

BRAIN MATTER(S)

NEWSLETTER
OF THE FLOREY
NEUROSCIENCE
INSTITUTES

IMPROVING LIFE THROUGH BRAIN RESEARCH

ISSUE 1 AUTUMN 2009

CAITLIN'S FUND

AUSTRALIA'S RESEARCH AWARDS

CHARITYWORKS MS BALL



THE FNI INITIATIVE AVERT TRIAL HAS SHOWN THAT GETTING PATIENTS UP, OUT OF BED AND WALKING SOON AFTER STROKE HELPS WITH THEIR MOOD

EARLY EXERCISE AFTER STROKE HELPS MOOD

New research has shown that getting patients up, out of bed and walking soon after stroke helps with their mood.

In the current hospital situation, more than 40% of patients report multiple symptoms of depression such as poor appetite, disturbed sleep and sadness in the first seven days after stroke. In contrast, only 20% of patients who were provided with an early active exercise program described similar symptoms.

Dr Toby Cumming, a research fellow with the *AVERT Very Early Rehabilitation Research Program* said, "We found that patients provided with early out of bed mobility exercises during their hospital stay were less depressed".

Ron, one of the members of the very early exercise group, said he was keen to get out of bed and move around following his stroke. He enjoyed the exercise sessions with the nurses and physiotherapist who would take him walking around the ward and up and down flights of stairs.

Ron said, "I've always been active; I enjoy gardening and doing things around the house. I don't like to sit around much."

In the days following his stroke, Ron noticed that he was teary and emotional. According to his wife, Margaret, the early rehabilitation exercises helped his mood: "It lifted his mood to be up and around, it made him feel that he wasn't incapacitated".

This research is encouraging and suggests that something as simple as exercise early after stroke can minimize symptoms of depression.

The next phase of AVERT is underway and will involve over 2,000 stroke patients from hospitals in Australia and overseas.

The AVERT trial is an FNI initiative. Initial grant support was provided by the National Heart Foundation, with an NHMRC grant of \$2.8 million funding the five year trial.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A GROWING SENSE OF EXCITEMENT IS MOVING THROUGH FLOREY NEUROSCIENCE INSTITUTES (FNI). AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST NEUROSCIENCE GROUP IS AMALGAMATING ITS RESEARCH, ADMINISTRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE. THE CHALLENGE AHEAD IS TO SEE THE INSTITUTES COME TOGETHER SUCCESSFULLY, AND THRIVE AND GROW INTO ONE OF THE TOP SIX NEUROSCIENCE FACILITIES IN THE WORLD.

My goals for the organisation over the next 12 months are:

1. to maintain and grow our scientific effort in spite of disruptions brought on by the amalgamation and building processes
2. to greatly expand our collaborative efforts across the group and with external partners
3. to enhance cross-fertilisation of ideas between research streams
4. to meet the funding challenges that face our expanding organisation

To meet the funding shortfall currently facing FNI, we recently applied to the Federal Government's \$5 billion Health and Hospital Fund. Our application for \$39.7 million is specifically for the completion of FNI's building project and the purchase of essential scientific equipment. We expect that the government will announce successful funding applications closer to the May budget.

Helping to create a stronger presence with government both federally and on a state basis, FNI has welcomed government ministers and local parliamentarians to tour the FNI facilities. Through a number of visits conducted during March our political leaders were overwhelmingly impressed with FNI's vision and commitment to improving life through brain research.

The early part of each calendar year usually sees a flurry of activity with scientists busily preparing research funding applications to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). In 2009 FNI scientists collectively applied for more than 40 NHMRC grants, a record for the group. At any one time we hold over 80 NHMRC grants in various categories ranging from large programs to individual scientist awards.

Finally and importantly, I would like to thank Professor Fred Mendelsohn who after 11 years as Director retired at the end of 2008. In the 1990s, Fred was instrumental in directing the then Howard Florey Institute towards neuroscience, and was a key architect in the development of FNI. Fred has left the organisation in good shape. He has attracted world class scientists to the team and has positioned us to become one of the largest neuroscience groups in the world. Fortunately, Fred will continue his connection and work with FNI. He has an office here so that we can readily take advantage of his years of experience.

Prof Geoffrey Donnan, Director, Florey Neuroscience Institutes

BRAIN MATTER(S): A NEW LOOK FOR THE FLOREY

Welcome to the new look and expanded newsletter replacing *The Florey*, *FNI News* and other publications that were being distributed throughout the FNI group.

Brain Matter(s) takes the best of *The Florey* and expands its approach to include the research undertaken at the Austin campus of FNI.

Brain Matter(s) will continue to keep you up to date with our research, the awards our outstanding scientists win, the building of our new facilities and the special fundraising efforts undertaken by highly committed individuals.

If you have a story that you would like to share with us, or a question that you would like to see answered in a future issue of Brain Matter(s), please email the Editor, Robert Hilkes at robert.hilkes@florey.edu.au

BUILDING UPDATES

Development of the \$225 million Parkville and Austin neuroscience facilities is progressing with the underground car park at the Parkville site taking shape.

Demolition at the Austin campus has been completed and the site is now being readied for construction.

The state-of-the-art research facilities are expected to be ready for more than 500 researchers and staff by mid-2011.

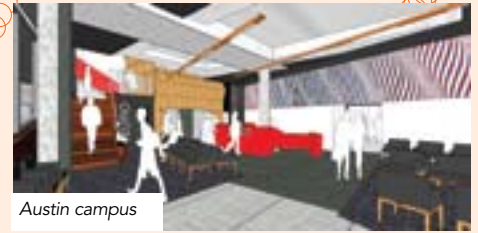
From the outset of the building process, cameras have been located on adjacent buildings to the Parkville site. Periodic shots have been taken of the construction taking place and this photographic record of the Parkville project can be viewed at <http://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/neuro/>

An important aspect of the development process was to ensure that there was a familial look and a fluidity of design of the two campuses. The architects have ensured that whether an external visitor or a staff member visits either the Parkville or Austin campus, they immediately recognise that the two buildings represent the one organisation.

These architects' impressions of the foyers to the two buildings demonstrate the familiarity people will feel when moving from one campus to the other.



Parkville campus



Austin campus



L-R. Prof Michael Good, Chairman of the NHMRC with Prof Graeme Jackson

FNI RESEARCHER, NEUROLOGIST PROFESSOR GRAEME JACKSON, WINS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S HIGHEST RESEARCH AWARDS

Seven of Australian's most distinguished health and medical researchers were recognised in December for their outstanding contribution to the success of research in this country. An FNI Deputy Director, Professor Graeme Jackson, was one of them.

Professor Jackson, a neurologist and Director and Founder of the Brain Research Institute (part of the FNI) was recognised for his work in defining the causes of epilepsy and for classifying the brain's developmental abnormalities using Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

The NHMRC, Australia's leading funding body for health and medical research, granted its Excellence Awards to the highest ranked recipients of grants and fellowships in 2008. Recipients were assessed by a group of experts, through a comprehensive peer review process.

Professor Michael Good, Chair of the NHMRC, presented the awards at an invitation-only dinner in Canberra on Wednesday the 10th of December 2008.

“OUR AIM FROM THE START WAS TO PLAY A PART IN FINDING A CURE FOR MS” SAID LINA. “WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT FUNDING THIS SCHOLARSHIP WILL IMMEDIATELY CONTRIBUTE TO FURTHER KNOWLEDGE AND BETTER TREATMENTS FOR MS, AND HELP IN FINDING A CURE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.”

CHARITYWORKS MS BALL

Having Multiple Sclerosis (MS) doesn't slow Lina Marocco down – this dynamic woman and her equally dynamic committee have raised nearly \$450,000 for MS research to date through her bi-annual Charityworks MS Ball.

Rio Carnivale-themed “Music, Soul and Laughter” was held on 22nd November 2008, and was a night of great fun, food and fundraising.

Thanks to the generosity of many sponsors and 620 guests, the event raised a staggering \$147,429!

Part of the money has gone to the Watsonia Respite Centre, a facility for long term care and respite for people with MS. The remainder will fund the inaugural CWMS Fellowship at FNI for research dedicated to unravelling the mystery that is MS.

If you would like to support a special area of research by holding your own community event, please have a chat with Astrid Sweres, our Community Engagement & Fundraising Manager on 03 8344 1629. The Fundraising team will be happy to help you with ideas and support.



FLOREY NEUROSCIENCE INSTITUTES LAUNCHED AN INTERIM WEBSITE FOR THE FNI GROUP IN EARLY MARCH. THE WEB ADDRESS AT WWW.FNI.EDU.AU, PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF THE FNI GROUP ACTIVITIES, OUR RESEARCH, SENIOR STAFF, PUBLICATIONS AND IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN THE NEUROSCIENCE COMMUNITY.



WWW.FNI.EDU.AU

The website also provides direct links to the three institutes that make up the FNI group, with institute specific information contained on each relevant site.

Back copies of FNI newsletters and annual reports can be found on the website and regularly updated images of the Parkville building development can be viewed through a photographic link on the site.

Over the next 12 months FNI will further enhance and feature the website.

FAREWELLING FRED

LATE LAST YEAR, FNI CHAIRMAN CHARLES ALLEN HOSTED SEVERAL MORNING AND AFTERNOON TEA FUNCTIONS FOR OUR GENEROUS AND LONG-TERM SUPPORTERS TO FAREWELL OUR RETIRING DIRECTOR, PROFESSOR FRED MENDELSON.

EVERYONE ATTENDING GREATLY ENJOYED THE OPPORTUNITY OF TALKING TO FRED PERSONALLY, AND WISHING HIM WELL IN HIS RETIREMENT.

Prof Mendelsohn reflected on the many changes he had implemented in realigning the research direction of the Howard Florey Institute towards neuroscience during the early 1990s. He also provided guests with details of the exciting future that is unfolding in neuroscience and for the new group.

Many of those attending had already made bequest commitments to the Florey, and some mentioned that they were intending to do so in the future. They took the opportunity to seek guidance on appropriate wording following the amalgamation of Howard Florey Institute, Brain Research Institute and National Stroke Research Institute into the Florey Neuroscience Institutes.

WHAT WE DO FOR OURSELVES DIES WITH US. WHAT WE DO FOR OTHERS LIVES ON.

A bequest is a simple but powerful way to support future generations. If you haven't already done so, please consider including Florey Neuroscience Institutes in your Will.

Few legal documents are more important to the people and causes you care about than your Will. Leaving a bequest to FNI is a celebration of your achievements that will have a direct impact on brain research, and could lead to improved treatments or cures for the many brain disorders causing distress today.

If you would like further information on making a bequest please contact our Community Engagement & Fundraising Manager Astrid Sweres on 03 8344 1888 or email bequests@florey.edu.au for a confidential discussion. Astrid can provide you with all the necessary information regarding appropriate wording to ensure that your gift fulfils your vision for the future.



Caitlin and Cathryn Darbyshire

CAITLIN'S FUND

Caitlin Darbyshire was a bright and courageous little girl who passed away in 2006 at only eight years of age following a lifelong battle with brain tumours. Her parents Andrew and Cathryn, who have been generous supporters of the Florey Neuroscience Institutes for several years, decided to establish "Caitlin's Fund" in memory of their daughter.

It is Andrew and Cathryn's fervent wish that other children suffering from brain illnesses should be helped through their fundraising efforts to support medical research.

Thus, in December 2008, they awarded the inaugural "Caitlin's Fund Travel Award" of \$2,500 to Dr Elisa Hill, a young scientist undertaking research into childhood brain related illnesses.

With this Award, Elisa was able to travel to Canberra in January 2009 to attend the 29th Annual Meeting of the Australian Neuroscience Society. There she presented a poster on her work which relates to the genes implicated in febrile seizures in patients with epilepsy.

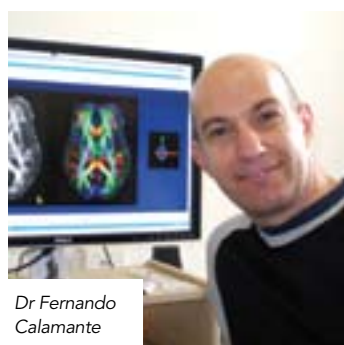
We were delighted to welcome Andrew and Cathryn to FNI in February to talk with Elisa about her work which also involves a research project on autism spectrum disorder, and they were fascinated to hear of the progress being made in this area. FNI greatly values this support, and sincerely thank Andrew and Cathryn for their continued interest in our research.

If you would like make a gift to Caitlin's Fund, please contact Margit Simondson on 03 8344 1645 for assistance.

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY DONATED TO THE FLOREY NEUROSCIENCE INSTITUTES BETWEEN OCTOBER 2008 AND MARCH 2009. LISTED ARE THOSE WHO KINDLY DONATED \$1,000 OR MORE.

CHRIS ABBOTT. THE WILLIAM ANGLISS (VIC) CHARITABLE FUND. ANZ BANKING GROUP LIMITED. ANZ TRUSTEES. ERIC ORMOND BAKER CHARITABLE FUND. BELL CHARITABLE FUND. BESEN FAMILY FOUNDATION. THE CASS FOUNDATION LTD. RICHARD COTTON. ANDREW DARBYSHIRE. HELEN GROVES. GEOFF HANDBURY. RICHARD HARBIG. HOWARD FLOREY BIOMEDICAL FOUNDATION (US). LORD MAYOR'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION. NAOMI MILGROM. J M MURCHIE NOMINEES PTY LTD. THE IAN POTTER FOUNDATION. JOHN T REID CHARITABLE TRUSTS. GAVIN ROGERS. GARY STILIANO. GREGORY TAGGART. THE JO & JR WICKING TRUST.

IN MEMORIAM. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE ALL THE GIFTS WE HAVE RECEIVED IN MEMORY OF LOVED ONES. THOSE REMEMBERED HERE ARE: IAN JAMES (JIM) BAXTER, WALTER BENSON, EDNA COUTTS, WINSTON LISTER FERNANDO.



Dr Fernando Calamante

DR FERNANDO CALAMANTE APPOINTED TO LEAD ROLE AT ISMRM

FNI researcher, Dr Fernando Calamante, was recently named "Chair Elect" of the "Diffusion and Perfusion" Study Group of the highly prestigious International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM).

The ISMRM is the largest international society in the field of magnetic resonance. It is a nonprofit scientific association whose purpose is to promote communication, research, development, and applications in the field of magnetic resonance in medicine and biology and other related topics, and to develop channels and facilities for continuing education in the field. Its multidisciplinary membership of over 6,000 consists of clinicians, physicists, engineers, biochemists and technologists.

The "Diffusion & Perfusion" Study Group is the largest Study Group in the ISMRM, with 895 members. Fernando's post as Chair Elect will begin in April 2009, the post progresses to Chair in 2010, and ends in 2011.

FNI STUDENT WINS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE SCIENTIFIC POSTER AWARD

FNI PhD candidate Laura Oluich was one of only five winners of the Sir Grafton Elliot-Smith Award at the annual Australian Neuroscience Society (ANS) meeting.

At the meeting held in Canberra, Laura was one of five students out of approximately 200 entrants who presented the best scientific poster.

Laura's work looks at developing a mouse model that mimics some of the damage seen in the human brain due to Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Her model will provide researchers with a better understanding of MS pathology, and identify new targets to promote brain repair in MS.



For more information contact the Editor, Robert Hilkes: robert.hilkes@florey.edu.au +61 3 8344 1658

The Florey Neuroscience Institutes is the amalgamation of the Howard Florey Institute, the Brain Research Institute and the National Stroke Research Institute. Trust Foundation is a proud philanthropic supporter of the FNI Newsletter. www.trust.com.au

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