



## Short films show big stories

**MSRA has joined the online community that is YouTube – uploading short video interviews with key researchers in order to make their knowledge accessible to all.**

The videos, available on a new section of our website [www.msra.org.au/news-media/](http://www.msra.org.au/news-media/) aim to create a deeper understanding of the research we facilitate and fund.

Filed during late 2008, they include top researchers from our five major research platforms, plus a group of People with MS.

Among the video 'stars' are Prof Graeme Stewart, Director Institute for Immunology & Allergy Research who has dedicated the last 30 years of his life to the pursuit of understanding MS. Prof Stewart discusses what researchers have already discovered in his field and what the next steps are in terms of unlocking the mystery of MS.

Prof Simon Hawke, Director of the MSRA Brain Bank, talks about why this bank is such a vital resource. There are also videos from People with MS and supporters of MSRA who discuss why they signed up to the MSRA Brain Bank, what it is like living with MS and why Foundation 5 Million is so important to them.

We hope that you enjoy these short videos which make up our multimedia collection. We encourage you to share the link with others.



► PROFESSOR HAWKE SPEAKING ON YOU TUBE.

We thank Stewart MacLennan (who inspired and produced these videos) and Geoff Brokate from Liquid Film who did all the filming and editing on a shoestring budget. We also acknowledge the late Ian Ballard and Foxtel for organising studio space for this production.

To view the interviews or download a transcript visit [www.msra.org.au/news-media/](http://www.msra.org.au/news-media/)

## Australia Day recognition for golden couple

**Two of MSRA's and F5m's greatest supporters, Roy and Carol Langsford, received Australia Day OAM honours for their tireless service to people with multiple sclerosis.**

There could not be a more deserving couple than Roy and Carol. In just seven years they have raised more than \$1.6 million through the Trish MS Research Foundation which they founded in memory of their daughter Trish.



A successful sportswoman, Trish Langsford represented Australia and NSW in

cricket and held the position of Development Officer for Women's Cricket NSW. At just 23, the effects of MS forced her to give all this up and the last four years of her life were spent in a nursing home where she died aged 29. Carol said it was Trish's suffering that keeps motivating them in the hope that one day a cure might be found and other people will be spared what their cherished daughter went through.

For Roy and Carol Langsford, the Foundation's success is based on supportive and passionate board members, volunteers, corporations and individuals. They said they share their Australia Day honour with them.

MSRA and F5m congratulate Roy and Carol on their award and thank them for the magnificent work they do for the community.

► ROY AND CAROL LANGSFORD.

# SNAPSHOT of MSRA-funded research activity starting in 2009

## Identifying the triggers for MS

Genetics & Epidemiology

### At Griffith University

- Jason McKenzie is mining for genes in five implicated regions of the human genome that play a role in MS.

### At the Howard Florey Institute

- Dr Judith Field is investigating how genetic changes in people with MS lead to the development of the disease.

## Developing better treatments

## A cure for MS via repair or regeneration of cells



Neurobiology



### At the University of Sydney

- Dr Michael Barnett is using advanced scientific techniques to discover and characterise potential molecules causing MS. The identification of these proteins may lead to targeted, more effective treatments for MS.

### At the University of Melbourne

- Laura Gianni is analysing human brain tissue for MS-specific markers that could be used to diagnose, treat or monitor disease progression.

### At the University of Western Australia

- Dr Alison Jennings is using MS affected optic nerves to stain the cells involved in repair of damaged nerve cells to find out why this process fails in the later stage of MS. The results will help find ways to prevent repair failure and therefore improve patient outcomes.

### At the Howard Florey Institute

- Dr Tobias Merson continues his efforts in defining the response of neural and immune cells to the death of the myelin-producing cells in the brain. His work will increase understanding over the earliest events in human MS.

### At the University of Melbourne

- Dr Simon Murray and his team have identified that Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) is a molecule that can assist the repair process to fix the characteristic neural damage in MS. They will now use a genetic approach to analyse how BDNF promotes the repair process to develop new therapeutic strategies for the treatment of MS.

Immunology & Virology

### At the University of Queensland

- Dr Judith Greer is exploring ways to inhibit the autoimmune response in specific parts of the brain that affect coordination and balance. This could be an effective and highly specific treatment for people with MS.

### At the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

- Dr Pamela McCoombe is studying the changes before and after pregnancy, looking at active cells and genes. In many patients with MS, disease activity is reduced during pregnancy. After pregnancy, there is often increased disease activity. The changes in the immune system during pregnancy are due to hormonal changes that are not well-understood.



Social & Applied Research

### At the University of Melbourne

- Prof Vicki Anderson is investigating the impact of childhood MS on family, social and schooling, from the time of diagnosis for two years, to identify pattern of impairments, changes over time, and establish the key support needs.

### At the University of New England

- Dr Rhonda Brown is examining the factors that are likely to account for an MS patient's early departure from work. Such information will better assist clinicians to develop more effective cognitive treatments and rehabilitative programs for MS patients.

### At MS Society (ACT, NSW, VIC)

- Phu Hoang has been awarded a Betty Cuthbert Fellowship to increase our understanding of the biological changes that cause spasticity and muscle stiffness with the ultimate objective of developing effective interventions.

# STOP PRESS

Direct link found between  
Vitamin D, sunlight and MS.

See [www.msra.org.au](http://www.msra.org.au)  
for more information.



## Friends having fun for a friend

**Noonaweena translates into resting place in the bush, but in November 2008 there was no resting only FUN for Friends of F5m founder Ian Ballard's in the Yengo National Park.**

A sensational dinner and auction was held raising over \$32,000. Such overwhelming generosity not only came from the guests but the Noonaweena team itself with all the staff donating their services and venue for the weekend.

The enthusiastic and passionate spirit of F5m founder Ian Ballard continues to shine through events such as these.



▶ GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN!



## Oink for F5m and MSRA

**These cute pink pig money boxes make a fantastic present, particularly for little ones excited about saving money – on second thoughts, we are in an economic crisis – perhaps we all need one!**

Not only do they look great but they are also a good way to collect loose change for MS research. To purchase your pink pig moneybox for \$20 each (or \$25 inc postage & handling) call 1300 356 467 or visit [www.F5m.org.au](http://www.F5m.org.au)

## Dance the night away



The **MS Latin Fundraising Group** bring you Latin Rhythms night for the second year where you can dance to some of Sydney's best muso's. Featuring 'Son Veneno' and Merenia Gillies ... think Buena Vista Social club and get dancing!! Saturday 28 March 8.30pm at Club Marconi – Prairievale Rd, Bossley Park. Ticket cost: \$20 (entry fee). Call 9822 3333 or email: [msslainspectacular@hotmail.com](mailto:msslainspectacular@hotmail.com)

## Coming up

**MS Golf Day in the Blue Mountains** – Leura Golf Club will host this year's event again, supporting Peter Aboud, one of our F5m champions. Peter has now raised over \$24K from his many supporters including Ord Minnett and Servcorp. An outstanding day of golf in the mountains is organised with two person ambrose and team events starting at 9am on Thursday 16 April. Golf, a BBQ lunch, prizes and the spectacular mountain setting will once again contribute to an exceptional day. Don't miss the fun, register on 02 4784 1503 or email [leurgag@pnc.com.au](mailto:leurgag@pnc.com.au)

**Thinking hats ... party hats ... Seaford Trivia Night** – time to put both your party and thinking hats on! If last year is anything to go by, be quick to secure your tickets as a night of fun will be had by all. The \$30 entry includes wine tasting, nibbles, pancakes and prizes. Held at Seaford Community Centre on Friday 24 April. For more information, please contact Fiona Cooper on 0414 418 728 or [fiona\\_cooper@hotmail.com](mailto:fiona_cooper@hotmail.com)

**Book clubs around Australia** – are invited to have fun at the annual 'Throw the Book at MS' fundraising quiz night. In its third year, it has already raised over \$20K. All book groups, small or large, are invited to turn their June meeting into a night of interesting questions on books and authors. Or attend one of the larger events held in Paddington (June 18), Mosman (June 6) and Chatswood (June 14). To register your group, call 02 9360 4128 or email [throw.the.book@hotmail.com](mailto:throw.the.book@hotmail.com)

# Ship ahoy for the MS Regatta



**Climb aboard on one of the many Sydney sailing events to support people with MS, MS research and sailors with disabilities.**

Sea legs, a sense of fun and a community spirit is all you need. Plenty of yacht owners are keen to take part in this event, they just need crews and sponsors to sign up and get involved.

**There is a level and location to suit everyone** – Jump onboard with a lady skipper at Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Darling Point on **Sunday 26 April** from 11:30am. Alternatively, join the competitive sailing on Pittwater at Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club on **Wednesday 29 April** from 2pm. Or participate in a more relaxed twilight race at Royal Motor Yacht Club on **Friday 1 May** from 4pm. There is even a dinghy race at Dobroyd Aquatic Club on **Saturday 2 May**.

With your help, we hope to reach our fundraising goal of \$50,000. Tickets range from \$10 – \$100 inclusive of:

- Regatta Entry Fee
- Freedom from MS Regatta t-shirt
- Snacks and/or lunch

Register soon to secure your spot. To register or for more information visit [www.msregatta.org.au](http://www.msregatta.org.au) or call the Regatta Events Team on (02) 9468 8390.

**Get involved to help us in the race for freedom from MS.**

**MSRA Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia**

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## US Confidence in Australian MS Research

**In March, MSRA will be hosting Dr John Richert, Vice President of Research at the US National MS Society (NMSS).**

Dr Richert will be addressing the Federal Government at a Parliamentary breakfast, highlighting Australia's unique and significant role in the global effort to beat MS and why the NMSS invests in our researchers.

MSRA has made a request to the Federal Government to bolster Australia's strategic MS research agenda through an injection of \$5 million which MSRA will match through private sector funding. The amount equates to less than \$1 for every \$1,000 that MS already costs the Australian community annually: a modest investment in improving the health of many.

We encourage all NEXT readers to email their local MP in support of our request to government for more research funds.

## Two New Research Fellowships

Dr Judith Field at the Howard Florey Institute has been awarded a Charityworks for MS Fellowship co-funded by MSRA. Dr Phu Hoang from Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute (and Physiotherapist at the MS Society of ACT/NSW/VIC) has been awarded a NHMRC Training Fellowship to continue his work that was initiated by an MSRA incubator grant in 2008.

### MSRA Partners

## Yes, I want to help MS Research Australia

My tax deductible donation is \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit my:  Visa Card  Mastercard  Amex

Card No: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

OR I have enclosed my: Cheque/Money Order payable to MS Research Australia.

I want to support MS Research Australia on an ongoing basis, please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my credit card per month until notified.



**To donate now go to [www.msra.org.au](http://www.msra.org.au)**

**Donations over \$2 are tax deductible**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (W): \_\_\_\_\_ (H): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  Please send me information on how I may support MSRA in my Will.