



## The Sir Gustav Nossal Professor of Immunology

Sir Gustav Nossal Professor of Immunology honours  
a giant of Australian science



*Sir Gustav Nossal (L) with his predecessor as director,  
Sir Macfarlane Burnet.*

The exceptional research, discovery and advocacy legacy of former WEHI director and national treasure Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE will continue through an ongoing professorship at WEHI. Launched with a generous gift from the Nossal family, the Sir Gustav Nossal Professor of Immunology is a prestigious new position that will lead pivotal research to advance immunology.

An international search is now underway for an outstanding candidate who will become the first Nossal Professor, a role that will build on Sir Gus' pioneering work that greatly advanced our understanding of the workings of the immune system.

### Fitting recognition

Sir Gus spent nearly four decades at WEHI after arriving as a young medical graduate in 1957.

His immunology research greatly advanced global understanding of immune tolerance – how the immune system learns to distinguish between our own body and foreign ‘invaders’ – and how the failure of this process can lead to rheumatoid arthritis and other immune diseases.

In 1965 he became the institute's fourth director, a position he held until 1996. Under his leadership WEHI transformed into a leading research institute with a broadened research scope, enhanced technologies and facilities, and an environment that attracted and nurtured some of the leading scientists of our time.

The professorship is a fitting recognition for one of Australia's preeminent scientists.



*Sir Gus Nossal in the lab*

## Continuing an exceptional legacy

While the ways we research, diagnose and treat the immune system have changed considerably in recent decades, there is much still to learn about this uniquely complex system.

The immune system is central to life and problems with it cause or exacerbate a vast range of health issues. This includes debilitating autoimmune disorders such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis that collectively affect up to 10% of the population. Treatments for immune diseases are limited, and in some cases don't exist.



*Professor Ken Smith with  
Sir Gus Nossal*

### Professor Ken Smith, Director of WEHI

"Sir Gus' research and leadership legacy is firmly established, and we are delighted that it will endure through this prestigious, perpetual role. This incredible gift provides the opportunity for new immunological discoveries that will help people live healthier and longer lives today, and importantly, well into the future for generations to come.

Early in my career I had the great good fortune to be Sir Gus' last PhD student, so I'm particularly proud that the professorship will sustain Sir Gus' passion for nurturing the next generation of immunologists.

Sir Gus knows as well as any that science is a team effort. We're so grateful to the Nossal family for this wonderful donation, for their innovative and inspiring concept for the professorship, and for their enduring connection to WEHI and Australian science."

### Kate Nossal, Sir Gustav Nossal's daughter

"Our family's desire to support WEHI comes from our longstanding personal relationship with this internationally renowned organisation. We see that the culture of collaboration and innovation established by Gus and his contemporaries continues, and this gives us confidence we can trust further generations of WEHI scientists to continue to make groundbreaking discoveries."



*Sir Gus Nossal*

### Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE, Former Director of WEHI

"I was very fortunate to be involved with immunology at an early stage of the science, and we have come a long way. But there is a lot more work to do before we have a full understanding of the immune system and related diseases. With this family donation, our aim is to support an exceptional scientist to help WEHI continue its global leadership in the field. I'm excited to see what discoveries this professorship could deliver in the essential area of immune health research.

It is humbling that WEHI intends to establish this position in perpetuity which will allow my family to remain connected with this wonderful institution into the future, as they have indicated a desire to do.

We live in an age where good science is particularly important. In that regard, I note that WEHI intends to grow this fund further to eventually support the whole lab team of the Nossal Professor in perpetuity. We hope that others will follow our lead and donate generously to this fund, or to the support of other scientific research, given how important private support is to Australian medical research."