

# Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre

Executive Summary 2011



Menzies  
Research  
Institute  
Tasmania



# Executive Summary

## Vision

The Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre prepares Tasmania, and thereby Australia, for the increasing numbers of people with dementia.

## Mission

The translational research and education programs cover the broad areas:

- Building Dementia Health Service Capacity and Carer Resilience
- Exploring the Trajectory of Dementia
- Investigating the Biological Basis of Dementia
- Education, Workforce Development and Community Engagement

## Funding Overview

The Wicking Centre is the largest health research group in Tasmania. Current and ongoing funding managed by the Centre this year (1 Nov 2010—31 Oct 2011) totals more than \$7,800,000.

The JO & JR Wicking Trust initially provided funding of \$300,000 per year (2008–2012), with our partners UTAS providing \$150,000/year and the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS Tas) providing a further \$50,000/year, totalling \$500,000 annual core funding.

The Wicking Centre is delighted to learn of its successful 2011 bid for future funding from the JO & JR Wicking Trust. This philanthropic funding of \$3m from 2013–2017 creates a unique opportunity for capacity building across the theme areas, enabling capability for key translational research including the drug discovery platform and dementia care teaching.

## Summary of outcomes 2011

Core funding:	Wicking Trust 2011	\$300,000
	DHHS and UTAS	\$200,000
New funding 2011:		\$3,780,970
Ongoing funding:		\$3,532,371
Total funds managed in 2011:		<b>\$7,813,341</b>
Research publications 2011:		22
Student capacity 2011:		16 PhDs; 5 Hons
Staff capacity 2011:		28 Academic; 11 Professional staff; 50 Research Associates

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## Goal Area 1

### Dementia Health Service Development

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**Objective:** *To improve dementia care service delivery in Tasmania and foster evidence-based best practice among health planning policy-makers, agency providers, practitioners, researchers and associates.*

**Research Team:** Professor Andrew Robinson, Dr Sharon Andrews, Dr Brigit Stratton, Dr Emma Lea, Dr Claire Eccleston, Dr Barbara Lloyd, Claire Morley, Hazel Ryan, Susan Leggett, Carl Higgs; **Associates:** Dr Christine Stirling, Dr Jenn Scott, Professor Roger Fay, Professor Richard Fleming (Woollongong), Associate Professor Chris Toye (Curtin), Professor Fran McInerney (ACU), Dr Jane Tolman and Dr Martin Morrissey (DHHS); **PhD candidates:** Helen Courtney-Pratt (graduated), Melinda Minstrell, Heather Brooks, Suanne Lawrence, Kate Elliott, Corinna Dwan.

New funding 2011:	\$ 1,571,974
Ongoing funding:	\$ 1,796,756
Total funding (bar core):	\$ 3,368,730
PhD candidates:	6
Publications:	12
Conference presentations:	17
Ongoing projects:	16

#### Highlight: Teaching Aged Care Facilities Program

Second semester 2011 saw this innovative program enter its second stage, the placement of UTAS medical, nursing and paramedical students in Launceston's Masonic Peace Memorial Haven Aged Care Facility and Hobart's Queen Victoria Home. Experiencing the aged sector first-hand gave the students positive attitudes to aged care work as well as building the organisational capability of the facilities. The two facilities are project partners, part of a consortium between the Wicking Centre, UTAS, the Australian Pacific Leadership Group and the Australian Catholic University.

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## Goal Area 2

### Exploring the Trajectory of Dementia

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**Objective:** *To more fully understand the continuum of the progression of the diseases that cause dementia.*

**Research team:** Dr Mathew Summers, Professor James Vickers, Dr Tracey Dickson, Dr Michael Valenzuela, Professor Jeffrey Summers, Professor Andrew Robinson, Professor Karen Ritchie; *PhD candidates:* Shannon Klekociuk, Juanita Westbury, Nichole Saunders (graduated), David Ward.

New funding 2011:	\$1,081,422
Ongoing funding:	\$281,794
Total funding (bar core):	\$1,363,216
PhD candidates:	5
Publications:	5
Conference presentations:	1
Ongoing projects:	2

Highlight: \$1m NHMRC funding for Tasmanian Healthy Brain Project

The Tasmanian Healthy Brain Study, a world first prospective longitudinal study, received a \$1 million National Health and Medical Research Council grant for a period of 5 years to examine the potential benefit of tertiary education in late life to protect against age-related cognitive decline and/or dementia. To date, 249 participants have commenced in the project, the majority being in the intervention arm and studying at the University of Tasmania. Recruitment of participants will continue over the next 4 years, with more than 100 already enrolled for 2012.

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## Goal Area 3

### Investigating the Biological Basis of Dementia

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**Objective:** *To undertake research into the causes of dementia and to develop platform technologies and therapeutic strategies to determine new ways to treat dementia in its earliest stages.*

**Research Team:** Professor James Vickers, Dr Tracey Dickson, Dr Jyoti Chuckowree, Dr Anna King, Dr Olivier Bibari, Dr Catherine Blizzard, Dr Jerome Staal, Graeme McCormack, Justin Dittman, Clara Lee; *PhD candidates:* Ruth Musgrove, Yao Liu, Katherine Hosie, Stanislaw Mitew, Chiing Yap.

New funding 2011:	\$ 1,127,554
Ongoing funding:	\$ 1,448,221
Total funding (bar core):	\$ 2,575,775
PhD candidates:	5
Publications:	6
Conference presentations:	6
Ongoing projects:	12

New studies are underway on the role of demyelination and loss of synapses in Alzheimer's disease and relevant transgenic models. These studies confirm that A $\beta$  plaques are a focus of axonal injury in Alzheimer's disease, but that there are also secondary changes that result, which may potentially be mitigated against. Other investigations in collaboration with the UTAS School of Chemistry are focussed on developing modifications of known drugs used for cancer treatment for potential use in neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.

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## Goal Area 4

### Education and Community Engagement

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**Objective:** *To build dementia research capacity and provide education and training for existing and potential future dementia care workforce*

**Team:** Diana Carter, Dr Carolyn King, Donnamay Brown, Suzie Castillo, Professor James Vickers, Professor Andrew Robinson.

Ongoing funding:	\$5,600 (UTAS Community Engagement Grant)
Conference presentations:	1
Community seminars:	25
Media outputs: (excluding web)	72

**Highlight:** Annual WDREC Research School

Thirty-five PhD and post-doctoral fellows from around Australia took part in the third annual Wicking Research School "The Neurobiology of Dementia" facilitated over three days in June 2011 at the Medical Sciences Precinct, Hobart. Chaired by Dr Tracey Dickson, sessions were led by Professor James Vickers, Professor Andrew Robinson, Professor David Small, Dr Jane Tolman, Dr Rob Gasperini, Dr Jyoti Chuckowree, Dr Anna King, Dr Jenn Scott, Associate Professor Roger Chung, Dr Lisa Foa, Associate Professor Inn Chuah and Dr Alison Canty.

## 2011 Wicking Centre RHD graduates and candidates

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>WDREC supervisors/ WDREC co-supervisors</i>	
Andrews, S.	Robinson, A.	Graduated PhD
Blizzard, C.	Dickson, T., King, A., Vickers, J.	Graduated PhD
Saunders, N.	Summers, M.	Graduated PhD
Courtney-Pratt, H.	Robinson, A.	Graduated PhD
Minstrell, M.	Stirling, C.	Submitted PhD
Lawrence, S.	Robinson, A.	2005—
Brooks, H.	Stirling, C.	2007—
Westbury, J.	Robinson, A.	2007—
Liu, Y.	Vickers, J., Staal, J., Dickson, T.	2008—
Musgrove, R.	Dickson, T., King, A.	2008—
Elliott, K-E.	Stirling, C., Robinson, A.	2009—
Mitew, S.	Dickson, T., Vickers, J.	2009—
Dwan, C.	Stirling, C.	2010—
Hosie, K.	Dickson, T., King, A., Vickers, J.	2010—
Klekociuk, S.	Summers, M., Vickers, J.	2010—
Chiing, Y.	Dickson, T., King, A.	2011—
Ward, D.	Vickers, J., Summers, M.	2011—

Please refer to the WDREC Annual Report 2011 for more details

## 2011 Wicking Centre Advisory Committee

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Chair	Prof Denise Fassett	UTAS Head, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Member	Ms Kim MacGowan	President, Alzheimer's Australia Tasmania
Member	Ms Wendy Quinn	Director, Clinical Networks, Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania
Member	Mr Darren Mathewson	CEO, Aged & Community Services Tasmania
Member	Mr Anthony Speed	State Manager, Australian Department of Health and Ageing
Member	Prof Simon Foote	Director, Menzies Research Institute Tasmania
Member	Prof Paddy Nixon	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) UTAS
Member	Prof Raymond Playford	Dean of Faculty of Health Science, UTAS
Member	Dr Jane Tolman	Director of Geriatrics and Rehabilitation, Royal Hobart Hospital
<i>In absentia</i>	Ms Teresa Zolnierkiewicz	Head of Philanthropy, ANZ Trustees Ltd.
<i>Ex-officio</i>	Prof Andrew Robinson	Co-Director, WDREC
<i>Ex-officio</i>	Prof James Vickers	Co-Director, WDREC
<i>Minute Secretary</i>	Mrs Diana Carter	Executive Officer (Strategic Operations), WDREC

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**Please refer to the WDREC Annual Report 2011 for more details** (available online at <http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking>)

Prepared by

Diana Carter

Executive Officer (Strategic Operations)

Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre

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Full Annual Report also available at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking>

WDREC: [www.utas.edu.au/wicking](http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking)