigan received a \$537,500 NHMRC Research Fellowship to continue his work with insulin and its impact on hypertension, diabetes and obesity.

Menzies was also awarded two Australian Research Council grants worth \$690,000 for research into diabetes and for the establishment of a confocal/multiphoton microscope for imaging of living systems.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew said the funding allocation was a tribute to the magnificent work of the Menzies Research Institute team under the leadership of Professor Simon Foote.

"Menzies continues to build its reputation as one of the leading medical research institutions in the country," he said.

Professor Foote said Menzies had performed exceptionally well in the funding round, with the outcome testament to the growing stature of its research.

"Congratulations must go to all those involved. This is an exceptional outcome and we look forward to moving these exciting projects forward," said Professor Foote.



A large group of Menzies' researchers presented their work at the ANZBMS conference in New Zealand. Prize winners Stella Foley (left) and Dr Tania Winzenberg are pictured in the front row

Researchers of the world gather at Menzies



Researchers hard at work, learning a method of disease risk factor surveillance known as STEPS

Health professionals from around the world gathered at the Menzies Research Institute in August to learn new methods and strategies for understanding the scope of the various health problems of their countries.

Seven participants from Malaysia, Brunei, Iran, Mongolia and the Philippines, under the auspices of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Fellowships Programme, attended to receive training in surveillance for risk factors for non-communicable diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Associate Professor Leigh Blizzard says that the Menzies Research Institute has for many years assisted developing countries

in building and strengthening their health surveillance capabilities.

"Our experience in this area means that we are in an excellent position to assist developing countries to strengthen their capacity to respond to emerging chronic disease problems such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer."

The WHO Fellows were joined by three collaborators from Vietnam, where Menzies is currently responsible for assisting with the development of a national surveillance system for these diseases, under a \$US2 million grant funded by United States philanthropic organisation the Atlantic Philanthropies.

Some fun in the sun important for Vitamin D

A study which examined the vitamin D levels of people from Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania has found that Vitamin D insufficiency is common over a wide latitude range in Australia.

Menzies researcher Dr Ingrid van der Mei says that most of the vitamin D that we need is produced by our body when we spend time in the sun.

"Low levels of sun exposure and dietary vitamin D intake can result in vitamin D insufficiency.

"We examined three communities at different latitudes and found that even in typically sunny Queensland, during winter and spring around 40% of the population has insufficient levels of vitamin D," said Dr van der Mei.

"In Tasmania, vitamin D insufficiency and deficiency seems to be common for a large part of the year."

Adequate levels of vitamin D are essential to bone health, and vitamin D insufficiency has also been linked to diseases such as cancer, MS and diabetes.

The study team from Menzies and the Queensland University of Technology was recently awarded a prestigious grant from the NHMRC to examine the issue of healthy Vitamin D levels in further detail, and make recommendations to guide people in gaining an optimal amount of sun exposure for their health.

The Tasmanian component of the Vitamin D study has been funded by grants from the NHMRC, the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund, and MS Australia.

Thank You Day



Volunteers Mrs Colleen Hay and Mrs Jan Elwell

Tasmanian researchers, volunteers, corporate sponsors and supporters gathered to be thanked and in turn show appreciation for the amazing achievements of our health and medical researchers at a morning tea to celebrate Research Australia's 'Thank You' Day on 8 November.

The event was jointly hosted by UTAS' Faculty of Health Science and the Menzies Research Institute.

Research Australia is a not-for-profit national alliance of more than 190 member and donor organisations with a common mission to make health and medical research a higher national priority.



Professor Simon Foote and Professor Allan Carmichael sign the giant 'Thank You' card

Thank you to our valued supporters

Many thanks to all of our donors for your ongoing support of Menzies' local research with global significance. August 2007 - October 2007

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Dr David Boadle
Mrs Anita Clarkson
Mr Don Cornish AO
Mr Brendon Davidson
Mr & Mrs Garth & Brenda Haas
Miss Emma Jackson
Mrs Margaret Keogh
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Mr Sam Mollard
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Ms Carmel Taylor
Mrs Cynthia Tennant
Mrs Pat Vallance
Mr & Mrs Walter & Robin Verth
Mrs Margaret Williams
Ms Barbara Zimmerman & Prof John Dickey

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Mr & Mrs Ken & Jeanette Wills
The Hon Donald Wing MLC
Mrs Caroline Wright
Mrs Loris Yaxley
Mrs Diana Young

The Menzies Research Institute is also deeply indebted to those generous donors who wish to remain anonymous.

The Art of Christmas 2007



Joan Humble's magnificent oil painting, "Sunrise from Southport"

Tasmania is very fortunate to have members of the arts community that are as generous as they are creative! Christmas arrived early this year for Menzies and the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation (RHHRF), with the launch of the 2007 *Art of Christmas* at the Cascade Visitors Centre on 27 September.

Art pieces donated by nine Tasmanian artists were showcased at the elegant cocktail function. Guests were entertained with jazz music as they viewed the original art, sipped cocktails, nibbled canapes and met the artists. Bidding was lively at auction time, with the sale of artwork raising more than \$15,000 for medical research in Tasmania on the night.

Eight art pieces have been reproduced into Menzies' 2007 *Art of Christmas* card range. The cards are now available for purchase from reception at Menzies and the RHHRF, at Fullers Bookshops in Hobart and Launceston and via mail order from the Menzies website.

One original framed artwork is still available for purchase: the beautiful "Sunrise from Southport" by Joan Humble. The painting is on display in Menzies' reception and all proceeds support health and medical research.

For more information, consult the website at www.menzies.utas.edu.au/artofchristmas.html or phone Susan Sussems on 6226 7700.

Thank you

The 2007 *Art of Christmas* has been made possible with the generous assistance of:

Artists

Natalie Dowling	Rebecca Murdoch
Joan Humble	Leigh Oates
Nigel Lazenby	Georgina Pajak
Cathy McAuliffe	Michael Weitnauer
Robyn Miller	

Sponsors

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Joel Rheinberger	Photographer

Thank you also to our generous supporters who purchased artwork on the night.

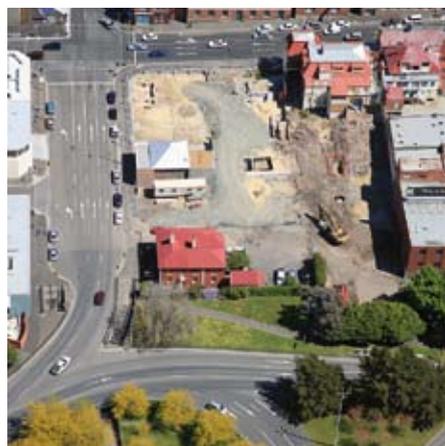


Artist Leigh Oates with his wife Ruth Oates



Steve Clennett chats with Tony Reidy of the RHHRF

Menzies site a historical hot spot



A birds eye view of the site shows a clean slate, ready for construction to begin!

Artefacts giving insight into how the rich lived in Hobart around the time of settlement are being uncovered at the Menzies site on the corner of Liverpool and Campbell Streets.

The old Menzies headquarters was demolished in September to make way for a modern new building in which the Menzies Research Institute and University of Tasmania's Faculty of Health Science will be co-located.

A team of archeologists working at the site, described as a time capsule of aristocracy in early Hobart, have uncovered the foundations of two Georgian mansions complete with cellar, stables and coach-houses.

Around 40,000 artefacts have been

unearthed from the historic site including smoking pipes, tumblers, plates, whisky decanters and children's toys. These relics of the past will be conserved by the University and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Visitors to the new building will have the chance to glimpse life in historic Hobart through the incorporation of glass panels in the ground floor of the building, which will allow people to walk over cesspits and stables, and observe artefacts where they were uncovered.

Once archaeological studies are complete, the site will be carefully covered over and preserved. Construction of the new building is expected to start in January 2008.

Study progress: thanks to you

In March this year we asked our committed donors to financially support Menzies' ongoing research into the causes of blood cancers such as leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

Blood cancers can affect people of any age. Many people are aware that leukaemia is the most common form of childhood cancer, but in fact 90 percent of Australians diagnosed with leukaemia are adults.

The Tasmanian Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research Study commenced in 2005, with the aim of identifying genes that contribute to increased risk of blood cancers.

With support from our generous donors, as well as major contributions from The Cancer Council Tasmania, The David Collins Leukaemia Foundation and Perpetual Trustees, researchers have been able to recruit families that have been affected with several cases of these blood disorders.

Researchers have identified 15 large families, and many people in these families have kindly donated their time and their DNA to the study. The study continues to focus on sample collection and identifying new family members in the large family pedigrees.

The genetic profiles of one large family have been examined, and researchers are currently completing further analysis to refine the genetic regions of interest that have been identified.

Preliminary results from the study have been presented at national conferences in the fields of human genetics and haematology.

Many thanks to all of our supporters who have supported this important project.

Society for the Future



Would you like information about bequest giving at Menzies? Please contact Development Coordinator Barbara Zimmerman on 6226 7782 or by email at barbaraz@utas.edu.au

Grants

The following grants have been awarded to the Menzies Research Institute since the last issue of the Bulletin.

Asian Pacific Society of Respiriology Travel Grant.

*O'May C; Kirov S; Sanderson K; *Reid D.

Reducing iron availability is a potential strategy for combating bacterial infection in the cystic fibrosis (CF) lung. \$1,500

Australian Research Council Linkage Grant – Infrastructure, Equipment & Facilities.

*Vickers, J; *Foote, S; *Small, D; *Walters, H; Hallegraef, G; *West, A; *Chung, R; *Woods, G; *Dickson, T; Nowak, B; Bolch, C; Patil, J.

Establishment of a confocal/multiphoton microscope for imaging of living systems. \$300,000

Australian Research Council Discovery Grant.

*Keske, M; *Rattigan, S.
Blood flow routes in muscle. \$390,000

Ian Potter Foundation Travel Grant.

*Hynes, K.
Australian and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society Annual Scientific Meeting. \$1,000

Ian Potter Foundation Travel Grant.

*van der Mei, IAF.
Visit to the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston USA. \$3,000

National Health & Medical Research Council Program Grant.

*Foote, SJ; Speed, TP; Smyth, G; Bahlo, M; Chalmers, DRC; Amor, D.
Genetic and Bioinformatic Analysis of Complex Human Diseases \$8,134,000

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*Blizzard, CL; Hosmer, D; *Quinn, SJ.
Goodness-of-fit testing of log-link models for categorical outcome data \$252,025

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*Ding, C; *Jones, G; *Venn, A; Cicuttini, FM
Does childhood physical activity, fitness and fatness impact on knee structural change 20 years later? \$292 926

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*Holloway, AF; Shannon, MF
How does basal chromatin structure predict cytokine gene responses \$501,000

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*Sanderson, Kristy; Oldenburg, B; Graves, N; Nicholson, J
Depression and anxiety in working adults: the costs and outcomes of working while ill \$133,438

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*Small, DH; *Vickers, JC; *West, AK
Regulation of the beta-secretase (BACE1) by glycosaminoglycans \$539,250

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*van der Mei, IAF; *Ponsonby, AL; *Taylor, BVM; Dwyer, D; Dwyer, T; *Blizzard, CL
Effect of EBV and HHV-6 latent infection or reactivation on MS activity: a prospective clinical cohort study \$258,500

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*Walters, EH; *Wood-Baker, R; *Reid, DW; Muller, HK; *Holloway, AF
Scarring and angiogenesis in the airway wall in smoking and COPD: links between inflammation and remodeling \$347,125

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*West, AK; *Chung, RS; *Vickers, JC; *Chuah, MI
Interactions between injured neurons, astrocytes and metallothionein \$458,750

National Health & Medical Research Council Project Grant.

*Wood-Baker, R; *Walters, EH; Robinson, A; *Nelson, MR; Turner, P; Scott, JL
A comprehensive self-management programme for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in the community \$375,375

National Health & Medical Research Council Grant - General Practice Clinical Research Program.

*Nelson, MR; *Reid, C; Ryan, P; Tonkin, AM; Wing, LM
Absolute risk prediction of subsequent cardiovascular events in a large cohort of elderly Australians with hypertension \$192,110

National Health & Medical Research Council Fellowship - Research.

*Rattigan, S.
NHMRC Research Fellowship (SRFB) \$537,500

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Cardiovascular Research Grant.

Howes, FS; *Nelson, MR; Hansen, EC
Barriers to initiating treatment in hypertension and treating to target levels \$11,920



Yes, I would like to help the Menzies Research Institute

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deducted from my credit card.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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Please do not publish my name in the 'Valued Supporters' section of Menzies' next Bulletin.

Please send me information on remembering Menzies in my Will.

Thank you for your support.

Please post to:
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Menzies
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More than flowers



Recognised as an extremely skilled and passionate photographer, Graeme Woolley captured a vast array of images through his camera lens over five decades.

His most popular series of photographs was an amazing set of images of Mount Wellington taken from his backyard in Howrah, recently featured in a book published by his family titled "Moods of a Mountain".

Graeme battled illness in 2005 and 2006, though he still made time to mentor and encourage others in his photographic passions. He passed away in October 2006.

His son Nigel explained that his Dad was rather disbelieving when his family suggested his photos should be published.

"Sadly he never got to see the final product. It would have been priceless to see his reaction to the selling of 1,600 books in a short time, and his work being the number one book sold in Tasmania for four weeks in a row," said Nigel.

The family made the decision to donate a significant proportion of proceeds from Graeme's book to medical research at the Menzies, in his honour.

Graeme's memory will live on through his photography, with his talent inspiring generations to come. His family's decision to make an 'in memoriam' donation to research means he will also be remembered by Menzies.

If you would like information on making an 'in memoriam' donation to medical research at Menzies, please phone Development Officer, Susan Sussems on 6226 7700.

Lasting Legacy (August 2007 - October 2007)

Gifts of remembrance have been made in honour of:

Mrs Joan Graney

Mrs Vera Houdek

Mr Peter Markowicz

Mr Robert Morrisby

Mr Robert Purden

Mr Stanley Shaw

Mrs Ethel Turner

Mr Graeme Woolley