

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, *BRISBANE*

About QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute

Established in 1945, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Brisbane, was the brainchild of Dr Edward Derrick, an early Director of the Queensland State Health Department's Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology.

Dr Derrick's work on infectious diseases prevalent in Queensland made him aware of the need for an institute devoted to full-time research in this field.

This year (2018), as QIMR Berghofer Medical Research marks its 73rd anniversary, it is now known as one of the largest and most successful medical research institutes in Australia, specialising in cancer research, infectious diseases, mental health and chronic disorders. Today the institute houses more than 50 laboratories and its own 40-bed clinical trials facility – Q-Pharm.



The Institute is home to more than 600 researchers, students and support staff, working collaboratively towards new diagnostic, prevention and treatment strategies, who are housed in three state-of-the-art buildings in the heart of the Herston Health Precinct and are located on the same campus as Queensland's largest teaching hospital – the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute is also a partner in the new Herston Imaging Research Facility.

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute's priorities are to:

- Translate scientific findings into new diagnostic tools, treatments and prevention methods;
- Collaborate with researchers, locally and internationally, to improve health outcomes; and
- Support and develop staff and provide funding stability for scientists.

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute research programs

Mental health

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute is a partner in the Queensland Mental Health Research Alliance.

The QIMR Berghofer Mental Health Program researches burdensome diseases, ranging from depression, schizophrenia and dementia.

QIMR Berghofer uses brain imaging, computational modelling, epidemiological studies and gene-sequencing technologies to provide unprecedented insights into the biology of cells, animals and humans, and the genetic basis for a number of conditions.

The diverse program includes research into diagnostic tests for depression, bipolar disorder, dementia and schizophrenia, as well as Australia's largest study of asthma genetics.

New molecular techniques have enabled QIMR Berghofer to undertake the *Genetics of Bipolar Study* – groundbreaking research that aims to identify the genes that predispose people to bipolar disorder, in order to develop new treatments, and ultimately find a cure for the disorder. Study researchers are currently working to recruit 5,000 Australian patients aged 18 and above, who have been treated for bipolar disorder, to volunteer for the world's largest and most rigorous investigation into the serious and potentially life-threatening illness. In the interim, they will also strive to heighten public awareness and understanding of mental illness.



Cancer

One in two Australian men and one in three Australian women will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85¹. For this reason, more than half of QIMR Berghofer's research focuses on understanding how and why different types of cancers – including skin, brain, bowel and breast cancers – develop, and to find better ways to prevent, detect and treat the cancers.

The QIMR Berghofer cancer program played a key role in isolating the active ingredient in radium weed, to develop a topical gel to treat sunspots. This product is now on the market in Australia and the US.



Infectious diseases

QIMR Berghofer was initially established to help tackle infectious diseases affecting Queenslanders. Since then, the institute's Infectious Diseases Program has broadened its focus to major global problems, including mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, Ebola, HIV/AIDS and scabies. In particular, the program concentrates on vaccine development.

QIMR Berghofer is also a key player in the Australian Infectious Diseases Research Centre, which brings scientists together to support research, and the Queensland Tropical Health Alliance, which focuses on reducing the burden of tropical diseases.

The international clinical trials underway at QIMR Berghofer are positioning Australia as a global hub for research, accelerating the development of new medicines for malaria.

Chronic disorders

Demographic and lifestyle changes have led to the rise of a number of chronic conditions. QIMR Berghofer's chronic disorders research program encompasses complex conditions such as allergies, asthma, cystic fibrosis, endometriosis, inflammatory bowel disease and iron-related diseases.

About Clive Berghofer

In August 2013 Toowoomba businessman Clive Berghofer AM donated \$50.1 million to QIMR Berghofer, making him one of Australia's most generous philanthropists, having previously donated more than \$10 million. As a sign of gratitude, and in recognition of Mr Berghofer's long history of support, the Queensland Institute of Medical Research changed its name to the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute.

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For more information, please contact Kirsten Bruce or Holly Hamilton from VIVA! Communications on 0401 717 566 / 0434 799 839.

Reference

1. Cancer Council Australia. Facts and figures - Cancer in Australia. Available at: <http://www.cancer.org.au/about-cancer/what-is-cancer/facts-and-figures.html>. [Last accessed November 2018].