


the NeuRA

magazine

Issue 30 | Spring 2019

How mental health research can transform lives

- 
- New WHO guidelines for dementia
 - NeuRA partners with Mark Moran Group
 - Colour Your Hair for Mental Health
 - The latest in Alzheimer's research

Will you join Kathy and I on our quest to find cures?

I have spent my life on a quest for discovery. As a young scientist, it was my honour to build upon the body of research and knowledge already uncovered by pioneering researchers who came before me.

Now, as CEO of NeuRA, I am determined to leave the same gift of ground-breaking research for future generations of scientists to continue improving the lives of Australians long after I am gone.

For my wife Kathy and I, supporting brain and nervous system research led by NeuRA is very personal and deeply important - and that's why we have chosen to leave a gift to NeuRA in our Will.

We feel comfort knowing this will be our legacy. And I invite you to consider making it your legacy too.

A gift in your Will is a very special way to support the work being conducted at NeuRA and will make a lasting difference to the health and quality of life of generations to come. Whether it's a large or small gift, it plays a vital role in supporting research projects into the future.

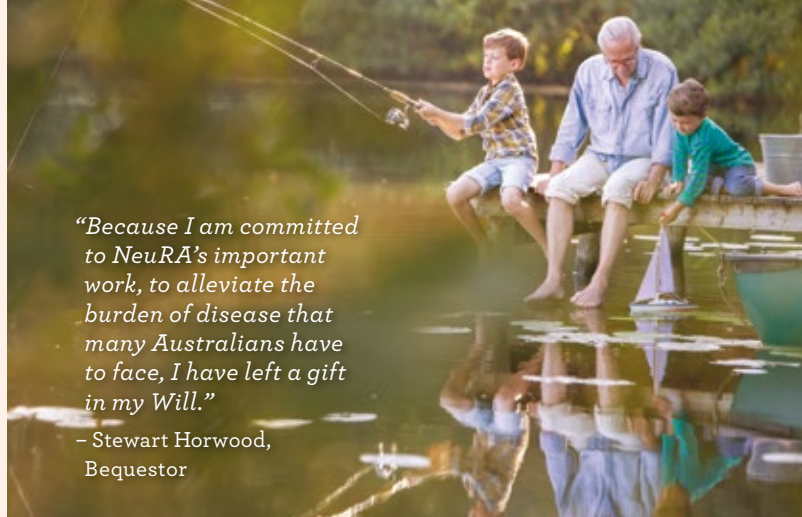
Will you join Kathy and I on our quest to find cures?



Prof Peter R Schofield AO FAHMS PhD DSc
CEO



BEQUEST FOR CURES



"Because I am committed to NeuRA's important work, to alleviate the burden of disease that many Australians have to face, I have left a gift in my Will."

– Stewart Horwood,
Bequestor

Yes! **I would like more information about making a bequest to NeuRA**

Title: _____ First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Mobile: _____

Preferred method of contact: ☐ Phone ☐ Mail ☐ Email

Please return this form to: NeuRA Foundation,
PO Box 1165, Randwick NSW 2031 Australia

- ☐ I'm interested in leaving a gift to NeuRA in my Will. Please send more information to me.
- ☐ I would like to speak confidentially with someone at NeuRA, please call me on the number above.
- ☐ Yes, I have already included a gift to NeuRA in my Will.
- ☐ I intend to include a gift to NeuRA in my Will when I next revise it.
- ☐ I'm not in a position to make a commitment at this time.



You can contact the Gifts in Wills Manager with any questions

Stephanie Grove

T +61 2 9399 1270

M 0420 247 760

E s.grove@neura.edu.au



BEQUEST FOR CURES

Anthony
and Virginia
Shirvington,
Bequestors

Anthony and Virginia Shirvington: appreciating NeuRA's vision, culture and expertise

In late 2018 Anthony and Virginia Shirvington decided to develop a donation and gifts in Wills program that would fulfill their desire to help those with mental illness. NeuRA quickly became their main beneficiary in this process.

Mr and Mrs Shirvington were aware of the work carried out by NeuRA in relation to mental illness, an affliction that has profoundly affected their life.

The impetus to become involved with NeuRA is closely linked to their distress about the lack of recognition, acceptance and even denial of the causes and effects of serious mental illness in the general community, which they have experienced personally. They also have direct experience of degenerative illness in the form of dementia of an elderly parent, which is another area of focus for NeuRA researchers.

The Shirvingtons were delighted to receive a letter from Professor Peter Schofield AO, the CEO of NeuRA, in which he included them among the organisation's "passionate supporters". He described their bequest as "a very special way of supporting the work being conducted at NeuRA and will make a lasting difference to the health and quality of life of generations to come". But also, importantly for them, the CEO and NeuRA Foundation team have shown their support through their appreciation and understanding of the impact of mental illness on their family.

"We are extremely pleased to be warmly accepted into the NeuRA community and to liaise with other donors as well as the highly experienced and dedicated researchers.

"The complex functioning of the brain has always been of particular interest to us and we feel a perfect fit with NeuRA and its vision," said Anthony and Virginia Shirvington.

Anthony and Virginia met while studying Arts/Law at the University of Sydney. Both became practising solicitors and have now retired. Having commenced in private practice they both moved into the public and semi-public sectors quite early in their careers. They feel a great sense of satisfaction in having completed careers advising, consulting and teaching in the area of professional responsibility for lawyers.

NeuRA helps develop new WHO guidelines for dementia prevention

People can reduce their risk of dementia by getting regular exercise, not smoking, avoiding harmful use of alcohol, controlling their weight, eating a healthy diet, and maintaining healthy blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, according to new guidelines issued by the World Health Organization (WHO).

NeuRA's Professor Kaarin Anstey was a member of WHO's Guideline Development Committee. She says the Guidelines highlight the scientific evidence to support the benefit of interventions for reducing the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

NeuRA partners with MMG to help older Australians

NeuRA and Mark Moran Group (MMG) have partnered to help deliver NeuRA's age-related research to MMG centres to improve health and wellbeing outcomes of older Australians, enabling them to live better for longer.

The first stage of the partnership includes the development and rollout of a new app-based wellbeing assessment tool that can predict falls among older people with 75% accuracy. The FallScreen+ tool will be trialled at MMG facilities before being rolled out nationally.



L-R: Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, MMG Co-Founders Mark and Evette Moran, NeuRA's CEO Prof Peter Schofield AO

"By making breakthroughs with NeuRA and saving one life, or potentially tens of thousands of lives, we are creating a future where older Australians will continue their interests, their passions, their health and being celebrated in their community," said MMG Co-Founder Evette Moran.



Colour Your Hair for Mental Health

In October, NeuRA is running a campaign called Colour Your Hair for Mental Health to raise funds for mental health research. Funds will be used to advance our ability to treat and prevent a range of illnesses including depression, schizophrenia, anxiety and bipolar disorder. It will also help us to learn how we can improve our resilience, which can reduce the likeliness and severity of mental illness.

In joining Colour Your Hair for Mental Health, participants will dye their hair or wear a colourful wig during Mental Health Week, 7-13 October. We hope that as well as raising funds, Colour Your Hair for Mental Health will generate conversations and create opportunities for people to come together and share stories that help break through stigma related to mental illness. Our goal is to generate more interest in this topic and greater awareness about how and why mental illness impacts so many people.

Why is NeuRA running Colour Your Hair for Mental Health? Our vision is to identify more effective treatments, or perhaps even a cure, for mental illness.

At least one in five Australians will face a mental health challenge in their lifetime and, by fundraising and colouring your hair, you can help to make a difference.

At NeuRA, we are working to unlock the secrets of what is occurring in our brains when these illnesses occur. Your support will enable more investment into research that can help treat and support people with mental illness throughout the country.

We encourage you to sign up to Colour Your Hair for Mental Health if you are interested in supporting great research and giving hope to millions of Australians living with mental illness.





Camille's partner John has played an integral role in supporting her as she trialled different medications and treatments



Camille celebrating her fourth birthday

How mental health research is bringing hope to Australians

Growing up in the small Sydney suburb of Oatley, Camille Wilson grew up with access to opportunities with the support of a loving family. From the outside, you would see a high achiever on course towards a bright future. But under the surface there was a young woman plagued by anxiety, who was self-harming and contemplating suicide.

As a teenager, Camille felt completely isolated and that there was little point to life. For the most part, these dark thoughts and feelings were hidden from her family – until her first suicide attempt at the age of 16. This led her to seek treatment.

"I didn't know what kind of treatment was best for me and the whole process was trial and error. Unfortunately, I was prescribed an array of anxiety medications that all came with side effects – from mild nausea to violent, suicidal thoughts," Camille said.

Worryingly, Camille's symptoms worsened. During her mid-twenties, Camille was overwhelmed by intrusive thoughts and regularly

hospitalised due to panic attacks and anxiety-induced vertigo.

"I felt like I'd hit rock bottom and had to get real help. I started seeing a psychologist and psychiatrist to help me understand the cause of my anxiety and find effective treatments in managing these symptoms."

During this time Camille stopped working and her parents took care of her. It was at this stage that she began talking more openly about her mental illnesses with friends and family members. This experience transformed Camille's life. Through effective treatment, she has taken charge of her life and today is a successful human resources professional and is also studying



Camille now works with school children to explain the importance of seeking support to treat mental illness

“One of my great hopes is that more research into conditions like anxiety and depression will mean that a new generation of young women will benefit from treatments that weren’t available a decade ago.”

a Masters in Brain Science. Camille is passionate about mental health research and advocates to improve awareness about the challenges facing many Australians.

“When I was younger, a lack of varied treatments and limited community awareness held me back. I could have sought effective treatment earlier but I didn’t know how to do this at the time,” Camille said.

“One of my great hopes is that more research into conditions like anxiety

and depression will mean that a new generation of young women will benefit from treatments that weren’t available a decade ago.”

“I’m getting behind Colour Your Hair for Mental Health because mental illness doesn’t discriminate. If there’s more research, there will be more treatment options for young people who may feel ashamed about what they’re experiencing and might not know where to turn for help in their hardest moments.”

She is also hopeful that research will help break down the stigma that still surrounds mental health disorders.

Colour Your Hair for Mental Health is raising funds for life-changing mental health research into illnesses such as depression, schizophrenia, anxiety and bipolar disorder.

**YOU CAN HELP TO
SUPPORT RESEARCH
and the millions of
Australians with
mental illness by
registering now at
colouryourhair.com.au**

Our pursuit to prevent Alzheimer's



L-R: DIAN-TU Study team Jacob Bechara, Dr Bill Brooks, Prof Peter Schofield AO and Mirelle D'Mello

For the past 11 years, NeuRA has played a key role in the ground-breaking international research program, DIAN (Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer Network). The program has researchers, clinicians and families from over 26 countries working together to study how Alzheimer's develops and learn how it can be treated.

They are doing this by studying a rare form of Alzheimer's disease called Dominantly Inherited Alzheimer's Disease (DIAD). Sadly, there is a 50 per cent chance that the children of someone with DIAD will develop the same disease. But the high prevalence of Alzheimer's among this group means researchers can begin treatment early to see whether their intervention methods are stopping the disease among trial participants.

NeuRA is part of a clinical trial program called DIAN-TU, which is looking at whether certain drugs

"These people are going to extraordinary lengths to participate in our trials, and I am very thankful for their commitment. Through their assistance, we hope to discover how to prevent Alzheimer's in Australia and internationally."

can prevent the deposition of amyloid in the brain. A significant amount of amyloid is typically found in people who develop Alzheimer's.

"I've been working with a small but committed group of Australian families in this trial for many years and have got to know some of them very well," said NeuRA's investigator Dr Bill Brooks.

"These people are going to extraordinary lengths to participate in our trials, and I am very thankful for their commitment. Through their assistance, we hope to discover how to prevent Alzheimer's in Australia and internationally," he said.

DIAD is unique because it is the only situation where Alzheimer's disease has a single known cause, which in

this case is a harmful gene. People in these families who inherit the disease-causing gene usually develop symptoms when aged between their thirties and fifties, which is about 35 years earlier than the typical onset age of Alzheimer's disease.

"It's tragic that so many people with DIAD may not live past the age of 60. But these people also give us hope because they may hold the key to discovering how we can prevent Alzheimer's from occurring. My aspiration is that everyone suffering from or touched by Alzheimer's will one day receive better treatment that reduces the growth and impact of this disease," Dr Brooks said.

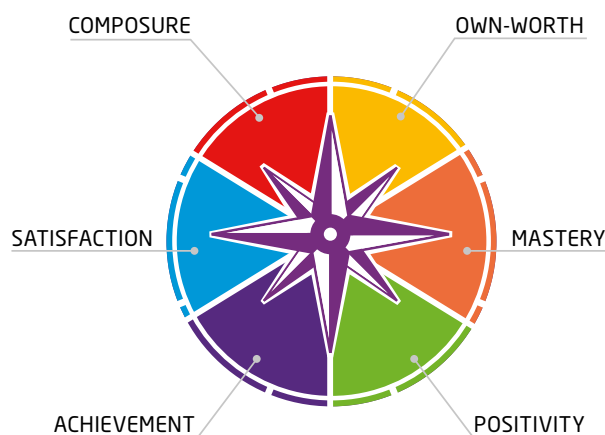
Researchers anticipate the results from the global DIAN-TU study will be available next year.

How to build resilience & improve mental health

with Dr Justine Gatt

Resilience enables people to cope and positively adapt in the face of stress or misfortune, and enables them to better handle adversity.

Researchers have found six key elements you can focus on to improve resilience:



TIPS FOR RESILIENCE

Composure: Develop positive coping strategies like active problem solving, rather than avoidance, self-blame, venting or substance use. Also, recognise when you are becoming stressed so that you can respond differently to challenges.

Own-Worth: Identify what you stand for and your values, and preserve them with healthy boundaries.

Mastery: Build on your strengths, seek opportunities for growth and be self-reliant.

Positivity: Have a positive outlook, seek out and schedule time for fun, and take regular notes of things you achieve.

Achievement: Identify your talents and interests, and set meaningful goals that satisfy your needs.

Satisfaction with Life: Prioritise fitness, physical health and mindfulness. Try to be present during your everyday activities.

DONATION & RESEARCH VOLUNTEER FORM

All gifts over \$2 are tax deductible

- ☐ Yes, I would like to donate to research at NeuRA
- ☐ Yes, I am interested in participating in research at NeuRA

Title:

First Name:

Surname:

Address:

Suburb:

State:

Postcode:

Phone:

Email:

How I choose to give my gift:

- ☐ Please accept this one-off gift to support research at NeuRA
- ☐ I would like to invest in the future and become a *Discovery Partner* with a regular donation of \$ _____ ☐ monthly / ☐ quarterly (please select)

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 or

☐ A cheque payable to the NeuRA Foundation is enclosed OR

☐ I wish to make my gift by credit card:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Diners

Card No:

Expiry Date:

Cardholder's Name:

Cardholder's Signature:

☐ If you do not require a receipt, please tick here

Please send me:

☐ Details about how I can support NeuRA in my Will

- Mail this coupon in the reply paid envelope
- Call us on **1300 888 019** to make a donation over the phone
- Make a secure online donation at neura.edu.au/donate

A message from the NeuRA Foundation: The NeuRA Foundation may co-operate with other like-minded reputable Australian charities to promote our work to our respective donors. If you'd prefer that NeuRA does not share your information with other charities, please phone us on **1300 888 019**, email us at foundation@neura.edu.au or write to us using the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for generously supporting our research into diseases

Neuroscience Research Australia Foundation, PO Box 1165, Randwick NSW 2031 ABN 57 008 429 961

Team NeuRA at the City2Surf 2019

On 11 August 2019, 54 people took on the City2Surf for Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA). The event is the world's largest fun run with 80,000 participants taking on the 14km course, which stretches from Hyde Park in central Sydney to the iconic Bondi Beach.

NeuRA thanks all of its fundraisers, who raised an incredible \$30,903. This funding will further NeuRA's mission to 'Discover, Conquer and Cure' disorders of the brain and nervous system. The top fundraiser was George Hughes, who raised \$4,056 in support of his mother who has been diagnosed with a neurological condition known as Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP).

"It's frustrating and heartbreaking to see a loved one suffer, knowing there's not much you can do to stop it from happening," said George.

"In time, and with the right level of funding, I am confident we'll find ways to cure diseases such as PSP. I'm determined to do my part to ensure that we get to this point as soon as possible. That's why we need to drive up awareness of such conditions, raise much-needed funds and support the medical and scientific community in their efforts."



L-R: NeuRA Foundation Director Grant Simpson with fundraisers Bess Stewart and Nigel Walker

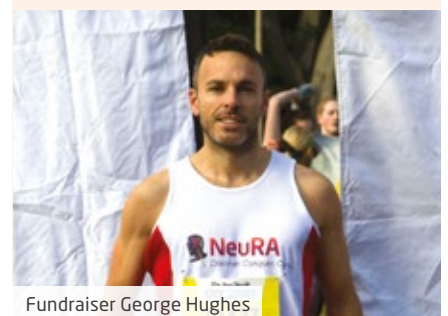
George was closely followed by Nigel Edward Walker who, since being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease three years ago, has "sought to live life to the fullest by working, running, trekking, golfing, gardening and much more." Nigel raised \$3,714 to help make a difference for others living with Parkinson's.

NeuRA staff met with the runners before and after the race, which was a highly rewarding experience. We heard about how neurological injuries, diseases or disorders have touched their lives.

Their stories reveal their appreciation for research and hope that we can together develop better treatments for themselves, loved ones and friends. We are so grateful for all of their fundraising efforts.

It's not too late to contribute to Team NeuRA

Community fundraising is vital to NeuRA's work. It generates funds for critical research and builds awareness in the community about our activities and research. We thank community fundraisers for telling family, friends and work colleagues about why they are so passionate about our cause. We love to see our runners proudly wearing the NeuRA logo on race day, encouraging others to champion medical research in Australia.



Fundraiser George Hughes

Thank you for your support

If you wish to update your preferred communications from NeuRA, please call 1300 888 019.

NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) Foundation
T 1300 888 019 F +61 2 9399 1082
ABN 57 008 429 961

Margarete Ainsworth Building
139 Barker Street, Randwick NSW 2031 Australia

www.neura.edu.au

