Welcome from the Director

It is a great pleasure to introduce to you the inaugural edition of *Nexus* – the newsletter of the Translational Cancer Research Network (TCRN).

Our vision for the TCRN is to empower our members to implement research-led improvements in patient care. By capturing the creativity, energy and enthusiasm of our members and staff, we aim to create a sustainable translational research engine. This engine will be the driving force of the TCRN and will be used to tackle cancer problems – big and small.

It has been an active start to the year for our Operations and Projects Team, who are busy developing member resources and planning our annual schedule of member activities and development opportunities. In addition, we are pleased to have been able to open our PhD Scholarship Top-ups program, and have recently released a call for expressions of interest for our Cancer Challenge of the Year Grants Scheme. This innovative grants program will support projects which deliver immediate benefits to patients or improve our health system in a tangible manner. Look out for details of the CCY Scheme in this issue, spread the word, and get your own translational research thinking caps on!

Each month, *Nexus* will bring you the latest news in translational cancer research activity from within the TCRN – keeping you up-to-date with research developments, education and funding opportunities, collaborative events and member resources. I am looking forward to a year of strong member collaborations and exciting advances in translational research.

*Professor Robyn Ward*
*Director, TCRN*
Meet the team...

**TCRN Leadership Council**

The TCRN is guided by a thirteen member Leadership Council who will provide management, coordination and direction for the Network. Our council members bring a diversity of disciplinary skills representing five principal domains – basic research, health systems, clinical practice, primary health care and pathology.

**Robyn Ward** – Prof Ward is our TCRN Director and Chair of the Leadership Council. Robyn is the Clinical Associate Dean Prince of Wales Clinical School, UNSW and the Director of Area Cancer Services for the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. She leads the Adult Cancer Research Program in the Lowy Cancer Research Centre and is a specialist medical oncologist at Prince of Wales Hospital (POWH).

**Philip Hogg** – Prof Hogg is the Director of the Lowy Cancer Research Centre and an NHMRC Senior Principle Research Fellow. He takes the senior lead for basic research activities of the TCRN.

**Jeffrey Braithwaite** – Prof Braithwaite is the Director of the Australian Institute of Health Innovation. He brings to the Network considerable expertise in health systems and safety research.

**Mark Harris** – Prof Harris is an NHMRC Senior Professoral Research Fellow with an outstanding international reputation in the field of research into primary care medicine. He will contribute his primary health care expertise to the TCRN activities.

**Neville Hacker** – Prof Hacker established and leads the gynaecological cancer service at the Royal Hospital for Women. His direction for clinical practice research and education will be highly valuable for the Network.

**Robert Lindeman** – As Director of Haematology at the Prince of Wales Hospital and delegated representative of the South Eastern Area Laboratory Service (SEALS), A/Prof Lindeman provides pathology leadership for the TCRN.

**Elizabeth Browne** – Elizabeth is the Cancer Services Nurse Manager for South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, and has particular experience in organisational structures for cancer care delivery. Elizabeth and her staff pioneered the development of Community Cancer Outreach services for cancer patients.

**David Goldstein** – Medical Oncologist at POWH, with clinical research expertise in gastrointestinal (GI) cancer, neurotoxicity and psychosocial issues, and laboratory interests in targeted agents. Prof Goldstein has championed multidisciplinary care in GI malignancies. He strongly promotes lab-clinician interactions and is a leader of GI cancer trials in Australia.

**Peter Gunning** – Prof Gunning is an internationally recognised basic researcher, with specific expertise in paediatric cancer research. Through his activities as a researcher, teacher and mentor, as well as his many years of service on cancer research advisory committees and boards, he will provide valuable strategic perspectives regarding the interplay between basic and clinical sciences.

**Marion Haas** – Deputy Director of the Centre for Health Economics Research and Evaluation (CHERE) at the University of Technology, Sydney. Prof Haas is a health economist with expertise in the application of economic evaluation in health care settings and understanding the preferences and behaviour of providers, consumers and patients.

**Nicholas Hawkins** – Prof Hawkins heads the School of Medical Science at UNSW. He is an anatomical pathologist and molecular biologist, with expertise in the relationship between genetic/epigenetic change and cancer morphology, predominantly in the field of colorectal neoplasia. He has particular interests in tumour banking.

**Matthew Links** – A/Prof Links is a medical oncologist and Area Director of oncology training for the South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service. He has expertise in education and has pioneered a multi-disciplinary education program for St George Hospital and for Cancer Institute NSW (evIQEd). He will lead the integration of education with quality improvement for the Network.

**Craig Underhill** – Director, Greater Southern Area Health Service Regional Trials Network and Border Medical Oncology Research Unit. Dr Underhill is a medical oncologist based in Albury, and joint Senior Lecturer at the UNSW Rural Clinical School. He is an experienced clinical and health services researcher, who brings leadership skills and expertise in network development, post-graduate oncology training programs and project management.

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**Jitendra Jonnagaddala** – Information Manager

Jitendra is developing an integrated cancer research information system for the TCRN, which will enable secure data sharing and will support research activities of the network. Jitendra has worked previously in translational research and clinical data integration projects with Singapore Health Services, and holds skills in design and development of clinical trials and clinical research management systems.

**Anna Palagyi** – Project Officer

Anna will be supporting TCRN members with the efficient coordination of their individual research projects, including resourcing and project monitoring and reporting. She coordinates member communications, networking events and educational activities for the TCRN, and will be the first to alert members of new grant and research collaboration opportunities. Anna brings health education, advocacy, research and publications skills to the team, from her background in public health and international development.

**Stella Jun** – Project Officer

Stella brings a wealth of experience in program management and implementation, community advocacy, grant writing and governance to the TCRN, in addition to a research background in integrative biology and cancer-related community health projects. Working part-time, Stella will be the project lead on the consumer engagement strategy and bio-stats credit program.

**Gillian Mackay** – Project Officer

Gillian was involved in the establishment of the TCRN and continues to provide expertise in governance and all aspects of grant management. She has a background in research administration and brings valuable experience in the management of grant funding from her previous role with Cancer Council NSW.

**Lena Caruso** – Network Research Manager

Lena is responsible for the operations and governance of the TCRN, and provides support for the Leadership Council. She oversees all projects delivered by the Operations and Projects Team. Lena has over 20 years’ experience of working in universities and research-related environments, including lab-based research, seeking, securing and managing industry sponsored research, intellectual property and research management. In addition to her science qualifications and expertise, Lena has an MBA with extensive experience in business development, contract drafting and negotiations, marketing and relationship management.
TCRN invites new members

**Become a member of the TCRN**

TCRN is a member-based network formed to create an innovative and supportive environment for the translation of research findings into improvements in patient care and outcomes. Members participate actively across a range of activities in the field of translational cancer research.

Membership to the TCRN is free, with a series of benefits including access to translational cancer research funding from both Cancer Institute NSW and TCRN, biostatistician assistance, networking and research collaboration opportunities, seminars and educational events, and regular member communications.

For further membership guidelines and application details, see the provisional individual membership application form [here](#), or email the TCRN Operations and Projects Team at tcrnmembers@unsw.edu.au.

**PhD Scholarship Top-ups Scheme**

The TCRN will award up to twenty 3-year PhD Scholarship Top-ups over the next five years to students who have received funding via a peer-reviewed, competitive scholarship through UNSW. In first semester 2012, up to six PhD scholarship top-up awards of $5,000 per annum will be awarded for the duration of the PhD program. A further $5,000 is included for conference travel and other relevant expenses over the candidature. Supervisors of award applicants must be members of the TCRN.

Applications for first semester 2012 closed on Friday 27th January, with 11 high-quality candidate submissions. Successful applicants will be announced in early March 2012. Applications for second semester 2012 will open in May.

**Biorepository**

The Lowy Biorepository is a purpose-built facility operated by UNSW, and provides the physical infrastructure for the ethical collection, processing, storage and distribution of samples for researchers. The Lowy Biorepository has a demonstrated working relationship with South Eastern Area Laboratory Services (SEALS), including their courier systems which allow efficient delivery of specimens from virtually any pathology provider in NSW. By mid 2012, this relationship will be consolidated by the establishment of the Health Science Alliance (HSA) banking protocol, a partnership with SEALS and the Dept of Anatomical Pathology at POW Hospital within which all patients with carcinomas eligible for banking are consented, specimens stored and related demographic and pathological data acquired. The Lowy Biorepository hosts the first Australian instance of caTissue – the biorepository tool of the NCI-supported Cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid (caBIG) – which allows biospecimen inventory management, tracking and annotation through a web interface, while protecting patient confidentiality via a hierarchical access system.

As a research support service, the Lowy Biorepository facilitates tissue processing, storage and retrieval in addition to a specimen management system. A discount is available to all TCRN members who use the Lowy Biorepository.

**Biostatistical assistance**

The TCRN offers a biostatistical research support service for members via a yearly credit system. Each member is provided with 5 hours free credit of biostatistical support plus an initial 30-minute consultation.

Our experienced biostatisticians can work with members to:

- assist in identifying research project data requirements
- develop appropriate project protocols
- perform statistical analyses according to agreed analytical plans
- advise on accurate interpretation and dissemination of study findings
- advise on the design of project-specific databases.

Please direct any questions, comments or requests for member services to the Operations and Projects Team: tcrn@unsw.edu.au

**Collaboration Space**

**ADVERTISE YOUR RESEARCH COLLABORATION NEEDS HERE**

Need a researcher with tumour marker knowledge?  
Want to chat genetic modelling with an expert?

Submit your collaboration call to:  
tcrn@unsw.edu.au

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**TCRN member services**

The TCRN supports our members by providing the enabling foundation, coordination and resources required to empower you to formulate and implement research-led advances in cancer research, treatment and care. Here are some of our services that we hope you will take advantage of.

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**NEWS**

Grants announcement: Cancer Challenge of the Year 2012

What is your Cancer Challenge of the Year?  
What do you think is the greatest unmet need in translational cancer research?  
With some money and resources could you address this in 12 months?

The TCRN is pleased to announce our first major grant opportunity for 2012: the $100,000 Cancer Challenge of the Year.

TCRN will provide up to $100,000 to fund translational research projects designed to address a new cancer or generic problem related to cancer. Projects should commence no later than 1st June 2012 and must be completed within 12 months.

EOIs close 5pm AEDT, Friday 17th February.

Download the EOI and Guideline forms [here](#).