Health check
Griffith Health newsletter
Issue 21, 2009

Griffith Health vision
Promoting Health, Enabling Communities
Griffith Health will, through leadership and innovation in teaching, research and community engagement, create sustained improvements in all aspects of health and health care for the local, national and international communities.

Research Australia – Griffith University Discovery Award
One of Australia’s brightest young scientists, Dr Jeff Holst has been recognised for insights into how autoimmune diseases start. Published in *Nature Immunology*, his work has the promise of improved diagnostics and treatment of autoimmune diseases such as lupus, type 1 diabetes and multiple sclerosis. He is now investigating how prostrate cancer cells increase their nutrient supply, which could lead to therapies designed to ‘starve the cancer’ by blocking nutrient uptake.

Research Australia is a national alliance of over 190 organisations, with a mission to make health and medical research a higher national priority. Independent of government and not-for-profit, Research Australia’s activities are funded by its members, donors and supporters from leading research organisations, academic institutions, philanthropy, community special interest groups, peak industry bodies, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, small businesses and corporate Australia. Research Australia shapes policy, advocacy and leadership in health and medical research and celebrates Australian Research excellence.

Research Australia’s members provide a broad base of expertise and experience to inform decision-makers within government, industry and community. Member networking events and working groups bring together members from across Australia, reinforcing the strengths of Australia’s health and medical research sector. Research Australia is a part of a network which includes Research America and Research Canada, so extend collaboration internationally.

Research Australia’s mission and goals aim to:
- Keep society well informed and valuing the benefits of health and medical research
- Encourage greater investment in health and medical research from government, industry and philanthropy
- Ensure Australia captures the benefits of health and medical research
- Optimise Australia’s global position in health and medical research.

Professor Allan Cripps is a member of the Board of Directors, Chair of the University Roundtable and has chaired the Research Australia Philanthropy Steering Committee.

Dr Jeff Holst, Centenary Institute “Thank You” Day Award winner of the Griffith University Discovery Award with Professor Allan Cripps.
Griffith University is to launch its Physiotherapy and Active Health Centre. The Centre will provide an additional venue for physiotherapy and exercise science students to gain valuable clinical experience while also providing a high quality clinical service to the community.

Initially the Centre will be offering services across the spectrum of musculoskeletal health – from prevention of injury to the treatment of acute injuries and the rehabilitation from injury or surgery.

Centre director Dr Richard Newsham-West said his vision was to gradually expand services to include other specialised areas such as cardiovascular and neurological health and elite sports performance.

He said the Centre could also accommodate other disciplines such as dietetics and sports psychology in the multidisciplinary management of health, sports and active lifestyles.

“With the clinical experience and postgraduate level qualifications of the current staff, combined with their academic knowledge and current research interests, we will be able to provide leading edge, evidence-based best practice either through treatment provided by themselves or through the supervised practice of entry level or postgraduate physiotherapy students.”

“The University also has excellent resources such as the equipment and skills to provide services such as strength testing, motion analysis and sports assessment that I hope will become part of a suite of clinics to help assist the performance of athletes through to the rehabilitation of patients recovering from surgery.”

Dr Newsham-West, who moved to the Gold Coast last year to establish the Centre, said the work was an extension of his passion for sports, physical activity and the profession.

A former middle-distance runner himself said he had his own share of injuries as an athlete and was always intrigued by form and function of the human body and physical performance.

Dr Newsham-West qualified as a physiotherapist in Otago, New Zealand, and specialised early in musculoskeletal and sports physiotherapy working in one of New Zealand’s leading sports medicine and rehabilitation clinics.

He has travelled with New Zealand’s National athletics and hockey teams and supervised the physiotherapy services for major sporting events such as the Netball World Cup, New Zealand Masters Games and the gruelling adventure race known as the Coast to Coast.

“Competitors in this event run, cycle and kayak from one coast to the other across the South Island. As the event physiotherapist I’d be up at 4am strapping ankles by the use of car headlights and still working when the last competitor came off the mountain run section at 7 or 8pm.”

Dr Newsham-West said he enjoys working with athletes of all ages and levels for the challenge of ‘beating mother nature’ and getting them back from injury as quick as possible.

The Centre operates on a discounted fee-for-service basis. Enquiries to 07 5552 9220 or thephysiocentre@griffith.edu.au
First medical graduates

Griffith has proudly graduated its first doctors and dentists.

Seventy Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery students and 45 Graduate Diploma of Dentistry students made up the inaugural graduating classes.

Pro Vice Chancellor (Health) Professor Allan Cripps welcomed the culmination of years of planning and development involved in establishing the two new Schools and graduating the first cohorts.

“The introduction of flagship programs such as medicine and dentistry has involved an enormous amount of work in terms of staff recruitment, curriculum design, infrastructure development and administration.”

“Our first students came into brand new programs with only provisional accreditation and in temporary facilities. They have grown and moved with us as the Schools bedded down innovative teaching in purpose built facilities and developed strong and productive links with the Gold Coast community.”

He said both programs have since received full accreditation from the relevant councils.

Nineteen of the graduating medical students will join the Gold Coast Hospital internship program – and have the benefit of making the transition from medical student to doctor in a familiar environment.

Other medical graduates will head off to accredited training hospitals throughout regional Queensland, in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and New Zealand.

Dental graduates will also be widely dispersed across the country with some staying on to work in southeast Queensland, many returning to home towns in New South Wales and Victoria, and several joining the defence force.

Dean of Medicine Professor Judy Searle has praised her graduating students for their ‘pioneering spirit’.

“These students have had to be very flexible over the last four years and deal with a lot of uncertainty. However they have also been great ambassadors for Griffith and for the profession.

International boost in public health

Griffith’s expertise in international and public health has been boosted with the appointment of Professor Allen Ross as Chair of Public Health. Professor Ross comes to Griffith from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada although his research interests, which focus on tropical and infectious diseases, ensure he is widely travelled.

One of his particular interests is the parasitic infection schistosomiasis which causes a significant burden of disease in endemic areas throughout Africa and Asia. “Schistosomiasis is one of the neglected tropical diseases that is a major public health problem in places such as China and the Philippines”. He said the burden of the disease has been grossly underestimated but is now attracting major funding from organisations such as the Gates Foundation and USAID. It adversely affects growth and cognitive function in children and as a consequence also impacts on other aspects of their life such as school performance.

Professor Ross said he had always wanted to work in developing countries and with vulnerable communities in order to tackle the deadly combination of infection, malnutrition and poverty. “People are born into poverty through no fault of their own. Sustainable public health programs, such as vaccination, have the potential to control disease and impact the lives of countless thousands.” Professor Ross, who has clinical as well as public health qualifications, is also interested in sexually transmitted infections and blood borne viruses (HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C) and plans to carry out research in Queensland among vulnerable populations.

His colleague, Dr Jose Rey-Ladino, has also recently joined Griffith as a Research Fellow and will be setting up a laboratory at Logan campus to develop a vaccine against the sexually transmitted infection Chlamydia and to work on other infectious diseases. Dr Rey-Ladino comes from the Centre for Disease Control in Vancouver, Canada and has a background in clinical immunology and microbiology.
Health check

Sowing the seeds for a healthy community

Aboriginal and Polynesian dancing, African drumming and multicultural food tastings were part of the festivities at Griffith's Logan campus as about 250 members of the local community celebrated the expansion of the community food garden.

The garden, comprising a couple of hectares of garden beds, a shed and some basic facilities, is providing a valuable communal space for new migrants from countries such as Burundi, the Congo and Sudan.

The community food garden helps integrate the new residents into the local community by providing employment and training opportunities and a venue for cultural exchange and expression.

Public health nutritionist Dr Shawn Somerset said food gardening also provided health benefits through a focus on nutritious plant foods, increased physical activity, and meeting social and psychological needs.

“Many of these people come from an agricultural background and it is important to them to have a garden. They relish the opportunity to grow traditional foods and cash crops.”

Sudanese woman and mother of five Cecilia Ossa has been in Australia for about five years and an active gardener at the Logan site for the last couple of years.

She said she and her husband enjoy growing their own food including okra, cassava, black eyed peas, corn and sweet potatoes.

While the garden started as a teaching resource for Griffith’s public health students, it has since expanded its role into the local community, supported by community and government agencies under the banner of the Queensland Government’s Community Renewal program.

Logan organisation A.C.C.E.S Services Inc assists in the transition of some 500-600 new immigrants into the local community each year.

As well as providing settlement orientation programs, counselling, social support and housing assistance, they also manage the community jobs program to enhance work readiness in participants.

About twenty people from Horn of Africa nations, Thailand, Burma, Samoa and Fiji have been employed in the community food garden over the last four months, honing practical skills such as building and landscaping. Several participants have found permanent work by the end of the program.

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New appointment

Professor Ratilal Lalloo has joined Griffith University as the inaugural Colgate Chair in Rural, Remote and Indigenous Oral Health.

The new position supports the University’s long-standing commitment to social justice and the teaching and research agendas of the School of Dentistry and Oral Health.

Professor Lalloo, who holds an Honours degree in epidemiology, Masters in community dentistry, and a PhD in dental public health, was previously head of community dentistry at the University of Limpopo in South Africa.

He said the new position at Griffith was in keeping with his academic and research interests but also his broader values.

“You cannot help but be politicised at a very young age when growing up under apartheid in South Africa. My family are middle class and I had a relatively privileged upbringing, but it certainly makes you think about the differences in society.”

“The impact and consequences of poverty are the same around the world. All health indicators are worse, from trauma to cancer and the ability to access health care.”

Professor Lalloo said dental public health focussed on the window of opportunity in childhood to implement preventive health programs and establish healthy behaviours.

Griffith students have already worked on research placements in the Aboriginal communities of Arukun in Cape York and Cherbourg in south-east Queensland.

This year Griffith, in partnership with Ochre Health Limited, Greater Western Area Health and Brewarrina Shire Council is establishing a part-time dental clinic in the rural town of Brewarrina, NSW. Fully supervised students will work in the clinic on three week rotations – providing valuable oral health services to the remote community.

Professor Lalloo said exposing students to rural practice gave them an opportunity to consider their future career choices.

“It is crucial that our students experience the real world and its challenges at placements such as Brewarrina and other sites. From a professional point of view, rural practice has many attractions including more flexibility and autonomy for students,” he said.

Australian Psychological Society 2008 early career research award

Dr Allison Waters is the winner of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) 2008 Early Career Research Award. According to the APS, this award recognises excellence in scientific achievement in psychology among psychologists who are at early stages of their research careers.

In addition, the award is intended for individuals whose achievements stemming from their PhDs and work completed since their PhDs were confirmed as outstanding and place them significantly ahead of their peers. Dr Waters’ success affirms the high quality of research conducted by staff within the School of Psychology and the Behavioural Basis of Health program.

Nurse of the year

Melissa Carey, associate lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Logan was declared Regional Charity Nurse of the Year for South-East Queensland late last year. A cheque for $1000 was presented to Melissa by Cancer Council Queensland’s representative Peta West. The money will be used by the School for teaching resources related to cancer education and cancer nursing.

Congress award

Master of Pharmacy student Ines Francia has been awarded the 2009 Contribution to Congress Award for her thoughtful contributions to the debate and discussions during education sessions at the annual National Australian Pharmacy Students’ Association (NAPSA) Congress.

About 250 pharmacy students attended the NAPSA Congress in Perth this year. The 2010 Congress will be hosted by Griffith’s pharmacy students on the Gold Coast. Ines, a registered nurse, is pursuing a career change to pharmacy with the support of an indigenous health scholarship awarded by the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund.

The scholarship is designed to encourage Indigenous students into a wide range of health professions where they can use their education to benefit other Indigenous people.
Global Illumination Event

If you thought you saw the Griffith Smith Street Bridge lit up pink, your eyes were not deceiving you. Griffith University’s iconic red Smith St Bridge was bathed in pink from Sept 24 through to the end of October 2008, as part of a nationwide project to launch the National Breast Cancer Foundation’s Global Illumination Event held as part of Breast Cancer Month each October.

The Global Illumination event was initiated by Estee Lauder Companies to light significant landmarks and monuments around the world pink – from Niagara Falls, to the Torre di Pisa in Italy, to Table Mountain in South Africa– raising vital funds for research.

Launch of the GIHMR Research Excellence Awards

The Griffith Institute for Health and Medical Research (GIHMR) launched the GIHMR Research Excellence Awards to recognise the quality and productivity of research within the Institute. The awards are based on quality, impact and significance of research in the following categories.

Established Researcher Excellence Award

Early – Mid Career Research Excellence Award

The 2008 recipients announced at the Gold Coast Health and Medical Conference, were:

Established Researcher Award

Professor Wendy Moyle

Professor Moyle’s research has evolved around professional practice issues that focus on evidence for “care” in the areas of aged care and in particular dementia care. This work commenced with an exploration of care of older people and people with dementia in residential care. It has specifically looked at: management of disruptive behaviours in people with dementia, including clinical trials of complementary therapies, quality of life and care models.

Associate Professor Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck

In addition to continuing her research on interventions to improve family relationships and children’s health within the Family Interaction Research Program, A/Prof Zimmer-Gembeck’s current research focuses on child, adolescent, and young adult emotional health and how it is impacted by relationship stressors (rejection, aggression), individual regulatory processes and coping strategies.

Associate Professor Paula Brough

A/Prof Brough currently leads an ARC–DP assessing the experiences of work–life balance for workers in four countries (Hong Kong, China, New Zealand and Australia) and also leads an ARC–LP validating an occupational stress intervention for correctional staff (in collaboration with Queensland Corrective Services).

She is currently a recipient of a Qld Smart State Senior Researcher Fellowship to introduce the Healthy Workplaces program in the Qld Police Service.
Online program for infection control and prevention

Ruth Barratt has specialised as a clinical nurse in infection control and prevention for about nine years and was keen to pursue some postgraduate study in the area.

While there weren’t any relevant programs available in New Zealand, she found a suitable online solution at Griffith.

Recently graduating with a Master of Advanced Practice (Infection Control and Prevention) with Class 1 Honours, Ms Barratt said the masters program gave her the opportunity to do some interesting research.

“Most nursing research is done as part of postgraduate study,” she said.

Her research looked at the experiences of patients nursed with isolation precautions because of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection or colonisation.

“Interviews with patients revealed that we can do better in terms of providing them with information about their care. Isolation can be scary for patients, even more so when they have no clinical signs or symptoms of being MRSA positive. A greater understanding of MRSA may help them cope better with their isolation,” she said.

“Interestingly, patients all had a keen sense of responsibility about the potential for spread of infection and understood that isolation might be necessary to protect other patients.”

Ms Barratt’s research earned a best paper award recently at the NZ Infection Control conference. She will use the prize money to attend an international Infection Control conference in the UK in September.

### STAFF NEWS

**Joan Webster**, Adjunct Professor of Griffith University – Research Centre for Clinical and Community Practice Innovation has recently accepted a prestigious offer from the University of York, United Kingdom to be a Visiting Professor. During her visit, Adjunct Prof Webster will be working with the Cochrane Wounds group for 5 weeks, updating her Cochrane reviews and presenting seminars to students and academics on her research and the evidence based practice program that she runs in Australia. She will also be attending the UK Cochrane Contributors Meeting in Edinburgh from the 17 to 19 March 2009. The Edinburgh meeting will provide an opportunity to meet with the coordinator and staff of the Cochrane Peripheral Vascular Group; for whom Joan and Professor Claire Rickard are writing a Cochrane review.

**Elisabeth Coyne**, School of Nursing and Midwifery, has been awarded the Royal College of Nursing Australia National Research grants and scholarships Annie Sage Memorial Scholarship $10000 and the Centaur Memorial Fund for Nurses Fellowship $15000.

**Promotion to Professor**

Associate Professor Jiri Neuzil (Medical Science), Associate Professor Elizabeth Patterson (Nursing and Midwifery).

**Early-mid Career Researcher Award**

**Associate Professor Rod Barrett**

His current research involves using a combination of laboratory experiments (using 3D motion analysis, EMG, ultrasound, MRI and isokinetic dynamometry) and neuro-musculo-skeletal modelling to understand the neuro-mechanical factors that contribute to the high incidence of falls in older adults.

**Dr Jason Peart**

Dr Peart’s main areas of research relate to mechanisms of ischaemic injury and cardioprotection in young and aged myocardium and endogenous cardioprotectants - adenosine and opioids.

**Poster Awards**

ASBMB Poster Award - **Samuel Cutler**
- STAT-1, not STAT-3, regulates constitutive and Interleukin-6/PMA inducible STAT Binding Elements of the proximal MMP-3 promoter in colorectal cancer

Bio-Rad Poster Award - **Jennifer Barbour**
- Job satisfaction, psychological strain and turnover intentions in police officers: The influence of organisation-specific measures of support

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(1) www.griffith.edu.au/health
Recipients of the 2008 Griffith grants for learning and teaching

Expansion of the SAGC tool for use by academics to measure generic skills growth in students

Dr Jennifer Cartmel (Human Services and Social Work); Associate Professor Alf Lizzio (Psychology)

Work-integrated learning (WIL): Developing an evidence-based support framework for international students

Kathleen Lilley (Qld Centre for Public Health), Professor Don Stewart and Dr Neil Harris (Public Health)

Introduction of research-based learning into the foundation year health program

Dr Helen Naug and Dr Natalie Colson (Medical Science)

Improving functioning knowledge and practical skills in Physiotherapy and Exercise Science students through active engagement with movement analysis technology

Dr Peter Mills, Associate Professor Rod Barrett, Professor Peter Milburn, Associate Professor Norman Morris, Dr Justin Kavanagh, Dr Neil Tuttle and Dr Greg Reddan (Physiotherapy and Exercise Science)

Setting the stage for success: Adapted Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) to position culturally and linguistically diverse students for academic achievement

Bernadette Watson, Marion Tower, Fran Gallagher and Associate Professor Marie Cooke (Nursing and Midwifery); Janine Chipperfield (Griffith Health)


Health check
Funding and Conferences

PUBLICATIONS (continued)


FUNDING


Colson N. Griffith New Researcher Grant (NRG) $14,000. (2009).

Ganji M, Griffiths LR. Cancer Council Queensland Project Grant 2 years Biomolecular profiling in PET/CT directed diffuse large B cell lymphoma. $164,000. 2009-2010.


Griffiths LR, MigArray Griffith Enterprise Grant, Development of a migraine diagnostic array. $10,000. 2009


Mellick A. GU New Investigator Award $20,000. 2008

Mellick AS, Griffiths LR. ARC Discovery Project, The role of small non coding RNAs in bone marrow mediated tumour angiogenesis. $127,000. 2009.


Pearl J, Headrick J. Cardioprotection via “Sustained ligand-activated preconditioning” in ischemic-reperfused myocardium. NHFA Grant-in-Aid. $64k (2009); $64K (2010).

Pearl J. Limiting infarction/dysfunction through sustained ligand postconditioning. Griffith University Research Grant Scheme (GURG) $20,201

Perkins T, Haseler L, Jayasinghe R, Bissessor N. Peripheral Oxygen Utilisation and Oxidative Stress in Heart Failure. Gold Coast Hospital Foundation Grant $19.5K


Rickard CM, Ray-Barres J. Systematic review of infection control literature to provide the evidence underpinning the revised “Infection control guidelines for the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases in the healthcare setting (the guidelines)”. NHMRC. $55,000, 2009.


Ulett G. NHMRC Project Grant: 569674 COMPARATIVE ANTI-BACTERIAL IMMUNITY IN THE URINARY TRACT: DOES ONE SIZE FIT ALL? $362,500


Watson B, Gallaghser F, Tower M. Setting the stage for success: Adapted Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) to position culturally and linguistically diverse students for academic achievement. Health Group Grants Committee - Griffith Health. $5,000, 2009.

Zhang Li. (Postdoc fellowship). Intravascular Device Program (Biofilm project). Griffith University RCCCPI. $10,000.

CONFERENCES


Collins D, Emmanuel E, Carey M. Maximising the transition experience for the first year nursing students: using art creation. Effective Teaching and Learning Conference. QUT Kelvin Grove, 30-31 October.


Hutchinson L, St John W. Boys’ access to school based youth health services (Abstract). Royal Children’s Hospital Community Child Health Conference. Brisbane. 23 October.


McKenzie S, St John, W, Walls M. Urology nurses have a role to play in helping men identify strategies to manage their urinary incontinence. Australian & New Zealand Urology Society (ANZUS).


Neumann, D. L., Thomas, P. R., & Hooper, S. L. The psychophysiological profile of elite and novice athletes during a precision sport. 43rd Annual Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Hobart. September 23-26, 2008

Neumann, D. L. Strategies that enhance student engagement during the teaching of statistics in psychology program. 43rd Annual Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Hobart. September 23-26, 2008

O’Keeffe E, Thomas P, Neumann D, Hooper S. An exploration of optimal attentional focus in cycling using a dual-task paradigm. ACICS Conference of Science and Medicine in Sport, Hamilton island 16-18 October, 2008.


Rogers M E & Glendon Al. 7th Australian Conference on Personology and Individual Differences (ACPID). (Personality and birth date: Taurus, Year of the Ox, or complete bull?). Bond University, Queensland, Australia, November, 2008.

Rogers ME, Glendon Al. 7th Australian Conference on Personology and Individual Differences (ACPID). (Personality and season of birth). Bond University, Queensland, Australia, November, 2008.

Tamariki D. Online teaching & Education. Caring for Women with Complications of Pregnancy. Griffith University. 25-27 November.

Ulett G. Strategies that enhance student engagement during the teaching of statistics in psychology program. 43rd Annual Conference of the Australian Psychological Society, Hobart. September 23-26, 2008


Zhang Li. (Postdoc fellowship). Intravascular Device Program (Biofilm project). Griffith University RCCCPI. $10,000.