

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2022



## FROM THE ACvA LEADERSHIP

It's been a sobering start to the year both locally and internationally. We'd like to acknowledge all those people who lost homes, livelihoods and loved ones. Overseas, because of conflict and at home because of flooding and extreme weather events.

Locally, we'd also like to acknowledge the recent deaths of Shane Warne, Senator Kimberley Kitching and Rod Marsh. Our thoughts are with their family and friends. No one wants to be a cardiovascular disease statistic and these sudden losses highlight the responsibility our sector has to the general population, to work for better outcomes regarding cardiovascular disease.

Working towards these goals, and as a key ACvA partner, we are pleased to welcome the Heart Foundation's appointment of incoming CEO Mr David Lloyd. We'd like to congratulate Mr David Lloyd on his new position and look forward to working together in the future. We'd also like to acknowledge Professor Garry Jennings AO and his amazing efforts in heading up the Heart Foundation and supporting ACvA Flagship activities.

## ACvA ACTIVITIES



### VentriClinical

In the last newsletter, we farewelled Anthony Murray from his role managing VentriClinical. We'd like to thank him again for all the foundational work he did to bring the ACvA concept of a medtech network into reality.

Today, we'd like to welcome **Dr Jeremy Simpson** as the new Manager of VentriClinical. He brings with him over 25 years of corporate leadership experience in drug and device development roles in healthcare, pharma, biotechnology and contract research organisation (CRO) settings across Australia, New Zealand and the rest of the Asia Pacific region.

Jeremy has worked in clinical development roles with GSK, Pharmacia Australia and ICON Clinical Research where he led the Asia Pacific regional team from Singapore. He was also Scientific Affairs Director at Fresenius Kabi Australia with wider responsibility for regulatory affairs, medical affairs, quality assurance, and product reimbursement.

We believe his experience and networks in these diverse settings make him the right person to manage VentriClinical in its aims to attract innovators, expertise, and funding towards cardiovascular medtech research, amplify research activities across boundaries, and align efforts with National and State programs and priorities.

VentriClinical is now made up of almost 50 Australian service providers, clinicians and engineers who contribute to successful medical device trials for cardiovascular technology innovations. Jeremy's immediate plans include national consultations on the business plan that has been developed for VentriClinical. He'll also be deepening our engagement with start-ups and SMEs and would love to connect with you, too.

You can contact him at [jeremy@ventriclinical.org](mailto:jeremy@ventriclinical.org), 0400 410 974 or [Jeremy Simpson](#).

## Roundtable & upcoming debrief

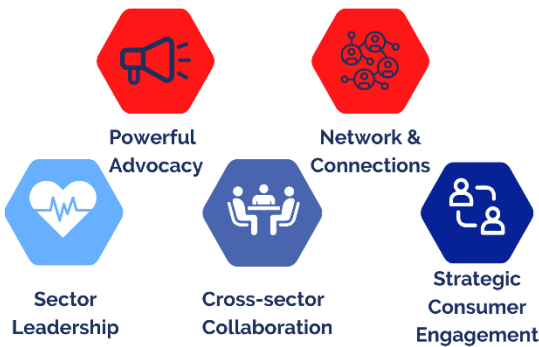


We held our Joint National Implementation & Policy Roundtable on March 10 with the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand and the National Heart Foundation of Australia.

With over 60 participants from government, peak bodies, and individuals spanning clinicians, researchers, primary care, allied health, pharmacists, nurses, consumers and industry, it was a chance to collectively inform a national CV Implementation & Policy agenda and action plan.

On **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May from 2 – 3.30pm** we'll be holding a Roundtable Debrief with a draft Roundtable Report and a Q&A session. Virtual registration details will be available soon. So please hold this date.

## Membership renewal



It's that time of year again! Memberships will lapse at the end of June and you have until then to renew.

As an ACvA member, we know you believe in the vital role that cardiovascular research plays in better outcomes for cardiovascular disease and that collaboration and collective efforts are essential to shift the dial on cardiovascular disease and stroke. If you know any peers, networks or organisations who are also passionate about collaborating to make a difference and who would like to join us, please share.

You can renew as an **individual**, **institution** or **industry**. If you are a not-for-profit or SME and think your circumstances don't match these categories, please email [acva@ozheart.org](mailto:acva@ozheart.org), as the ACvA Board has recently created a process for small organisations.

## Strategy Day



Our annual Strategy Day is a chance to collaborate, connect and rearticulate our plans and programs. You are an integral part of this process.

We welcome all interested members to join us for this hybrid event **June 9, 2022**. Sessions include ACvA strategic initiatives, funding strategies, EMCR initiatives and a Q & A session.

We have a limited number of face-to-face opportunities available, with the meeting being held in Melbourne. A virtual option will also be available and a detailed schedule and Zoom registration will be available closer to the date.

### Emerging Leaders Committee



Our Emerging Leaders Committee (ELC) will once again be offering their **CV Champions Program**. It's an EMCR leadership development opportunity which has been expanded to focus on strategic thinking, building your network, stakeholder engagement and creating impact-driven research.

There are places for up to 50 EMCRs on the 18-month program. Before applications open in June, we'll be holding an online workshop at 11am AEST, 23<sup>rd</sup> May for interested members to have input into the shaping of the program. If you'd like to contribute, EMCRs can complete an EOI [here](#).

A series of **podcasts** will also run that align with the CV Champions Program. You'll hear stories and experiences from across the CV research sector including guidance for EMCRs through better mentoring, grant writing tips as well as key findings and technologies from the latest CV research.

We've been busy finalising a mentorship application to expand our mentor base as well as a survey to evaluate our **Mentoring Program**, and we plan to re-launch the program later in 2022.

An **EMCR Summit** is being planned for the afternoon of **8<sup>th</sup> June**, the day before the ACvA Strategy Day. This will be a chance to consider how EMCRs can engage throughout the ACvA and discuss key priority areas and implementation of strategies to enhance the Australian CV EMCR culture. This will be a hybrid event with limited in-person attendance in Melbourne. More details to follow.

### Whole-of-Sector Brainstorming Session



Prof Gemma Figtree



Prof Zanfina Ademi



Prof Kim Greaves

### Transforming Primary and Secondary Prevention for Cardiovascular Disease Brainstorming Session



Prof Lee Nedkoff



Mr Matthew Whitty

Just yesterday, the ACvA facilitated *A whole-of-sector approach to transforming primary and secondary prevention for cardiovascular disease (CVD)*, an international brainstorming session regarding new approaches to the prevention of CVD.

It was intended as a preliminary discussion to explore models that can position Australia as a pioneer for best strategies and therapies in CVD prevention.

Stakeholders from pharma, medtech, clinicians, The Heart Foundation and Government discussed:

- a. balancing new approaches with current best practice in implementing existing therapies and evidence
- b. the need for national harmonised quality indicators on primary prevention in Australia
- c. mapping existing programs of work in Australia
- d. the opportunities for national registry and embedded clinical trials in Australia
- e. integrating the patient voice
- f. health economics and value from rapid access
- g. barriers and implementation priorities
- h. exploring industry involvement/partnerships
- i. leveraging opportunities

## NEWS IN THE SECTOR

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**NSW Cardiovascular  
Research Network**

### **New South Wales Cardiovascular Research Network**

NSW CVRN continues its monthly **Rising Stars Seminar Series** which give EMCRs the opportunity to participate as an invited speaker at a cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional event. The series is delivered, facilitated, and hosted by EMCRs.

The next seminar on 2 May is *Heart Disease - at the start and end of life* with Dr Julee McDonagh and Dr Kavitha Muthiah. Further details and registration can be found [here](#).

In June NSWCVRN will hold **Working Collaboratively**, an EMCR Masterclass bringing together Senior CVD researchers to discuss how to build successful teams and EMCRs to discuss how to start a collaboration. This is a hybrid event and the date is TBC.



### **Western Australia Cardiovascular Research Alliance**

WACRA has partnered with the Perron Institute for pre submission grant reviews which are being utilised for MRFF, Heart Foundation and NHMRC grant submissions

They are also presenting a **Grant Writing Workshop** on May 13 on how to be successful in obtaining an MRFF grant, how to use metrics and how to include a Consumer Advocate.

WACRA continues the important job of advocacy to government through recent media pieces in *The West Australian* and *Medical Forum*. Following the deaths of high-profile Australians, they highlighted the importance of heart health checks and the importance of understanding risks in women following International Women's Day.



**Queensland  
Cardiovascular  
Research Network**

### **Queensland Cardiovascular Research Network**

QCVRN have launched the **graphic support scheme** and **grant writing support scheme**, for 2022. Both schemes support the capacity of cardiovascular research in



Queensland and currently offer EMCRs, along with established scientists across affiliated institutions an opportunity to enhance their research communication.

Mark your calendars for **11-14 August 2022** when the **QCVRN Symposium** is being held in conjunction with the CSANZ on the Gold Coast. Programming and events to come.

QCVRN are excited to share that this year they're offering a **PhD top up scholarship scheme** involving a \$5,000 competitive stipend scholarship. QCVRN are currently welcoming applicants for this opportunity, **applications close 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022**.

For more information visit [QCVRN](#) or email [qcvrn@qcvrn.org](mailto:qcvrn@qcvrn.org)



### **The Menzies Institute for Medical Research, Tasmania**

The University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical research has a new Associate in our own Executive Director, Kerry Doyle. They've welcomed her, during a 6-month stay in Hobart, with an on-site office and the joy of in-person company.



### **The Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute, Victoria**

The Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute has opened a new **Inflammation and Cardiovascular Disease lab** headed up by **Dr Tin Kyaw**.



The lab is investigating novel ways to prevent secondary heart attacks. It will build understanding of how immune cells play a role in aggravating atherosclerosis to cause a heart attack, who is most at risk of developing a secondary heart attack due to this immune response, and better treatment options for these patients.



### **Monash Victorian Heart Institute, Victoria**

A clinical trial led by Monash University's Victorian Heart Institute has recently found a novel new therapy which reduces harmful plaque in arteries and changes its composition, so it is less likely to rupture and cause a heart attack.

Congratulations to the **HUYGENS study** clinical lead and past ACvA Director, Professor Steven Nicholls and his team.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS & TRAINING**



**International Clinical Cardiovascular Genetics Conference** / Brisbane / 11-13 May

**2022 ARCS Annual Conference** / Sydney / 23 -25 May

**AusMedtech 2022** / Melbourne / 24 – 26 May

**NSW Health Therapeutics & Pharmaceuticals Specialisation Course** / Sydney & online / 25 – 27 May

**MTP Connect's REDI Training Development Programs** / various locations around Australia & online / multiple dates

**Medical Device Partnering Program (MDPP)** / Adelaide / ongoing

Cicada Innovations Partnering / Sydney & online / ongoing

MTP Connect's REDI Training Development Programs / various locations around Australia + online / multiple dates

AusBiotech 2022 / Perth / 24 – 28 October



If you or your organisation have events, training or opportunities that are relevant to ACvA members which you'd like us to promote in this newsletter, email [nina.cullen@ozheart.org](mailto:nina.cullen@ozheart.org)

## GRANTS & OPPORTUNITIES

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**Ideas Grants 2022**

**NHMRC / Australia / 6 April (minimum data)**

Ideas Grants support innovative research projects addressing a specific question(s).

**Postdoctoral Research Fellow**

**Charles Perkins Centre & Northern Clinical School / 1 May**

The Charles Perkins Centre and Northern Clinical School have an exciting opportunity available for

two experienced researchers to join the Sleep Research Group to work closely with the study team on an NHMRC investigator grant investigating the links between sleep disordered breathing and cardiovascular diseases.

**Heart Foundation Research Funding Programs**

**Heart Foundation / Australia / May to July**

The NHFA has funding programs open in the following areas

- **Vanguard grants** / 6 May
- **PhD Scholarship** / 6 May
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander award** / 17 June
- **Collaboration and Exchange award** / 22 July
- **Strategic Grants**

**Dr John Dixon Hughes Medal**

**National Foundation for Medical Research and Innovation / Australia / 20 May**

This award is for a researcher under the age of 45 for outstanding contribution towards the development and advancement of a biomedical innovation related to the nature, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and incidence of disease and other health problems that have a significant impact on the health of humans.

**2022 Symposia Proposals**

**APSA-ASCEPT / 30 May**

Applications are now open for symposia proposals to be presented at the APSA-ASCEPT 2022 Joint Conference to be held from Tuesday 29 November — Friday 2 December 2022 in Perth. The theme of the conference is *Local and global partnerships to drive innovation and impact*.

**Development Grants**

**NHMRC / Australia / 15 June**

The Development Grant scheme provides financial support to individual researchers and/or research teams to undertake health and medical research within Australia at the proof-of-

concept stage that specifically drives towards a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe.

### MRFF Preventive and Public Health Research initiative - 2021 Consumer-Led Research Grant Opportunity

**NHMRC / Australia / 29 June (minimum data) / 13 July (closes)**

The objectives of this grant opportunity are:

- **Stream 1:** projects that develop and/or test the implementation of interventions for improving:
  - health self-efficacy for consumers with long term diseases and conditions, and/or
  - health self-efficacy for priority populations
- **Stream 2:** projects that use citizen science methodologies where citizens and scientists use web-based platforms and digital tools to co-create health knowledge that has practical implications for improving health outcomes and/or improving consumer experiences of health care, whilst increasing consumer understanding of, and consumer involvement in, research.

### MRFF – 2021 Early to Mid-Career Researchers Grant Opportunity

**NHMRC / Australia / 29 June / 13 July (closes)**

The 2021 EMCR Grant Opportunity aims to enable or support emerging research leaders to make breakthrough discoveries, develop their skills, and progress their careers in Australia; and address intractable health issues and/or accelerate research translation with the potential to transform health care and/or health systems.

### Special Issue submissions - *Electrophysiology and Arrhythmia Management around the Globe: Challenges and Opportunities*

**Heart Rhythm O<sup>2</sup> / 30 June**

This special issue of Heart Rhythm O<sup>2</sup> will feature original research and topical reviews representing the practice of electrophysiology (EP) and arrhythmia care around the world, with an emphasis on: EP work being done in the developing world and amongst disadvantaged populations; raising awareness of the challenges faced by physicians and researchers who lack needed resources; and opportunities for improvement, advancement, and collaboration with the global EP community.

### Cardiovascular Elite Grants

**NSW Health / NSW / 30 June**

These grants are part of the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program to drive scientific discoveries, support the development of novel and innovative therapies, and improve health outcomes for patients with cardiovascular disease.

### MRFF – Primary Health Care Research Initiative – 2021 Primary Health Care Digital Innovations Grant Opportunity

**NHMRC / Australia / 13 July**

The objective of this grant opportunity is to provide grants of financial assistance to support Australian medical research and medical innovation projects that develop novel digital health tools and technologies to improve access to primary health care services in disadvantaged and/or vulnerable populations (for example, migrant communities, people living with disabilities, lower socioeconomic communities, and rural and regional Australia).

### Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants

**NHMRC / Australia / 27 July (minimum data)**

Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants support high-quality clinical trials and cohort studies that address important gaps in knowledge, leading to relevant and implementable findings for the benefit of human health.

## 2022 Clinician Researchers: Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Grant Opportunity

### MRFF / Australia / 10 August

The objective of Streams 1 and 2 of this grant opportunity is to provide grants of financial assistance to support medical research projects led by nurses, midwives and allied health professionals that validate and implement new approaches for improving the quality of patient care.

The objective of Stream 3 of this grant opportunity is to provide a grant of financial assistance to support a medical research project that prospectively evaluates projects funded through Streams 1 and 2 to generate knowledge that improves understanding of the factors that promote the adoption, impact and sustainability of evidence-based practice in health care.

## MRFF – 2021 BioMedTech Incubator

### MRFF / Australia / 25 August

This opportunity looks to fund the most suitable organisation who can identify and select a number of Australian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) undertaking early-stage medical research and medical innovation projects that have commercial potential.

## MRFF – Cardiovascular Health Mission – 2022 Cardiovascular Health Grant Opportunity

### MRFF / Australia / 7 September

The objective of this grant opportunity is to provide grants of financial assistance to support Australian medical research and medical innovation projects that:

- **Stream 1** (Targeted Call for Research): improve the understanding of cardiovascular disease risk, including biological mechanisms.
- **Stream 2** (Targeted Call for Research): conduct preclinical development and validation of novel molecular targets and novel device approaches for cardiovascular disease and/or stroke.
- **Stream 3** (Accelerator): conduct a large-scale project focused on discovery and testing of new, broadly applicable (multiple disease groups) interventions for cardiovascular disease and/or stroke (e.g. anti-inflammatory targets).

## The Australian Functional Genomics Network

### AFGN / Australia / ongoing

The AFGN is an MRFF funded initiative that aims to link clinical data for variants of unknown significance with research groups able to perform disease modelling. Funding is provided by AFGN to accelerate classification of disease variants.