

LifELab

The latest news from QIMR Berghofer

ISSUE 129 | WINTER 2026

The hidden worm in our own backyard

 **QIMR**
Berghofer

AI gives pathologists a new way to detect cancer

Parkinson's disease affects men and women differently

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Message from the Director

This edition of LifeLab turns our focus to tropical diseases that continue to shape health outcomes here in Australia and across our region.

Queensland has a long and proud history of tropical disease research, and that legacy runs through many of the stories in this issue. QIMR Berghofer has spent more than eight decades tackling health challenges that thrive in warm climates and disadvantaged settings.

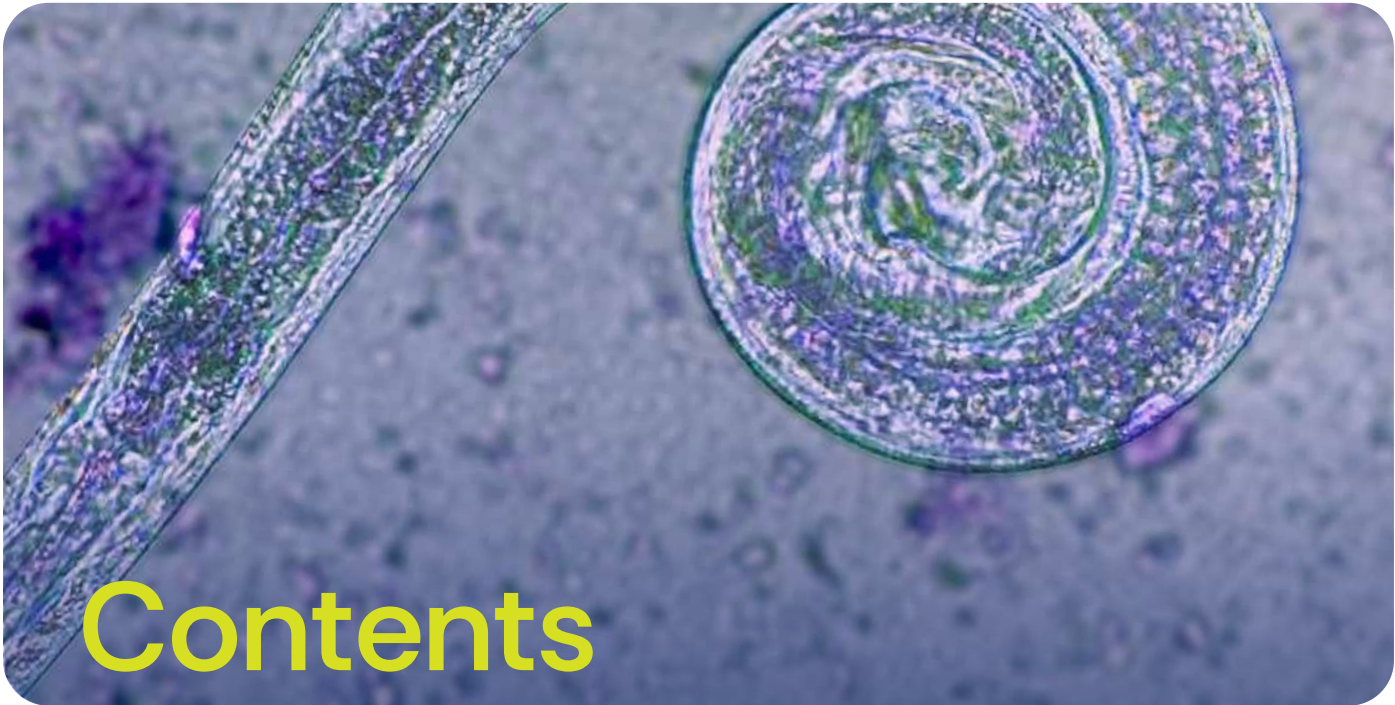
Our lead feature shines a light on strongyloidiasis, one of the most dangerous and least recognised tropical diseases caused by the microscopic roundworm *Strongyloides stercoralis* that persists in parts of northern Australia. It is a powerful reminder that tropical diseases are not distant problems. They exist in our own backyard, and they are both preventable and treatable when research, policy and community partnerships align.

Prevention is a recurring theme. We share how a simple education program, Magic Glasses, helps children visualise invisible parasites, encouraging better hygiene and reducing parasitic worm infections. You can read how cutting-edge mRNA vaccine technology is strengthening Australia's ability to respond rapidly to mosquito-borne threats like Japanese encephalitis virus. We also explore how new technology could give pathologists what researchers describe as spatial super vision, providing information they can't see with their own eyes.

While this issue spans parasites, viruses, cancer and neurodegenerative disease, the unifying message is clear: locally driven research can deliver global impact. Whether through tropical disease elimination, vaccine preparedness or personalised approaches to complex conditions like Parkinson's disease, our researchers are working every day to ensure discoveries translate into real-world benefits.

Thank you for being part of this journey, and for your interest, support and commitment to better health for communities in our tropical areas and beyond.

Professor Grant A. Ramm
Interim Director and CEO



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The hidden worm in our own backyard

“By tackling strongyloidiasis here at home and developing better diagnostics, prevention strategies and elimination programs, they can be adapted across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. What is being done in Australia has the potential to set a global benchmark.”

– PROFESSOR DARREN GRAY

Ending strongyloidiasis isn't ambitious – it's overdue.

[Click here to find out more.](#) With your support, we can take one of the most practical steps toward Closing the Gap.

A long history of tropical disease research

Medical research in Queensland has long been shaped by the study of tropical disease. Among its pioneers were the Bancrofts, parasitologists whose work helped lay the foundations of what would become QIMR Berghofer. For more than 80 years, understanding, controlling and eliminating parasitic worm infections has been essential work of the Institute.

Australia's overlooked tropical disease

One of the most dangerous and least recognised of these infections is strongyloidiasis, a tropical disease caused by the microscopic roundworm *Strongyloides* [Strong -ga -loyd -ees] *stercoralis*. Despite Australia being a wealthy nation, it continues to record some of the highest rates globally, particularly in rural and remote regions. In severe cases, the disease can be fatal.

“Strongyloidiasis is one of the world's most neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). It thrives in disadvantaged tropical regions worldwide and disproportionately affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait

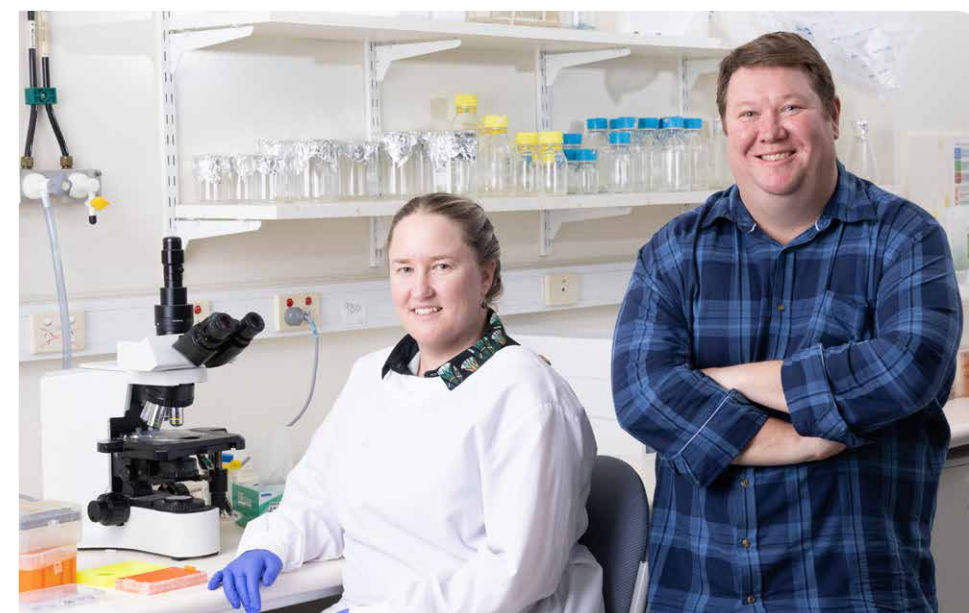
Islander communities,” Professor Darren Gray, Head of the Global Health and Tropical Medicine Laboratory at QIMR Berghofer said.

How the parasite infects the body

Too small to see, the parasite lives in warm, moist soil and can penetrate bare skin, often through the feet. Once inside the body, it migrates through the lungs and intestines, where female worms reproduce. Uniquely, the *Strongyloides* worm can reinfect the same person repeatedly without leaving the body, allowing infection to persist for decades. If immunity is suppressed, it can rapidly escalate into life-threatening sepsis.

A global disease with local impact

“It is the most neglected of the NTDs. Modelling suggests up to 600 million people may be infected worldwide, including 237 million in the Southeast Asia Region and more than 130 million across the Western Pacific Region. In some Australian communities, prevalence may be as high as 60 per cent,” Associate Professor Catherine Gordon, Head of the Applied Tropical and Molecular Parasitology Lab said.



Associate Professor Catherine Gordon (left) and Professor Darren Gray in the lab.

Leading solutions from Australia

“It is not a distant global issue, but a major health problem in Australia's backyard. By tackling strongyloidiasis here at home and developing better diagnostics, prevention strategies and elimination programs, they can be adapted across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. What is being done in Australia has the potential to set a global benchmark,” Professor Gray said.

QIMR Berghofer researchers are working with communities, clinicians and environmental health experts to improve diagnosis, develop rapid-point-of-care testing, and design elimination programs suited to real world settings.

“Most importantly we have Indigenous leaders and community members involved. Their involvement ensures solutions are culturally appropriate and sustainable,” Professor Gray said.

Prevention, treatment and the path to elimination

The good news is that strongyloidiasis is preventable and treatable. A simple medication called ivermectin can cure infection, but lasting elimination depends on safe housing, clean water, working sanitation and good hygiene.

“Sanitation is not cheap, but our work shows it is far more cost effective in the long term. What's needed is upfront investment,” Professor Gray said.



QIMR Berghofer scientists work closely with researchers in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Why are parasites more common in tropical regions?

Climate and environmental conditions

Parasites are found worldwide but flourish in tropical and subtropical regions, including parts of Australia, due to biological and social factors that allow them to survive and spread.

Warm temperatures accelerate parasite life cycles, while humidity supports larvae living in soil or water. Heavy rainfall can spread infection through flooding and surface contamination.

The role of insects and vectors

Tropical climates also support insects that act as vectors or transmitters of disease, such as mosquitoes, sandflies and ticks.

Behaviour and living conditions

Walking barefoot, outdoor work and exposed skin all increase risk, while poor housing, inadequate sanitation, limited clean water and barriers to healthcare enable transmission. Parasitic diseases are not just geographic diseases, but diseases of inequality.

How parasites spread

Parasites include worms, insects, mites and single-celled protozoa such as those that cause malaria. Some disease-causing parasites are transmitted by vectors like mosquitoes or ticks, while others penetrate the skin directly or enter through contaminated food or water. Many infect both animals and humans, reflecting the close connection between health and environment.

In tropical Australia, parasites are not inevitable. Improvements in housing, sanitation, clean water and healthcare remain among the most powerful tools for reducing parasitic disease.

FEATURE

Seeing the unseen through Magic Glasses



Imagine if children could see germs and parasites the way they see mud on their shoes.

That's the idea behind Magic Glasses, a novel health education program designed as an intervention on soil-transmitted helminth (parasitic worm) infection.

Originally developed by Australian and Chinese researchers for schools in rural China, the Magic Glasses program centres on a 12-minute animated cartoon.

When its characters put on 'magic glasses', they are able to see invisible parasite eggs hiding on dirty hands, bare feet and uncovered food. Combined with classroom discussions, creative activities and take-home pamphlets, the program turns hygiene into something children truly understand and remember.

The results have been striking. Rigorous trials showed the program nearly doubled children's knowledge of soil transmitted helminths

(intestinal worms), significantly increased handwashing, and halved new infections.

Now adapted for the Philippines and the Lower Mekong region, Magic Glasses demonstrates that education can be a powerful form of disease prevention, especially in areas where reinfection is common.

QIMR Berghofer researchers, led by Associate Professor Catherine Gordon, are now developing a new health education package featuring the Magic Glasses. This includes a short, animated video that teaches schoolchildren what schistosomiasis is and how they can protect themselves.

Associate Professor Gordon recently travelled to Cambodia to collaborate with local partners on the project. The video is being shaped by conversations with children, parents, teachers and health workers, helping to ensure the information is relevant and the stories are engaging.

She has also worked closely with a local animator to make sure the video reflects everyday life, from scenery and clothing to daily routines.

By equipping children with the knowledge to protect themselves and their families, the Magic Glasses program supports long-term efforts to reduce infection and safeguard communities that rely on their rivers every day.

Your gift will help Magic Glasses reach children who need it most and protect the future of entire communities.

[Click here to find out more.](#) Together, we can turn simple ideas into practical protection, today.



OUR PEOPLE Q&A

Introducing parasitologist Associate Professor Catherine Gordon

As Head of the Applied Tropical and Molecular Parasitology laboratory, Associate Professor Catherine Gordon leads research that sits at the intersection of global health, cutting-edge diagnostics and some of the world's most overlooked diseases.

Q What research are you involved in?

A Our research focuses mainly on parasitic diseases such as schistosomiasis and strongyloidiasis, particularly in Southeast Asia, where people are often infected with multiple parasites at once. Understanding these co-infections is important for both public health and clinical care. Much of our research is about improving diagnostics, from fast, low-cost tests that can be used in the field, to advanced laboratory and sequencing methods that can detect multiple or emerging parasites at the same time. We also work on prevention, including studying animal reservoirs and using health education to reduce reinfection, as there are currently no vaccines or prophylactic treatments available to stop people being infected again.

Q What is a parasite, and why is it important to research them?

A A parasite is an organism that survives at the expense of its host, often causing disease. In humans, parasitic worms can cause symptoms such as diarrhoea, nausea and anaemia, but the impacts can be far more serious. Long-term infections may lead to stunted growth and impaired learning in children, and some species are even linked to cancer. These diseases are closely tied to poverty and can reinforce cycles of poor health and disadvantage, which makes research crucial for improving quality of life and long term outcomes.

Q Are tropical areas the only places that parasites thrive?

A They are more common in tropical and subtropical regions, but they're not limited to them. Warm, moist environments allow parasites to survive longer and develop faster. Some species also rely on intermediate hosts, such as snails, which are more abundant in these climates.

Q There is also research where worms are used to benefit people. Can you explain that?

A Although parasites are usually harmful, researchers are exploring whether some worms interact with humans in more complex ways. Because we've evolved alongside parasitic worms for thousands of years, scientists are studying how they influence the immune system and gut health. This research looks at using worms or worm-derived molecules to better understand inflammatory diseases and potentially inform future treatments.

Q What might surprise people about diseases caused by worms?

A Probably a lot. Many people think of them as short-term stomach bugs or distant tropical problems, but they can quietly cause long-term harm, and they do occur in Australia. People might also be surprised by how broad parasitology research is, from simple field diagnostics to advanced lab-based testing and developing animations.

FEATURE

Super vision: AI gives pathologists a new way to detect cancer

What if pathologists could uncover hidden signs of cancer using the same glass slides they've relied on for more than a century, but with a layer of intelligence that reveals what the human eye can't see?



"The STImage tool does not replace the experience and expertise of pathologists. Rather, it assists them in their important and technically challenging work, by providing extra information about cell types and genetic activity that they can't see with their own eyes."

— ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
QUAN NGUYEN

Scientists at QIMR Berghofer have developed an artificial intelligence screening tool that can detect hidden genetic markers of cancer. Known as STImage, the new technology combines machine learning with cutting-edge spatial biology to give pathologists what researchers describe as spatial super vision.

Published in *Nature Communications*, the research shows the tool can accurately predict breast, skin and kidney cancers, as well as a liver immune disease, using standard patient tissue samples. Importantly, it was found to be reliable, low cost and fast, producing results that are easy for pathologists to interpret.

The potential impact of the breakthrough is far reaching, saving lives through earlier, faster and more accurate diagnoses, personalised treatments, and improved access to specialist expertise, particularly for patients in regional and remote areas.

"It's like giving pathologists the super resolution vision of Superman or Superwoman to scan millions of invisible biomarkers in a tiny tissue sample to find the two or three that are showing signs of cancer. This capability is critical for earlier detection, more precise diagnosis, and better-informed treatment decisions," said Associate Professor Quan Nguyen, who led development of the tool with QIMR Berghofer's National Centre for Spatial Tissue and AI Research (NCSTAR).



NCSTAR staff: Dr Joey Li, Dr Prakrithi Pavithra, Naga Bandari, Associate Professor Quan Nguyen and Ashandeep Kaur.

"It's like giving pathologists the super resolution vision of Superman or Superwoman to scan millions of invisible biomarkers in a tiny tissue sample to find the two or three that are showing signs of cancer."

— ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
QUAN NGUYEN

Building on a century-old practice

For more than 100 years, pathologists around the world have relied on a simple, low-cost process known as hematoxylin and eosin (H&E) staining. The familiar blue and pink slides reveal cell structure and tissue architecture, helping doctors identify abnormalities. But they don't show the molecular activity inside tissues, information that can be crucial for understanding disease.

That's where spatial biology comes in. This emerging field examines how genes and proteins behave within their precise locations in tissue, uncovering patterns linked to cancer and other diseases that standard microscopy cannot detect.

STImage bridges the gap between these two worlds. Associate Professor Nguyen said the STImage tool applies spatial analysis to standard H&E slides, generating biologically grounded predictions based on molecular patterns hidden within the tissue.

"The STImage tool does not replace the experience and expertise of pathologists. Rather, it assists them in their important and technically challenging work, by providing extra information about cell types and genetic activity that they can't see with their own eyes," Associate Professor Nguyen said.

Transparent AI

STImage is designed to provide more detailed information for pathologists.

"It makes a diagnostic prediction and mathematically computes the level of certainty about the result. In a first, there is transparency about the result with the tool showing the reasons that led to the prediction, like specific tissue or cellular features, to help pathologists evaluate findings," Associate Professor Nguyen said.

In testing, the tool also generated accurate predictions about prognosis and treatment response, correctly classifying patients as high or low risk of survival and likely to have a complete or partial response to existing drugs. While promising, these features are at an early stage and are being developed further.

To train the model, researchers used machine learning and statistical algorithms to analyse de-identified datasets from breast, skin and kidney cancers, as well as the liver disease, primary sclerosing cholangitis.

Only a handful of similar tools exist globally, and STImage

outperformed comparable models while adding crucial features around reliability and interpretability.

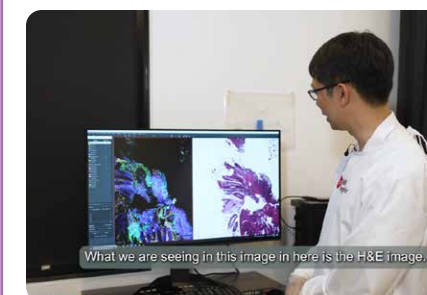
Looking ahead

The researchers are now expanding STImage's capabilities, broadening the types of cancer it can detect, refining its accuracy, and integrating more datasets to identify rare cancer cells and key immune cells involved in disease progression and treatment response.

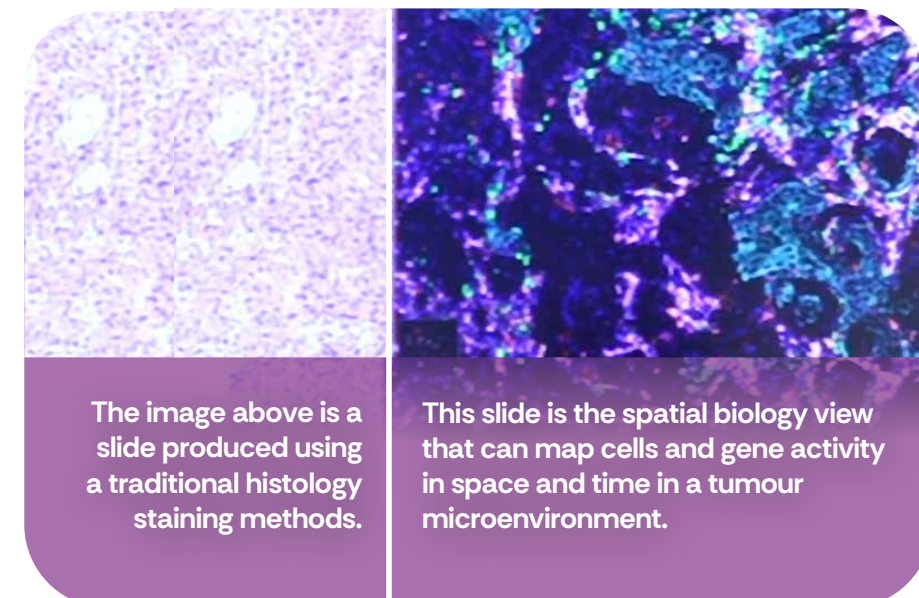
The next step is to trial the model in pathology laboratories. The team hopes the tool could become part of routine clinical practice within two years.



[Watch a video about this research.](#)



What we are seeing in this image in here is the H&E image.



The image above is a slide produced using a traditional histology staining methods.

This slide is the spatial biology view that can map cells and gene activity in space and time in a tumour microenvironment.

Building a vaccine for an Australian outbreak of Japanese encephalitis virus



“It shows that Australia can design, build and test new vaccines locally in response to mosquito borne outbreaks.”

— ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DANIEL RAWLE

An unprecedented outbreak of Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) across Australia in 2022 exposed how rapidly mosquito-borne diseases can establish themselves in new environments.

Spread by mosquitoes that thrive around wetlands and pig farms, the virus infected at least 42 people, contributed to seven deaths, and was detected on more than 80 pig farms across New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. It is now considered established and is detected during mosquito seasons.

In response, QIMR Berghofer researchers, in collaboration with biotech company Southern RNA and Griffith University, moved quickly to develop and test new mRNA vaccines designed to target the genotype IV strain responsible for the outbreak. This marked the first time this strain had caused widespread disease in humans; other genotypes are typically associated with outbreaks in Southeast Asia.

Mosquitoes play a central role in JEV transmission, carrying the virus between animals, particularly wading birds and pigs, and humans. While mosquito control remains essential, vaccines are a critical complementary line of defence during outbreaks.

The main vaccine available in Australia is called Imojev, a live-attenuated vaccine that is effective but expensive and unsuitable for some groups, including immunocompromised people and pregnant women.

Associate Professor Daniel Rawle, Head of the Emerging Viral Diseases lab at QIMR Berghofer, said the team turned to mRNA technology, the same platform used successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic, to rapidly design two experimental vaccines.

“mRNA technology uses the body’s natural processes to trigger protection without using live viruses. These vaccines encode key viral proteins that self assemble in the body to mimic the outside of the virus,” he explained. “This allows the immune system to recognise and respond to the threat without exposure to the live virus.”

Early results

The early results have been highly encouraging. “In preclinical testing, following exposure to the virus, vaccinated groups showed markedly lower levels of virus in the bloodstream and were largely protected from disease,” PhD student, Abigail Cox said.

“Although antibody responses were slightly lower than with Imojev, our mRNA vaccines provided comparable protection against infection,” researcher, Dr Wilson Nguyen said.

Looking ahead

Beyond the laboratory results, Associate Professor Rawle said the work demonstrates a broader national capability.

“It shows that Australia can design, build and test new vaccines locally in response to mosquito-borne outbreaks. And mRNA vaccines are faster to make, potentially cheaper, and may be safer for people who cannot receive live vaccines,” Associate Professor Rawle said.

As climate change and shifting ecosystems expand the range of mosquitoes and the viruses they carry, Associate Professor Rawle said the ability to respond quickly and locally will become increasingly critical to Australia’s preparedness for future mosquito-borne threats.

Clinical trials and research studies

Clinical trials and research studies play an integral role in medical research and the impact it can have on the lives of people around the world. Here are some of the studies currently underway and recruiting at QIMR Berghofer.



R-FIRE: Brain Health

Small particles in bushfire smoke can enter the brain and have been linked to poor mental health, cognitive deficits and increased risk of dementia.

With progressively longer fire seasons, rural firefighters are increasingly on the front line of landscape fire smoke impacts.

The Rural Firefighter Investigation of Risk & Exposure (R-FIRE): Brain Health study is the first Australian study to investigate the links between bushfire smoke exposure and brain health in a highly exposed population. The study aims to enable targeted screening and intervention efforts to reduce the negative effects of smoke exposure in the brain.

Individuals who have experienced fighting bushfires (including hazard-reduction burns) as paid or volunteer firefighters in Australia are invited to participate.

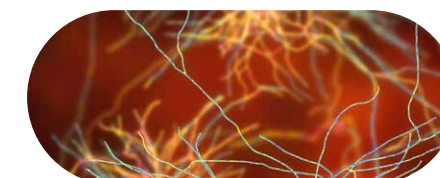
For more information, visit: www.qimrb.edu.au/studies/r-fire



Genetics of Glaucoma Study

If you’re aged 50–70 years and have a family history of glaucoma (affected parent and/or sibling) but no personal history of the disease, we invite you to be part of our study.

For more information, visit www.qimrb.edu.au/studies/genetics-of-glaucoma-study



Genetics of Epilepsy Study

The GenEp Study seeks to uncover the genetic reasons why anti-seizure medications help some people, why others continue to have seizures, and why certain individuals experience side effects such as fatigue or brain fog. Understanding these differences will guide improved, more personalised epilepsy treatment.

Adults with epilepsy or recurrent seizures are invited to participate.

www.geneticsofepilepsy.org.au

For more information about all current trials and studies, please visit www.qimrb.edu.au/studies

Parkinson's disease affects men and women differently



"Seeing this study grow to become the largest active Parkinson's cohort in the world is extraordinary, and it's a testament to the generosity of the thousands of Australians who gave their time to participate. This is exactly the kind of bold, ambitious research our community needs."

– VICKI MILLER, SHAKE IT UP AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION CEO

The first major analysis from the Australian Parkinson's Genetics Study (APGS), led by QIMR Berghofer, has uncovered striking differences in how the disease affects men and women, pointing to the need for more personalised approaches to care.

The study drew on data from nearly 11,000 Australians with Parkinson's disease who completed detailed questionnaires about their experience with the condition and provided saliva samples.

Women in the study were more likely to experience falls, pain and mental health challenges, while men more often reported cognitive and sleep related symptoms. These patterns suggest that Parkinson's may develop and progress differently depending on sex, potentially driven by a mix of biological, genetic and environmental factors.

"These differences tell us that Parkinson's is not a one-size-fits-all disease," Associate Professor Miguel Rentería, who leads the Computational Neurogenomics Laboratory at QIMR Berghofer said.

"The distinct patterns we see in men and women may reflect different underlying biological pathways and environmental exposures. Understanding these differences is essential if we want to move towards truly personalised approaches to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment."

Environmental exposures before diagnosis also varied. Men reported much higher exposure to pesticides and were more likely to have worked in high-risk industries such as farming, metal work and petrochemicals. Overall, one in four participants reported a family history of Parkinson's, while pesticide exposure and traumatic head injury were common across the whole cohort.

The world's largest active Parkinson's cohort

PhD candidate Fangyuan (Elainor) Cao, who led the analysis, said the diversity of experiences stood out.

"What struck me most was just how varied the experience of Parkinson's is – not only between individuals, but between men and women. The richness of this dataset allows us to move beyond averages and start to understand why the disease looks so different from one person to the next."

Clinician and researcher collaborator, Associate Professor Kishore Kumar from Garvan Institute of Medical Research, believes the findings will help doctors recognise this variability in practice. "This cohort is a remarkable national resource that will drive future genetic and longitudinal research and, ultimately, help improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's."

With support from the Shake It Up Australia Foundation and the Michael J. Fox Foundation, the APGS has also recruited 10,000 Australians without Parkinson's disease, creating a powerful comparison group.

Shake It Up Australia Foundation CEO, Vicki Miller said the findings reinforce the importance of supporting this type of research here in Australia.

"Shake It Up Australia has proudly supported the APGS since 2022 because we believe large-scale Australian research is essential to finding better treatments and, ultimately, a cure. Seeing this study grow to become the largest active Parkinson's cohort in the world is extraordinary, and it's a testament to the generosity of the thousands of Australians who gave their time to participate. This is exactly the kind of bold, ambitious research our community needs."

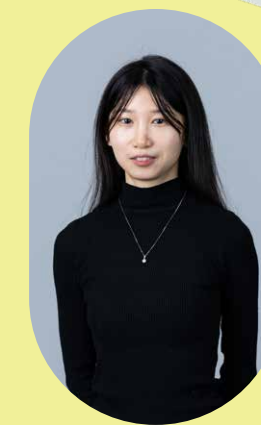


[Watch a video about this research.](#)



AWARD

Associate Professor Miguel Rentería has been awarded the Australian Academy of Science's Ruth Stephens Gani Medal for his research advancing the understanding of the genetics and epidemiology of neurological disorders, particularly Parkinson's disease.



"The richness of this dataset allows us to move beyond averages and start to understand why the disease looks so different from one person to the next."

– PHD CANDIDATE MS FANGYUAN (ELAINOR) CAO

Key differences reported by men and women in the first major APGS analysis

Aspect	Women	Men
Falls	45%	41%
Pain	70%	63%
Depression	32%	26%
Anxiety	23%	16%
Memory changes	61%	67%
Cognitive impairment	Lower	Higher
REM sleep behaviour disorder	7%	12%
Sleep apnoea	9%	19%
Impulsive behaviours	Lower	Higher
Pesticide exposure	28%	42%



Thanks to people like Don and thanks to people like you

A couple of months ago, our community played an important role in advancing medical research at QIMR Berghofer, inspired by people like Don.

Don was a devoted husband and a proud dad to Freddie and Darcy. Life was full and fast paced until, without warning, everything changed. A sudden seizure when he was 38-years-old led to a diagnosis no family is ever prepared for: glioblastoma, the most aggressive form of adult brain cancer. Like so many families before them, Don and Lauren were confronted with how limited treatment options can be, and how urgently new discoveries are needed.

Even in the face of devastating news, Don's response was resolute. He focused on time with his boys, creating moments that mattered, and encouraging those around him to support medical research, so future families might face illness with more options, and more hope.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, that call was answered and \$857,612 was raised to advance medical research.

Support for QIMR Berghofer enables researchers across a wide range of diseases, including brain cancer, other cancers, infectious diseases and immune related conditions to pursue discoveries that save lives. Your generosity helps scientists

test new ideas, accelerate promising treatments and translate research from the laboratory to the clinic.

Lauren and her boys carry Don's legacy forward with courage and hope. So do we.

To everyone who gave, shared or stood with us: thank you. Your compassion is helping turn loss into progress and ensuring medical research can continue to change outcomes for generations to come.

[For more about Don's story, click here.](#)

*Amount as of Friday 3rd July 2026



Top: Don and his wife Lauren, with their children, Freddie and Darcy.

Above: Family portrait by Darcy, titled 'On a rainbow, back together again'.

Bottom right: Professor Bryan Day (right) and Professor James Hudson (left), meeting with Lauren and Freddie.



You don't need to wear a lab coat to change lives

This September 9th become a hero for medical research.

Australia's medical research community is at a critical crossroads, one where groundbreaking discoveries are within reach, but the funding needed to deliver them is falling dangerously behind.

"We're seeing success rates for competitive grants fall to historic lows, and that has a real human cost," explains Professor Grant A. Ramm, interim Director and CEO, QIMR Berghofer.

With National Health and Medical Research Council Ideas Grant success rates dropping to just 8.1%, many high-quality, potentially life-saving research projects are left unfunded, not because the science isn't good enough, but because the resources simply aren't there.

And yet, the sector remains rich in talent. "Australia has a world-class medical research workforce, but we risk losing talent if funding doesn't reflect the true cost of doing research," Professor Ramm warns.

Without sustained investment, the country risks not only missed breakthroughs, but the loss of the people capable of delivering them.

Amid these challenges, community support has never been more vital, or more appreciated.

"Right now, Australia's medical research sector is being asked to deliver world-class breakthroughs with funding that simply isn't keeping pace."

— PROFESSOR GRANT A. RAMM, INTERIM DIRECTOR AND CEO, QIMR BERGHOFFER

On September 9, QIMR Berghofer will join the inaugural National Medical Research Giving Day, a bold new movement supporting life-saving discoveries and the future of healthcare.

Backed by more than 30 leading Australian medical research institutes, the campaign brings together researchers, communities and supporters with one shared goal: turning today's generosity into tomorrow's breakthroughs.

The message is simple, not all heroes wear lab coats. You don't need to be a scientist to help change lives.

Medical research touches every Australian, and the treatments we rely on today only exist because someone chose to invest in discovery.

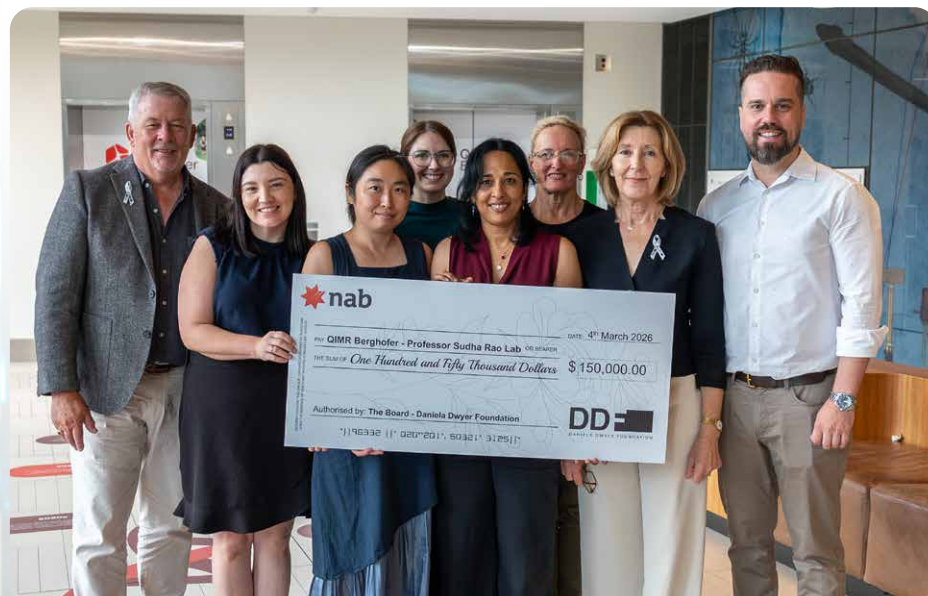
This September 9, become a hero for medical research. Every donation, big or small, helps fund critical research, drive new discoveries, and brings hope to patients and families across Australia.

[Click here to become a hero for medical research.](#)



SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Driving breakthroughs in brain cancer detection and care



Left: Professor Sudha Rao; Below: Daniela Dwyer; Above: Professor Rao and her team accepting a cheque from the Daniela Dwyer Foundation, including Daniela's parents, Kevin (left) and Luisa (second from right) and her partner, Taylor Bow (right).

Brain cancer research has received a major boost, with the Institute welcoming a generous \$150,000 donation from the Daniela Dwyer Foundation in March to support the work of Professor Sudha Rao and her team.

Daniela Dwyer (pictured below) was just 34 years old when she passed away from an aggressive brain cancer, only 11 months after diagnosis. During that time, she met Professor Rao and donated samples to help advance research. In her memory, her parents Luisa and Kevin Dwyer, together with her



partner Taylor Bow, established the Foundation to support improved diagnostic and treatment options.

This latest funding will help accelerate Professor Rao's non-invasive Liquid Biopsy Digital Pathology Platform, a promising technology designed to improve the detection and monitoring of aggressive cancers. Currently being trialled in the ABC Pax study across Queensland hospitals, the platform has already received encouraging early feedback.

A recent visit from the Foundation highlighted the real world impact of their support. Partnerships like this play a critical role in translating research into new diagnostic tools for patients.

We are grateful to the Daniela Dwyer Foundation for its commitment to advancing research that aims to improve outcomes for people affected by cancer.

Bancroft Society Lunch 2026

Advancing Tropical Disease Research

Members of the Bancroft Society and supporters who have chosen to include a gift to QIMR Berghofer in their Will are warmly invited to attend the Bancroft Society Lunch on Wednesday 30 September 2026.

The Brisbane luncheon provides a relaxed opportunity to connect with fellow supporters and learn more about the impact of tropical disease research at QIMR Berghofer.

We welcome the opportunity to recognise your commitment to advancing medical research and the vital role your generosity plays in ensuring this important work continues for generations to come.

Event details

Date:
Wednesday 30 September

RSVP by:
Monday 7 September

If you have not yet received your invitation or would like further information, please contact:

Lorraine: 0408 722 877

Christian: 0439 616 068

Leaving a legacy for the future health.

Leaving a gift in your Will to QIMR Berghofer supports vital research and helps protect the health of future generations. Every gift, large or small, is received with gratitude and used with care.

To learn more, our Gift in Wills team Lorraine and Christian, are available for a friendly and confidential conversation.

Free Call: 1800 993 000

Email: giftinwills@qimrb.edu.au



Thank you

Thank you to the incredible community of supporters who power life-saving research at QIMR Berghofer. Your generosity makes discoveries possible.

Loud shirts. Big impact.

Tropical shirt day is coming to QIMR Berghofer!

Dig out the hibiscus and palm leaf prints, turn up the colour and mark your calendar for 21 August, because the tropics are taking over QIMR Berghofer. This Tropical Shirt Day think sunshine, shades, island vibes and shirts that don't whisper – they announce.

Tropical Shirt Day is more than just an excuse to wear your loudest shirt (although that's definitely encouraged), but it's a chance to come together as a community and support vital tropical health research at QIMR Berghofer that makes a real difference to people living in tropical and vulnerable communities.

Why tropical shirt day matters

Behind the colour and creativity is a serious purpose. Funds raised through Tropical Shirt Day will support QIMR Berghofer's Centre for Tropical Health and Emerging Diseases, where researchers focus on diseases that thrive in warm climates and disproportionately affect communities across the tropics.

From parasites carried in soil and water, to infections driven by heat and humidity, this research helps improve health outcomes where the need is greatest. Every donation helps fuel science that saves lives – long after the shirts go in the wash.

One day. One community. Meaningful impact.

Tropical Shirt Day is a fun way to bring our community together – celebrating creativity, connection, and commitment to better health outcomes in the tropics.

So grab a shirt, start a fundraiser, and help turn bold fashion into bold change.

Save the date: 21 August 2026

**Wear tropical. Fundraise proudly.
Support tropical health research.**

Thank you to all of our kind supporters. Whether you fundraise for us in your community, donate monthly, or give when you can, you truly are the heart of research.

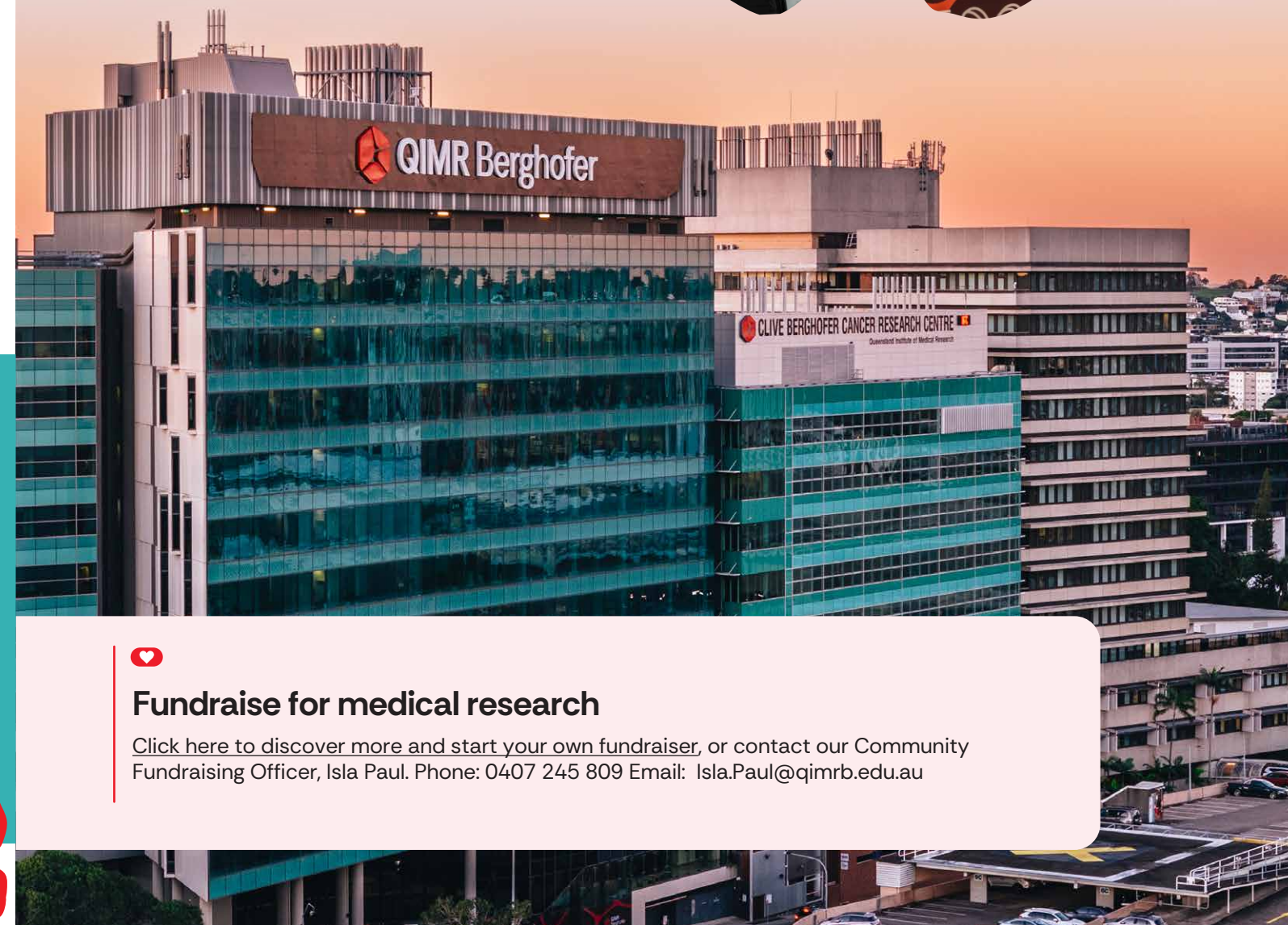
Friends of the Institute

Join a community of curious minds dedicated to supporting world-leading research in Queensland.

Friends of the Institute is your gateway to the heart of medical discovery. As a Friend, you become part of a community dedicated to advancing world-leading research and it's totally free!

Becoming a friend will bring you closer to our scientists through exclusive lab tours, invitations to community presentations and, the latest research updates and breakthroughs in our LifeLab magazine and monthly eNewsletter.

[Click here to join today and see how Queensland's very own research institute is changing lives around the world.](#)



How to get involved

-  Wear a tropical shirt on 21 August to show your support, or purchase a limited edition QIMR Berghofer tropical shirt
-  Set up your own fundraising page and share it with colleagues, friends, and family
-  Fundraise as an individual or a team in our peer-to-peer fundraising challenge
-  Tell your story, spread the word, and invite your network to donate

Whether you go all-out with a team theme or keep it simple with a big splash of colour, every effort counts.

For more information, contact Isla Paul
Phone: 0407 245 809
Email: Isla.Paul@qimrb.edu.au



Fundraise for medical research

[Click here to discover more and start your own fundraiser](#), or contact our Community Fundraising Officer, Isla Paul. Phone: 0407 245 809 Email: Isla.Paul@qimrb.edu.au

On September 9, join thousands of Australians in backing the research that shapes our future.



Become a hero for medical research

Every Australian will be affected by illness at some point in their life, and the treatments we rely on today exist because someone chose to invest in discovery. This is your opportunity to be part of something bigger.

This September 9 support life-saving medical research

- Donate using the enclosed form
- Visit donate.qimrb.edu.au
- Scan the QR code
- Call our Supporter Line on 1800 993 000

Click here to
help fund
the next
breakthrough

[**www.qimrb.edu.au**](https://www.qimrb.edu.au)