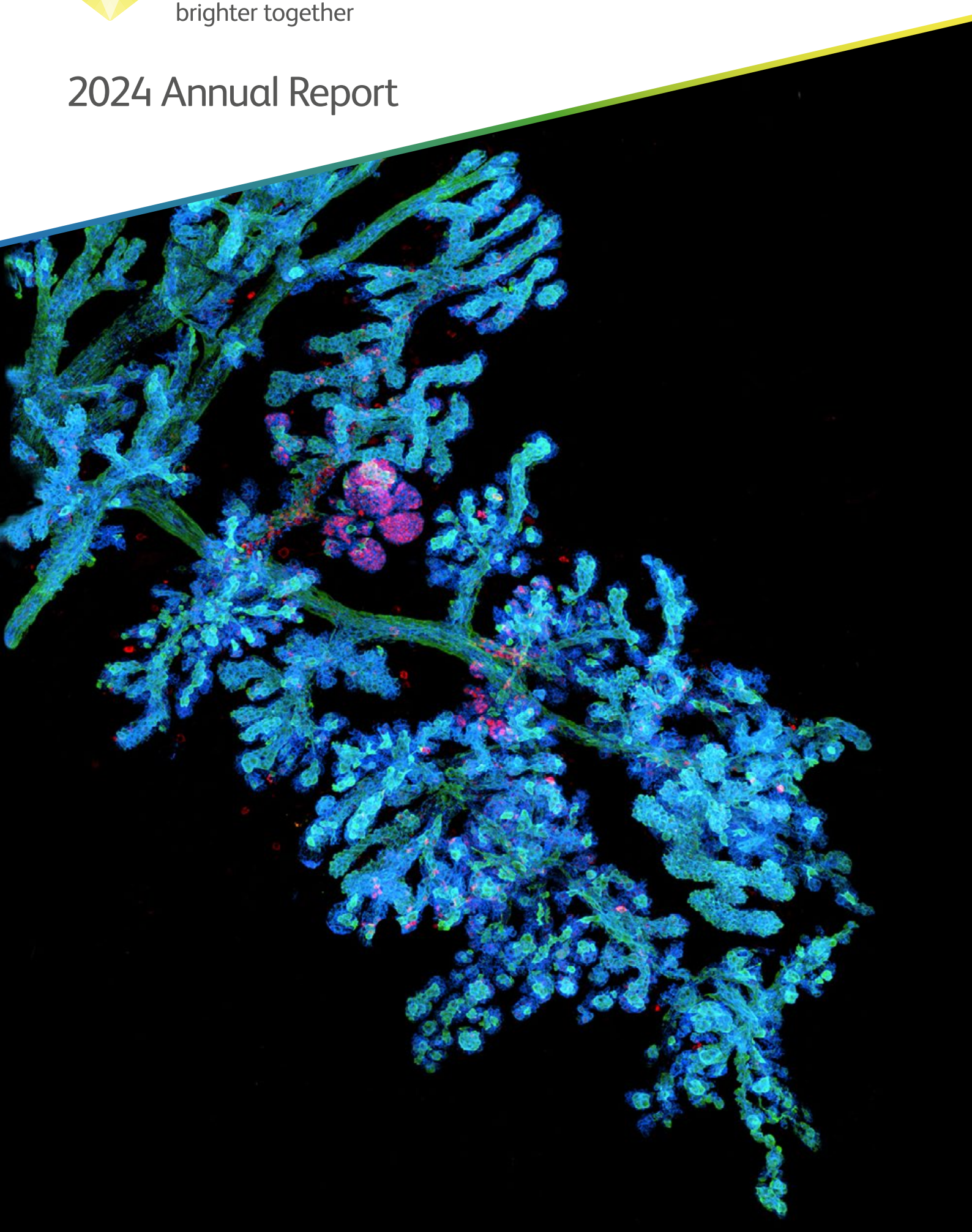
WEHI
brighter together

2024 Annual Report



Contents

Cover image
2024 Art of Science
Curious Contiguous Cells
Bianca Capaldo
An irregular cluster of cells (red) are seen hidden in the breast tissue of a woman carrying a faulty BRCA2 gene. These could indicate changes related to cancer for individuals at high risk of the disease.

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Walter and Eliza Hall Institute

ABN 12 004 251 423

WEHI acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which our campuses are located, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and embrace their continued connection to Country and community.

About WEHI

WEHI is where brilliant minds collaborate and innovate to make discoveries that will help us to live healthier for longer.

Our medical researchers have been serving the community for more than 100 years, making transformative discoveries in cancer, infection and immunity, and lifelong health.

WEHI brings together diverse and creative people with different experience and expertise to solve some of the world's most complex health problems.

The spirit of collaboration is in our DNA. WEHI was established by a partnership between the University of Melbourne, the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust, bringing together talented researchers from across the globe, remarkable clinicians focused on the health of the community and the power of philanthropy.

Our passion for improving lives drives us forward, even when breakthroughs are decades in the making. We are brighter because of our collaborations with hospitals, universities, research institutes and industry, and the support of our community, including philanthropists, donors, bequestors, alumni and consumers.

Our research

Cancer – understanding the basic processes that are disrupted to generate cancer cells and how these can be leveraged to detect, prevent and treat disease.

Immune health and infection – discovering how the body fights infection, how errors in the immune system lead to disease and how we can use the immune system to conquer disease.

Development and healthy ageing – studying how the biological foundations laid down during gestation and childhood affect development and how our longer life expectancy presents new challenges for our ageing population.

New medicines and advanced technologies – a powerful hub for cutting-edge technologies underpinning biomedical discoveries and for the translation of these discoveries into new medicines and diagnostics.

Computational biology – developing and applying new methods to analyse genomes, proteomes, metabolites and more, in health and disease, to reveal how these systems work and how to treat disease.

Our mission

Mastery of disease through discovery.

Our vision

We're an innovative medical research institute that engages and enriches society and improves health outcomes through discovery, translation and education.

Our values

- Pursuit of excellence
- Integrity and mutual respect
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Creativity
- Accountability
- Contribution to society

President's report

I am delighted to present WEHI's 2024 Annual Report.

Guided by a commitment to long-term success, the board and senior leadership have remained focused this year, as always, on strengthening WEHI culturally, economically and environmentally, while ensuring a safe and productive research environment.

The commencement of Professor Ken Smith as the seventh director in our 109-year history is a pivotal moment for the institute.

It has been a pleasure welcoming Ken to WEHI and providing him and the leadership team the support they need to achieve their vision for our research and discovery future.

It's a testament to that exceptional team, and particularly Professor Alan Cowman AC, through his roles as acting director and later deputy director, that Ken has been able to hit the ground running so effectively.

We are indebted to Alan for his considered and nurturing leadership over many years. It is a boon to WEHI and to science that while he has now stepped down as deputy director, he will continue to drive impactful research at the institute.

Research that leads to transformative discoveries is a long-term endeavor that requires scientists to be bold and supporters to engage in the journey.

For this reason, we are deeply grateful to the Snow Medical Research Foundation for their support of the Snow Centre for Immune Health, and to the Colonial Foundation for the Colonial Foundation Diagnostics Centre. Both centres, which are in partnership with the Royal Melbourne Hospital, exemplify the long-term commitment needed to push the frontiers of our research.

It was also personally rewarding for me to deepen my family's connection to WEHI by kickstarting the Hemstritch Centre of Excellence for Pancreatic Cancer Research – a 10-year commitment.

My sincere thanks to three departing members of our board who have provided us with valuable contributions and guidance. We farewelled Carolyn Viney (joined in 2016), Professor Christine Kilpatrick (joined in 2017) and Professor Duncan Maskell (joined in 2023). WEHI has benefited greatly from their expertise and leadership.

We were honoured to welcome three new members to the board.

Professor Mark Cassidy joined as one of our two University of Melbourne directors. Mark is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and we are grateful to bring his experience in engineering and research, as well as his innovative thinking, to the board.

We also welcomed Professor Shelley Dolan, Chief Executive of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, as one of our two board representatives from the hospital. A previous Chief Executive of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Shelley is a highly respected clinical and research leader, and her strategy, governance and stakeholder experience are invaluable to WEHI.

Finally, Paul Donnelly has joined us, bringing more than 30 years of experience in global capital markets and corporate finance. Paul is the current CEO of Flagstaff Partners, a premier finance advisory firm, and was previously with Macquarie Group for 25 years. He is well placed to help us meet our strategic and financial goals.

The board recognises and supports WEHI's commitment to environmental sustainability, and ongoing efforts to build resilience to online threats.

Science is truly a team sport, and behind every breakthrough in the lab are dedicated staff across our campuses, partners and community supporters, and a network of wonderful donors. My sincere thanks on behalf of the board to everyone who nurtured our research in 2024.

In 2025, we will remain focused on ensuring that WEHI stays at the forefront of international science and advances health through innovative research.

Jane Hemstritch AO
President, WEHI

Director's report

It's my privilege to reflect on a year of outstanding investigation and discovery.

Thanks to our driven and talented staff, WEHI continues to be a powerhouse of scientific output and impact. Exemplary work included:

- Using organoid drug testing to predict how patients with advanced bowel cancer will respond to treatment with 90% accuracy.
- The discovery of a likely world-first cure for lethal skin disease toxic epidermal necrolysis, made possible by a WEHI-developed mouse model.
- Pinpointing the likely 'cells-of-origin' that grow into breast cancer in women carrying a faulty BRCA2 gene, illuminating new treatment targets.

In 2024 we continued to evolve to ensure our long-term sustainability, while providing our teams with the best foundations for delivering exceptional science. Our new scientific structure, announced in 2024 for implementation in 2025, will ensure we continue to meet our ambitious discovery goals while making the most of our resources.

Our researchers received well-deserved personal recognition for work that has shifted the dial in science and community impact.

These included Professor David Komander, elected a fellow of the UK's national science academy, the Royal Society, Professors Jane Visvader and Geoff Lindeman, who received the Royal Society's Buchanan Medal, Professor Gordon Smyth, who won the Eureka Prize for Excellence in Research Software, and Professor Misty Jenkins AO, named a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

We significantly advanced our commercialisation and entrepreneurship activities, vital for ensuring discoveries in the lab translate to impact in the community.

Our 66ten investment fund made its first major investments, while WEHI spinout Ternarx was officially launched by Australian Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler. In total a record four WEHI spinout companies were created in 2024.

Donations and philanthropic support play a critical role in equipping WEHI with the tools, facilities and time to make the next big discovery. Critically, they help fund the essential costs of research that traditional funding sources like government grants often do not. Thank you to our wonderful community of supporters who inspired and enabled our efforts in 2024.

I would like to particularly acknowledge Sir Gustav Nossal and the Nossal family for their gift creating the Sir Gustav Nossal Professor of Immunology, and our President Jane Hemstritch AO for her vision and generosity in establishing the Hemstritch Centre of Excellence for Pancreatic Cancer Research.

Our relationships with key partners expanded in 2024, as the Snow Centre for Immune Health commenced operations and we announced the Colonial Foundation Diagnostics Centre. Having both centres in close collaboration with the Royal Melbourne Hospital allows our discoveries to be both made and applied in the clinic, focusing our research, increasing its relevance and accelerating its impact on human health.

In 2024 we farewelled our chief operating officer Carolyn MacDonald and welcomed new chief people officer Lindsay Karakiozakis. Professor Vihandha Wickramasinghe, a leader in RNA biology, joined our team as a new lab head. We were devastated by the passing of our colleague Johannes Wichmann, an excellent researcher in our Genomics lab, and much valued member of the WEHI community.

I'd like to thank the former Victorian Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll for his support, and welcome Danny Pearson who gains this portfolio.

Returning to WEHI, where I commenced my research career, has been truly special. I want to acknowledge and thank Professor Alan Cowman AC, who as acting director prior to my arrival provided our team with wonderful leadership, and as deputy director after my arrival gave me generous guidance and ensured a smooth transition.

His support, along with that of acting deputy directors Professor Marnie Blewitt and Professor Sant-Rayn Pasricha and the rest of the WEHI team, has been immensely appreciated.

My sincere thanks to everyone in the WEHI community for their commitment and care in 2024.

Professor Ken Smith
Director, WEHI

Our impact

1400+
staff and students

90+
laboratories and platforms

60+
countries represented by staff and students

140+
consumers contributing to research

483
new scientific publications

470
active patents based on WEHI discoveries and inventions

70,981
citations of WEHI research in 2024

14
new patents granted

71
new local and international research collaborations

8
new provisional patents filed

$109.6m
grant income in 2024

12
new commercial agreements

$9.31
raised from every $1 invested in fundraising

4
new WEHI spinouts

Professor Marnie Blewitt and Dr Nicholas Liau at the National Drug Discovery Centre, headquartered at WEHI

Exceptional science and people

January

L–R: Dr Rosa Pascual, Professor Geoff Lindeman, Professor Jane Visvader, Dr Rachel Joyce

Pinpointing 'cells-of-origin' for breast cancer

A WEHI-led study pinpointed the likely source cells that can grow into breast cancer in women carrying a faulty BRCA2 gene, who are at high risk of developing the disease. About 70% of BRCA2 carriers will develop breast cancer.

The milestone finding identified an aberrant population of cells that divide more quickly. The study also showed these cells have potential to be targeted with an existing cancer drug to delay tumour growth, which may lead to future preventive treatments for the disease.

The findings build on the research team's earlier identification of the likely cells-of-origin in women carrying a faulty BRCA1 gene, which led to an international breast cancer prevention study.

Dual award recognition for bioinformatician

Bioinformatician Dr Haloom Rafehi received the 2024 Lorne Genome Mid-Career Award for her work unravelling the genetics of ataxia, a neurological disorder that impairs balance, coordination and speech.

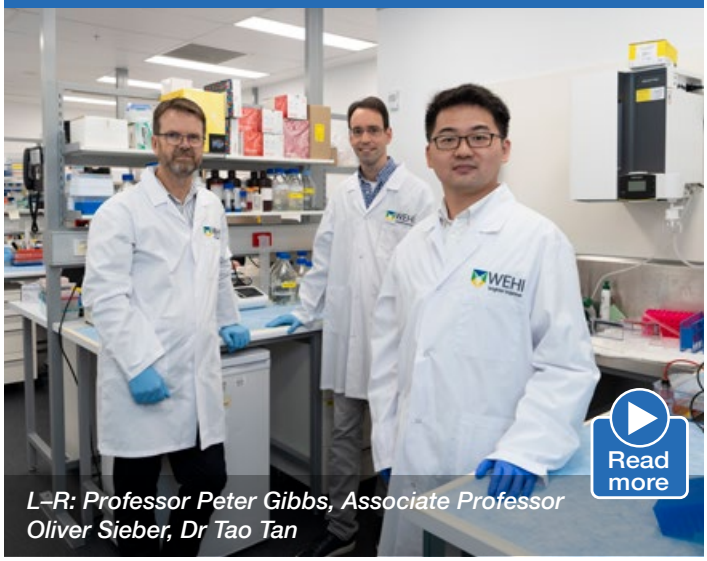
The Australian Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Society also recognised Dr Rafehi in 2024, with the Outstanding Contribution by an Early Career Researcher Award.

Dr Rafehi helped identify two genes that cause two forms of ataxia: CANVAS and SCA27B. Her discovery of the gene that causes CANVAS was the first major breakthrough in ataxia genetics in many years. The genes that cause CANVAS and SCA27B turned out to be common causes of adult-onset ataxia worldwide.

February

Dr Haloom Rafehi

February



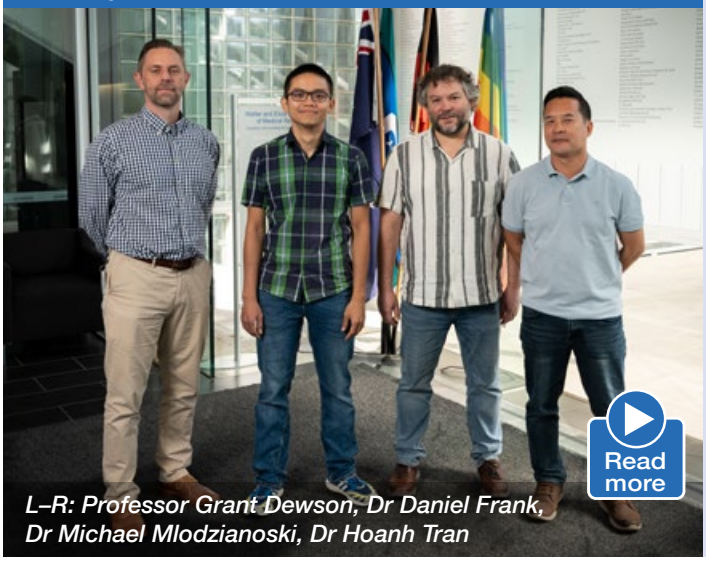
L–R: Professor Peter Gibbs, Associate Professor Oliver Sieber, Dr Tao Tan

Lab-grown tumours predict treatment outcomes

A world-first study found drug testing on tumour organoids can predict how bowel cancer patients will respond to specific treatments. Organoids are 3D cancer models the size of a grain of sand, grown in the lab from a patient's own tissue. They mimic the characteristics of the cancer from which they were created, including drug sensitivity.

Predicting which therapy will be most effective for bowel cancer patients, before they begin treatment, is currently a major challenge. The WEHI-led study found organoids could predict how patients with advanced bowel cancer would respond to treatment with 90% accuracy. A clinical trial based on the study is in development.

February



L–R: Professor Grant Dewson, Dr Daniel Frank, Dr Michael Mlodzianoski, Dr Hoanh Tran

Genetic link to incurable birth defect revealed

Researchers unravelled how mutations in a gene can lead to an incurable neurodevelopmental disorder, which causes abnormal brain development in newborns.

The WEHI study was the first to prove that a protein called Trabid helps control neuronal development and function, and that mutations to this protein lead to microcephaly – a condition where a baby's brain is smaller than expected. About 1 in 2000 babies in Australia are reported to have microcephaly.

It's hoped the findings will provide a deeper understanding into the protein's impact on healthy development, leading to treatments that can slow or stop the development of microcephaly and potentially other neurological disorders.

New TB classification to help eradicate disease

An international collaboration of 64 experts co-led by WEHI's Dr Anna Coussens developed a new framework for classifying tuberculosis (TB), the world's most deadly infectious disease.

For the last half-century TB has been classified as either active or latent in patients, an approach researchers indicated is hindering global TB elimination efforts.

The new framework defines four disease states, two asymptomatic, acknowledging that TB can exist and be transmitted without symptoms. The World Health Organization adopted the new framework and recognised research is needed to develop new diagnostics and treatments for asymptomatic TB, to minimise TB transmission and improve patient outcomes.

March

Dr Anna Coussens

March

Professor Sant-Rayn Pasricha

Study helps transform global anaemia guidelines

The way anaemia is diagnosed worldwide is set to change for the first time in 50 years, following a landmark study led by WEHI.

The findings have been used by the World Health Organization to revamp its guidelines for the blood disorder, which affects over 1.5 billion people globally, including about 1 in 20 Australians.

The new guidelines provide the first clear set of haemoglobin thresholds that can consistently be used by health practitioners around the world, to enable more efficient ways to diagnose and treat the disease. The updated guidelines are a critical step towards achieving the WHO's aims of halving the global prevalence of anaemia in women of reproductive age by 2030.

April

Dr Sarah Garnish

Coveted honour for emerging research leader

WEHI postdoctoral researcher Dr Sarah Garnish was honoured at the Premier's Awards for Health and Medical Research.

Dr Garnish received the Basic Science Researcher award in recognition of her efforts investigating necroptosis, a particularly destructive form of cell death. When this process goes awry, it can lead to inflammatory diseases. Her work has identified the signals that turn necroptosis on and off, and mapped the cellular brakes that normally keep necroptosis in check.

The Premier's Awards recognise the exceptional contributions of Victoria's early-career health and medical researchers, highlighting work making significant improvements to the lives of people around the world.

Prestigious award for top cancer researcher

WEHI laboratory head and Snow Fellow Dr Stephin Vervoort was awarded the Australian Academy of Science's prestigious Ruth Stephens Gani Medal.

An emerging leader in gene regulation, Dr Vervoort's research has resulted in significant discoveries about the fundamental ways genes are controlled, revealing how these processes go wrong and can cause cancer, and identifying potential targets for therapeutic intervention.

Despite the importance of gene regulation to our health, we do not currently have a full understanding of how it works. Dr Vervoort's innovative, multidisciplinary approach pairs analysis of our entire genetic code with computational methods to address this major knowledge gap.

April

Dr Stephin Vervoort

May

L–R: Dr Sarah Diepstraten, Dr Eddie La Marca, Dr Gemma Kelly, Dr Yin Yuan

Dual drug treatment delivers blood cancer knockout

Researchers discovered that combining two existing drugs can eliminate acute myeloid leukaemia (AML), one of the most common types of blood cancer, in lab-based tests.

The WEHI research team treated cancer cells with a combination of venetoclax, a current standard-of-care drug for AML, and a STING agonist, an emerging class of immunotherapy drugs. The innovative pairing of the two drugs was successful against more aggressive and difficult to treat forms of AML.

The study enhanced understanding of how STING agonists work, potentially changing how these drugs are used in future. It could soon lead to clinical trials, providing hope for the 1100 Australians diagnosed with AML annually.

May

Professor David Komander

Ubiquitin trailblazer elected Royal Society Fellow

WEHI division head Professor David Komander was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, the UK's national science academy. Prof Komander was recognised for his significant research contributions towards understanding ubiquitin, the 'kiss of death' protein that tells our cells which proteins to break down or recycle – a vital process that helps cells stay healthy.

His work has helped unravel the 'ubiquitin code' that enables ubiquitin to perform additional cellular functions and has led to drug discovery projects for conditions including Parkinson's disease, inflammation and cancer. Prof Komander was one of only five researchers from Australian institutes elected to the Royal Society in 2024.

Partners boost regional malaria eradication efforts

Eliminating malaria remains a global health challenge, with more than 200 million cases diagnosed and around 620,000 deaths worldwide each year.

With support from the Australian Government, a partnership between WEHI, PATH and the Burnet Institute was announced to help accelerate the development of novel diagnostics for 'hidden' *Plasmodium vivax*.

There are no tests to accurately detect who is carrying *Plasmodium vivax*, a malaria parasite that can stay dormant in the liver for years and continues to be a leading barrier to malaria eradication. The partnership will advance a portfolio of high-quality diagnostic tests, with the WEHI research efforts led by Professor Ivo Mueller and Dr Rhea Longley.

May

Professor Ivo Mueller, Dr Rhea Longley

June

Professor Tony Papenfuss, Dr Stefano Mangiola

Making data analysis accessible and efficient

High-tech methods for studying genes and cell biology create an immense amount of data. Two software tools play an important role in helping scientists manage and interpret this data: Bioconductor, which helps with data analysis, and tidy R programming, which is a way to organise data.

For the first time, a research team led by WEHI's Dr Stefano Mangiola connected these tools, creating tidyomics. The new software makes biological data simpler to work with, is easier to learn and is freely available for public use.

The tidyomics crowd science initiative was supported by Professor Tony Papenfuss, as well as representatives from more than 30 institutions across 10 countries.

June

Dr Marcel Doerflinger

Long COVID research awarded MRFF funding

While long COVID is believed to affect hundreds of thousands of people in Australia and around the world, little is known about why the condition occurs and what leads to the neurological complications that are linked to it.

A project led by Dr Marcel Doerflinger hopes to solve these significant unknowns, supported by over $980,000 in funding from the Medical Research Future Fund.

Collaborating with The Florey Institute and the Hudson Institute of Medical Research, the team aims to unravel the molecular mechanisms in the brain that drive neurological complications, like brain fog, and identify biomarkers in the blood that could be used to diagnose patients at risk of developing long COVID.

Protein discovery opens future Parkinson's research

WEHI researchers in collaboration with a team at the University of Vienna discovered two proteins that regulate mitophagy.

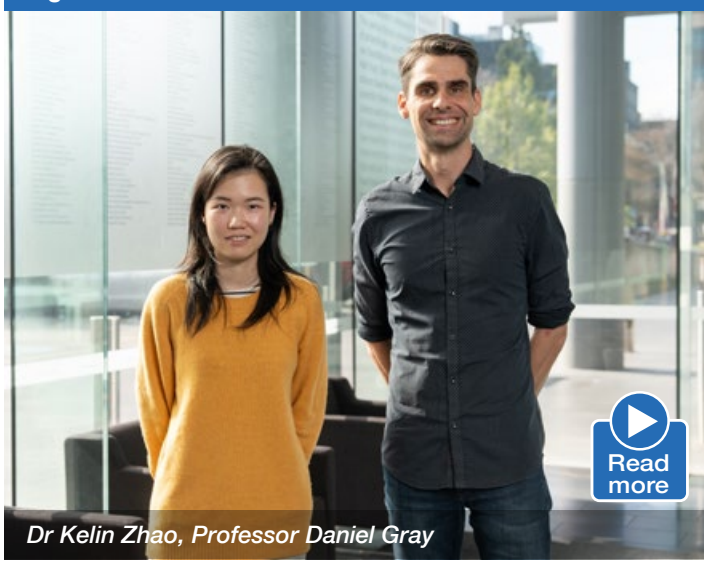
Mitophagy is the process cells use to recycle damaged mitochondria, the source of cell energy. Dysfunctional mitophagy is linked to Parkinson's disease, which has the fastest growing incidence of any neurological condition in the world. There are no current drugs or therapies to slow or stop the disease.

The researchers found two proteins, NAP1 and SINTBAD, help regulate mitophagy. Targeting these proteins could be a potential avenue to boost this vital recycling process, with the discovery illuminating a new focus area for researchers to target in their search for drugs to treat Parkinson's disease.

July

Associate Professor Michael Lazarou

August



Dr Kelin Zhao, Professor Daniel Gray

Uncovering new clues into our ageing immune system

A WEHI study could help solve a long-standing mystery into why the thymus, a key immune organ, shrinks and loses its function as we get older.

Researchers uncovered two new cell types that drive this ageing process. They found that clusters of these cells form 'scars' in the thymus, preventing the organ from restoring itself after damage. And these cells also impair the thymus' ability to make T cells, a type of white blood cell that plays a crucial role in our immune system, responding to viruses and bacteria, and eliminating infected or cancerous cells.

The significant findings could unlock a way to restore function in the thymus and prevent our immunity from waning as we age.

August

Professor Geoff Lindeman, Professor Jane Visvader

Historic win for breast cancer research pioneers

Division heads Professor Jane Visvader and Professor Geoff Lindeman were announced as recipients of the 2024 Buchanan Medal, awarded by the UK's national science academy, the Royal Society.

It was just the third time the award has gone to an Australian recipient since its inception in 1897. The pair were also the first joint winners in the history of the award, which recognises distinguished contributions to biomedical science.

Prof Visvader and Prof Lindeman have jointly led WEHI's breast cancer research program since it was established in 1998, spearheading a series of landmark findings that have underpinned the development of better ways to treat and prevent breast cancer.

Findings give hope for better COVID drugs

Researchers shed new light on the mechanics of Papain-like protease (PLpro) – a key enzyme involved in the virus that causes COVID-19. The study examined PLpro, which may enable SARS-CoV-2 to evade immunity, clarifying how it works and how it could be inhibited.

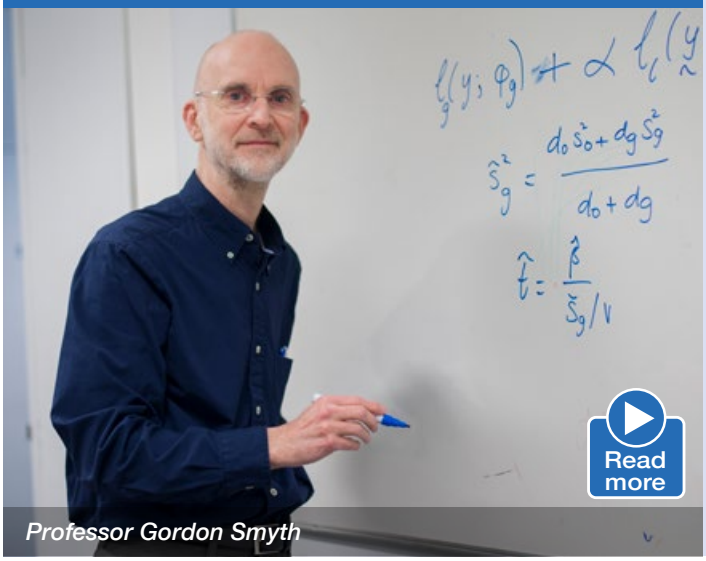
Using a technique called Deep Mutational Scanning, the team confirmed the function of the enzyme's active site (the region where chemical reactions take place), and discovered how other parts of the enzyme influence its overall activity.

The findings could lead to drug designs to help prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 by better targeting this enzyme, accounting for flexible regions that may enable the virus to evade inhibition.

August

Associate Professor Melissa Call, Xinyu Wu

September



Professor Gordon Smyth

Eureka prize win for bioinformatics leader

The analysis of vast amounts of data is critical to modern genetics research. WEHI's Bioinformatics division head Professor Gordon Smyth and his team have created software called limma, which uses robust statistical methods to handle these massive, complex datasets with ease.

In 2024, Prof Smyth's efforts – spanning two decades – were recognised with the Australian Museum's Eureka Prize for Excellence in Research Software.

The software, cited or mentioned in over 70,000 published papers worldwide, has been widely adopted as a tool in the genomic community. limma helps researchers detect changes in gene activity – a crucial element to finding new treatments for diseases like cancer and diabetes.

September

L–R: Leesa Lertsumitkul, Dr Ryan Cross, Professor Misty Jenkins

New immunotherapy could hold brain cancer hope

Researchers identified a promising new treatment that targets and destroys glioma, an aggressive and incurable form of brain cancer.

The WEHI-led study used novel CAR T cell therapy, which isolates a patient's immune cells, engineers them to become cancer killers and re-infuses them into the patient. While CAR T cell therapy has shown promise for brain cancer treatment, finding the right proteins to target in brain cancer cells has been a major hurdle. The study revealed a protein called EphA3, found on the surface of high-grade glioma cells, could be a key target.

The pre-clinical findings also revealed the therapy's potential to strengthen the immune system to prevent future tumour growth.

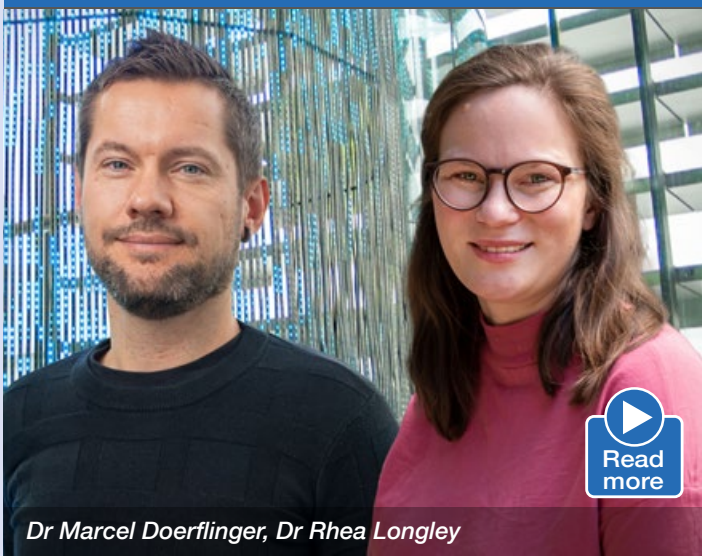
2024 Viertel Fellowships for leading researchers

Dr Marcel Doerflinger and Dr Rhea Longley were awarded 2024 Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellowships, receiving $1.375 million each over five years to advance their work.

Aiming to revolutionise the treatment of lung infections, Dr Doerflinger is tackling antimicrobial resistance by developing RNA-based therapies that can enhance the body's immune response to clear some of the deadliest pathogens.

Dr Longley is working towards more effective malaria surveillance, a critical step in the final stages of elimination. Her research will examine naturally acquired immune responses following malaria infections, to develop new tools and approaches to accelerate malaria elimination.

October



Dr Marcel Doerflinger, Dr Rhea Longley

October

Associate Professor Joanna Groom, Professor Marie-Liesse Asselin-Labat

Next-gen vaccine projects receive $10m funding boost

Two dynamic and multidisciplinary WEHI-led research teams received a combined $10 million in funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council Synergy Grants scheme, supporting their work towards the vaccines of the future.

Professor Marie-Liesse Asselin-Labat is leading a collaborative team investigating how cancer evades our immune system. They hope to uncover how immunotherapies and vaccines can be made more effective and find new treatment targets.

Associate Professor Joanna Groom and her team are determining how to make vaccines for respiratory viral infections more effective and long-lasting, seeking to meet the need for vaccines that protect against complete classes of viruses.

October

Dr Georgia Atkin-Smith, Associate Professor Edwin Hawkins

New marker could improve blood cancer detection

A landmark study led by WEHI and La Trobe University found a potential new diagnostic marker that could be used to better detect the level of tissue damage in our bodies.

Extracellular vesicles (EVs) are small 'delivery trucks' released by our cells that deliver important materials to other cells to aid cellular communication. The world-first study observed EVs in the bone marrow of live mice, and revealed a link between blood EV levels and tissue damage in diseases like leukaemia.

The research team hopes to leverage this critical new insight to develop a blood test to monitor cancer patients with tissue damage, which could enhance future treatments for blood cancers and other diseases.

World-first cure for lethal skin disease

Patients with a lethal skin disease were cured in break-through collaborative research that identified a new driver of toxic epidermal necrolysis, a rare and severe disease with no effective treatments.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry (Germany) used cutting-edge Deep Visual Proteomics to study skin samples in unprecedented detail. The study revealed a new disease driver targetable with clinically available JAK inhibitors.

These drugs were tested in a critical mouse model developed by WEHI researchers. The overwhelmingly positive results allowed for a trial in seven patients, all of whom recovered, marking the likely first-ever cure for this condition.

November

L–R: Professor John Silke, Dr Maria Tanzer, Dr Holly Anderton, Natasha Silke

November

L–R: Professor Clare Scott, Associate Professor Matthew Wakefield, Dr Ksenija Nesic

Combatting drug resistance in breast, ovarian cancers

WEHI researchers found a new way to predict a subset of patients who are likely to become resistant to PARP inhibitors (PARPi), a key therapy used to treat ovarian and breast cancers in Australia.

Using patient blood samples, the research team detected altered gene 'splicing', a process that can make ovarian cancer cells resistant to PARPi treatment. The significant finding could enable the early detection of patients who won't respond well to the therapy.

The breakthrough will improve patient care and can be applied immediately to existing tests. Researchers hope blood test screening for PARPi resistance will in future become standard practice in both clinical and lab settings.

Meet the people powering our research

Outstanding research is a whole team effort and grant funding alone often falls short of the true costs involved. WEHI invests in good governance and organisational sustainability to ensure research excellence, fundraising and business development to amplify resources and maximise our impact, and activities that engage the community to nurture the next generation of researchers. Meet some of the people whose crucial contributions help our research thrive.

Matt Coffey
DeadlyScience Program Manager

My role manages the design and delivery of educational STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programs for First Nations secondary school students through WEHI's partnership with DeadlyScience. The best part of my job is connecting experts at WEHI with students from across the country to inspire them to pursue studies and careers in science. I'm proud to play a small role in contributing to the institute's commitment to fostering the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scientists.

Dr Julia Man
Division Coordinator, ACRF Cancer Biology and Stem Cells

I help the brilliant brains stay on schedule! The administrative burden is high in research, so reducing this for scientists means there is more headspace for them to focus on their science. Scientific admin is varied and interesting, encompassing reporting, finances and disseminating findings. I enjoy seeing the journey of projects, progressing from something written in a grant application, to the final published results. It's also rewarding to witness the growth of the next generation of researchers nurtured at WEHI.

Mahbub Bhuiyan
Infrastructure and Facilities Manager

I manage physical environments, including buildings, assets, facilities and infrastructure to enable scientists and professional teams to make remarkable discoveries safely, efficiently and in a compliant manner. This pivotal role involves close collaboration with the WEHI community to ensure seamless service delivery and amenities across all sites. I take pride in upholding sustainable, well-maintained facilities that drive cutting-edge research and innovation within a dynamic medical research organisation.

Dr Gemma van Duijneveldt
Philanthropic Grants Manager

I support researchers to seek funding from donors by helping them tailor their communication and connecting donors with research that matters to them. Having a scientific background, I understand researchers' constant struggle for financial support, which makes finding funding opportunities rewarding. I love the passion of our scientists and the enthusiasm of our donors to support their work. The coming together of researchers and donors is remarkable, especially as our donors, like us, find purpose and value in helping people live healthier, longer lives.

Kelly Trueman
Consumer Program Coordinator

My role supports over 140 consumers (people impacted by disease) and WEHI researchers. I help researchers understand a consumer's real-life experience in relation to a particular illness, driving discoveries and better patient outcomes. I support both these groups, ensuring their needs are met and voices heard. With growing emphasis on consumer engagement in research, my role is crucial to support the program's rapid growth. Meeting consumers with unique perspectives makes this role dynamic and inspiring.

Dr Nicholas Liau
Venture Principal Scientist

At WEHI Ventures, we help scientists translate their discoveries into medicines and products that help people. I scout out these investment opportunities and then help teams do the work needed to bring their discoveries to market. It's important to understand the detailed science, but at the same time, I need to helicopter up to the high-level strategic view of how it fits into the biotech landscape and marketplace. Trying to juggle the two of these means that there is never a dull day!

Shauna Ross
Facility Manager

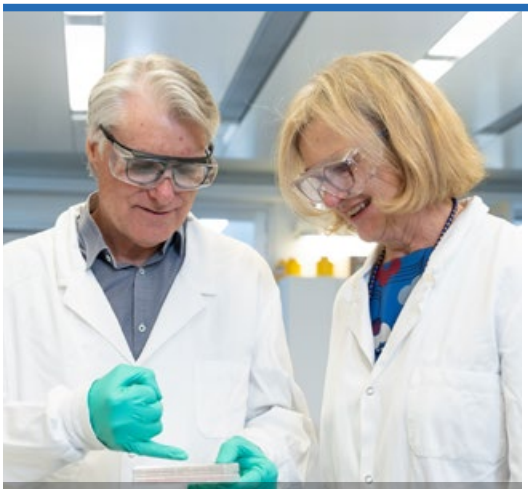
I manage a mouse breeding facility supplying mice to WEHI researchers and clients across Australia. Did you know mice have almost the same genes and body systems as people, making them crucial for modelling human diseases in medical research? Animal research is heavily regulated, and I ensure compliance by working closely with the Animal Ethics Committee. I'm proud of my team's contribution to scientific discoveries and it's very satisfying knowing that we have an important role in the process.

Goran Arsovski
Senior Laboratory Technician

I oversee the production and quality control of specialised cell culture solutions at the largest facility of its kind in Australia. The facility is crucial for experimental success, providing stable conditions for cell growth and research in medicine, biotechnology and genetics. I ensure the highest precision and reliability in every substance produced. You can imagine how meticulously crafted components need to be to support brilliant scientists! Witnessing our impact on advancing breakthroughs fills me with pride, knowing we contribute to life-saving discoveries.

Partnerships driving discovery

Collaboration is at the core of solving scientific challenges. Our research centres bring together leading minds, diverse expertise and cutting-edge technologies on long-term multidisciplinary projects that focus on solving some of the great health questions of our time.



Snow Centre for Immune Health joint heads Professor Phil Hodgkin (WEHI) and Professor Jo Douglass (The Royal Melbourne Hospital)

Snow Centre for Immune Health

The Snow Centre for Immune Health formally commenced operations in 2024, starting a new phase in immune health research.

Based at WEHI in partnership with the Snow Medical Research Foundation and the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the centre aims to revolutionise our understanding of immune function and tackle some of Australia's fastest-growing chronic conditions such as immune deficiencies, allergies and autoimmunity.

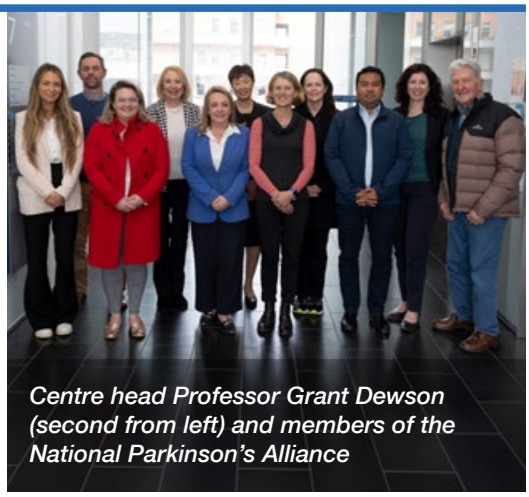
At the heart of this research are new techniques that measure how well immune cell 'fate timers' govern the life cycle of individual cells. This approach allows scientists to assess the activity of both healthy and immune-compromised cells, providing unprecedented insights into their performance.

This pioneering work is possible thanks to a 10-year philanthropic partnership, one of Australia's largest, generously provided by the Snow family and inspired by the late Terry Snow AM.

Parkinson's Disease Research Centre

The Parkinson's Disease Research Centre used its unique combination of expertise in cell death, ubiquitin signalling and mitochondrial functioning to discover how together they underpin neurodegeneration in Parkinson's disease. Researchers also discovered new proteins that regulate mitophagy and contributed to the search for a blood biomarker for Parkinson's through the largest bioinformatics study of its kind.

Centre head and director of the new National Parkinson's Alliance, Professor Grant Dewson, helped successfully advocate to the Australian Government for improved research and advocacy funding to develop a National Action Plan for Parkinson's.



Centre head Professor Grant Dewson (second from left) and members of the National Parkinson's Alliance

L–R: Dr Heidi McAlpine, Dr Lucy Gately, Professor Misty Jenkins and Dr Sarah Best from The Brain Cancer Centre

The Brain Cancer Centre

In 2024, The Brain Cancer Centre celebrated three years since its establishment. In this short time, the centre has committed over $30 million to brain cancer research and clinical trials, launched a world-first clinical trial platform (Brain-POP), funded 13 research projects and clinical trials, brought together 17 collaborative partnerships from across Australia and supported over 70 researchers.

The Brain Cancer Centre supports brilliant minds, by collaborating with peers across Australia and around the world to accelerate brain cancer research. This passionate, dedicated team has a laser focus on helping achieve our vision: that one day no lives are lost to brain cancer. Many Minds. One Focus.

Colonial Foundation CEO André Carstens, the Royal Melbourne Hospital Chief Executive Professor Shelley Dolan and WEHI director Professor Ken Smith

Colonial Foundation Diagnostics Centre

An outstanding $21 million philanthropic investment from the Colonial Foundation established the Colonial Foundation Diagnostics Centre, a pioneering research centre to advance precision diagnosis for diseases that affect millions of Australians.

Around one-in-ten Australians have a chronic inflammatory disease, like rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, multiple sclerosis and lupus.

Co-led by WEHI and the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH), the centre was announced in September and will use cutting-edge 'spatial biology' technologies to deliver enhanced diagnosis and, in turn, personalised care for patients with these and other inflammatory diseases.

Importantly, the centre will combine the RMH's clinical capabilities with WEHI's nation-leading technologies, and the skilled scientists who use them, to enable precision medicine and improve patient outcomes.

Following a comprehensive international search, Associate Professor Edwin Hawkins (a WEHI laboratory head) was announced in November as the Centre Head and Chief Scientific Officer, with Dr Michael Christie (a clinician scientist at WEHI and Deputy Director of Pathology at the RMH) appointed Deputy Centre Head and Chief Medical Officer.

Hemstritch Centre of Excellence for Pancreatic Cancer Research

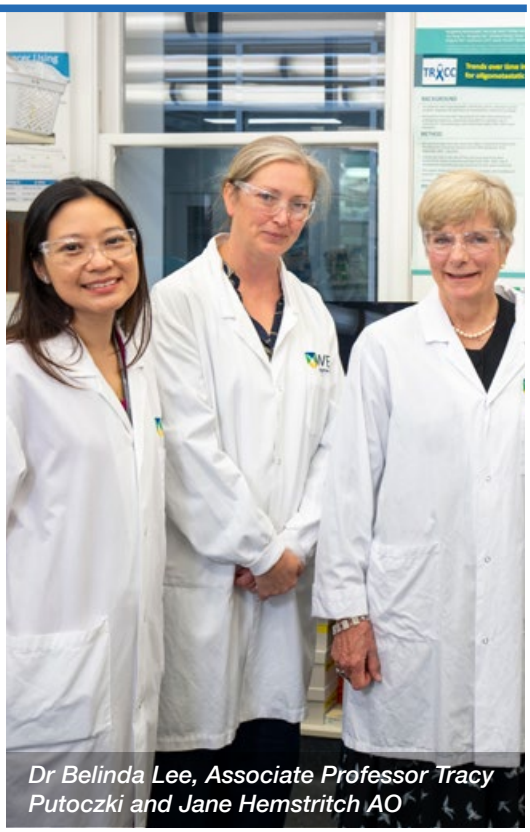
An $8 million philanthropic investment by WEHI president Jane Hemstritch AO established the Hemstritch Centre of Excellence for Pancreatic Cancer Research in June.

Pancreatic cancer is set to become Australia's second deadliest cancer by 2030. Only 12.5% of those diagnosed survive beyond five years.

The centre will support a patient-focused translational research platform called PURPLE, that will empower patients and enable scientists and clinicians to better understand this devastating disease, ultimately leading to the development of urgently needed therapies.

Research enabled by PURPLE includes groundbreaking work by Dr Belinda Lee and Professor Peter Gibbs in circulating tumour DNA, which has led to the DYNAMIC-Pancreas phase 2 clinical trial. The trial was showcased at the prestigious American Society of Clinical Oncology's 2024 scientific symposium.

The translational research platform has also enabled the discovery of a potential biomarker signature for early pancreatic cancer detection. The research – led by Dr Belinda Lee, Dr Laura Dagley and Associate Professor Tracy Putoczki – could in future detect traces of cancer from a simple blood sample, and was awarded PanKind Foundation grants in 2024 and 2025 to expand the study.



Dr Belinda Lee, Associate Professor Tracy Putoczki and Jane Hemstritch AO

Outstanding supporters

Our supporters play an essential role in powering medical breakthroughs that lead to better health outcomes for the entire community.

Thank you to all our wonderful supporters, including those profiled here. A list of all donations and grants of $10,000 or more is on pages 30–31.

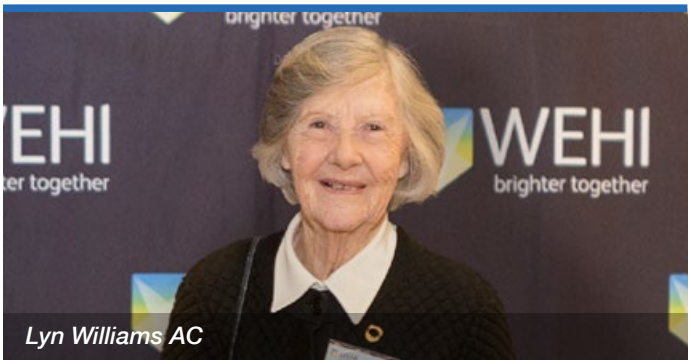
Sir Gustav Nossal with his children and WEHI director Professor Ken Smith. Back L-R: Michael Nossal, Kate Nossal, Professor Ken Smith, Dr Brigid Nossal, Stephen Nossal. Seated: Sir Gustav Nossal

Gift celebrates giant of science

The exceptional research, discovery and advocacy legacy of former WEHI director and Australian treasure Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE will continue thanks to a generous gift from the Nossal family.

The Sir Gustav Nossal Professor of Immunology is a prestigious, endowed professorship that will lead pivotal research to advance human immunology.

Sir Gus spent nearly four decades at WEHI and advanced the global understanding of immune tolerance. The Nossal family's generous donation will support an exceptional scientist to help WEHI continue its global leadership in immunology.



Lyn Williams AC

Advancing research, celebrating a legacy

In recent years Lyn Williams AC was looking for a major medical research project to support. She wanted to contribute to breakthrough research that would have the potential for significant long-term impact.

With high regard for WEHI's reputation and achievements in world-class research, she chose WEHI as a suitable institution to support.

On the advice of the director, in 2023 and 2024 she enabled two of WEHI's talented laboratory heads, Professor Marie-Liesse Asselin-Labat and Dr Maria Tanzer, to advance their pioneering work through her donations.

Associate Professor Michael Lazarou, whose research is supported by Neil Stanley Haysom's bequest

Honouring Neil Stanley Haysom

WEHI received a significant bequest from the late Neil Stanley Haysom, whose interest in medical research stemmed from the loss of both his parents to cancer.

This gift contributes funds to support 17 lab heads focusing on diseases like Parkinson's, dementia and cancer as well as 15 platform technology labs that provide vital tools for researchers.

Neil is remembered for his quiet contributions to Melbourne's architectural landscape. His legacy continues through WEHI's commitment to advancing medical research.

Entrepreneurship and commercialisation

Commercialisation ensures important medical breakthroughs help patients. WEHI is proud of our strong track record of transforming innovative ideas into successful ventures.

Our thriving entrepreneurial culture fosters innovation to create far-reaching impact. In 2024, we continued to incubate and bring to market many brilliant initiatives, enabling our science to become the basis of innovative products and drugs that will positively impact people's lives. Through this process, we also create diverse income streams to fund future scientific discoveries.

66ten impact begins

WEHI's $66 million investment fund, 66ten – the largest internal seed fund in an Australian medical research institute – backed its first major programs in 2024.

Among other examples, the fund made a major investment in a breakthrough WEHI-led project focused on activating a patient's own genes to treat a rare disorder, Prader-Willi Syndrome.

66ten also joined IP Group Australia, Tin Alley Ventures and HostPlus in supporting exteRNA, an innovative biotech company. The $11 million joint seed funding will accelerate development of cutting-edge small molecule therapies to tackle hard-to-treat cancers.

Managed by WEHI Ventures, 66ten is dedicated to ideas and intellectual property developed at WEHI or in collaboration with WEHI.

Incubating innovation

Jumar Bioincubator officially opened, showcasing the first early-stage ventures taking up residency in its state-of-the-art facility co-located with CSL.

A joint initiative between WEHI, CSL and The University of Melbourne, Jumar bridges gaps in the biomedical ecosystem, fusing world-class research facilities and expert commercialisation to nurture home-grown biotech global health solutions.

Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp AO officiated the event, hosted by Jumar's founding partners, alongside funding partner Breakthrough Victoria and Cicada Innovations, which manages Jumar.

In 2024, 29 new ventures – including Proxima Bio, a WEHI spinout that is also a 66ten portfolio company – moved into the hub. The work of over 180 talented individuals is hosted at Jumar.

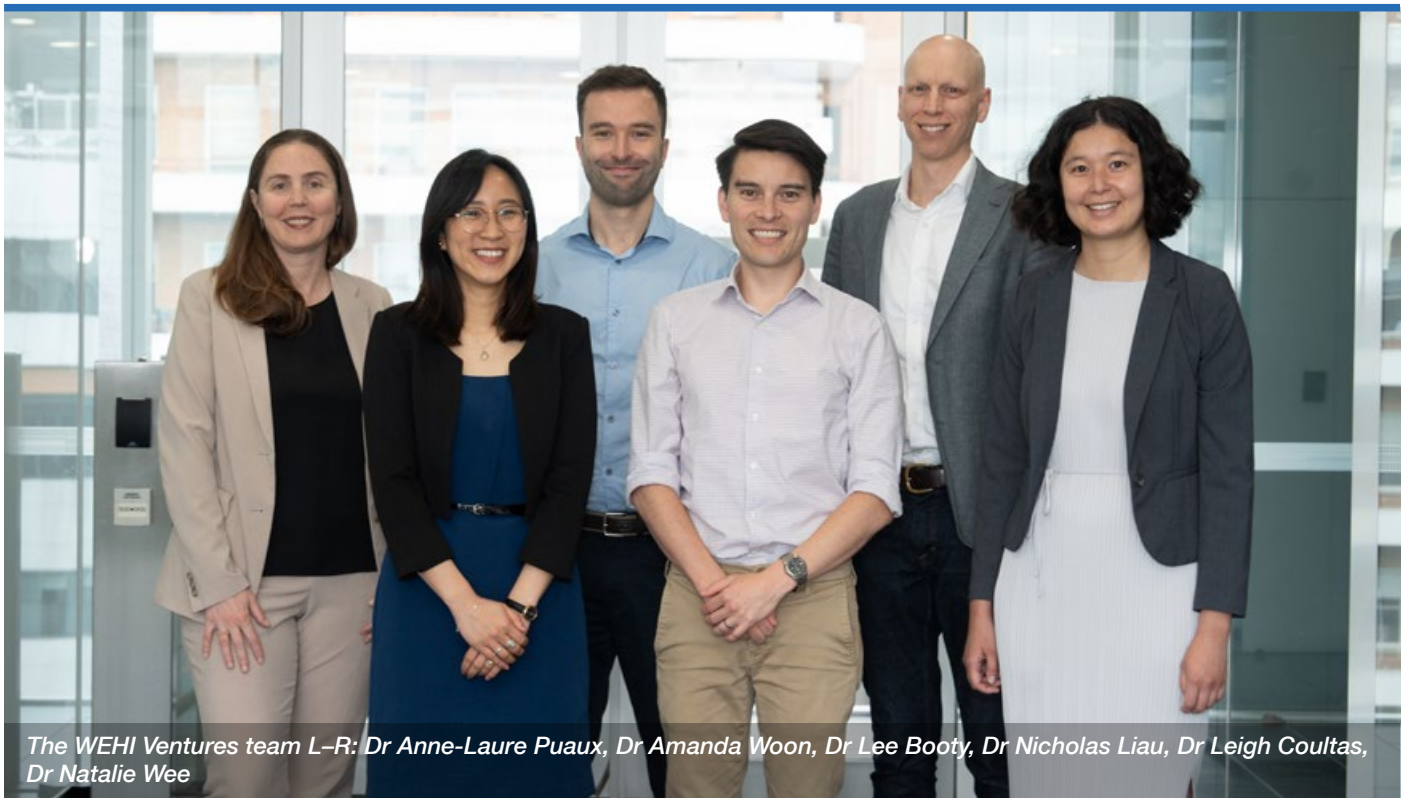
Global spinout success

In 2024 WEHI spinout IonOpticks expanded its global presence by partnering with Nordic private equity firm, Adelis Equity Partners, and was named one of @AuManufacturing's Top 50 Most Innovative Manufacturers.

IonOpticks' technology was developed at WEHI and the company was incubated at the institute for two years. The company's groundbreaking chromatography columns are used in mass spectrometry, a critical research tool in scientific labs globally.

The company ships to 35 countries, with customers including 16 of the top 20 global pharmaceutical companies as well as academic institutions including Harvard Medical School and the University of Oxford.

IonOpticks is a brilliant example of the value of nurturing entrepreneurial scientists and backing them with robust support.



The WEHI Ventures team L–R: Dr Anne-Laure Puaux, Dr Amanda Woon, Dr Lee Booty, Dr Nicholas Liau, Dr Leigh Coultas, Dr Natalie Wee

Operational overview

Guided by our strategic priorities, we continued to enhance our operations in a sustainable way and fostered a safe and positive working environment. We deepened our engagement with the community and equipped our team with the key resources to drive scientific achievement.

Enabling excellence

Building on strong foundations, we empowered our teams to consistently achieve research excellence by:

- Supporting our research strengths through a new scientific organisational structure, taking effect from 1 January 2025. The updated structure is more efficient and streamlined to ensure we're able to keep delivering great science and maximising the use of our resources.
- Continuing to deliver on our Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) Strategy, which is growing the expertise we need to make discoveries that might not otherwise be possible. In 2024 we recruited a further two WEHI AI Fellows and held our inaugural Artificial Intelligence in Biomedical Research Symposium, which brought together Australian and international experts from across our sector to share insights on the challenges and opportunities that these new technologies can bring.
- Securing $37 million in prestigious National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Investigator Grants, which provide salary and project support for leading research, for funding commencing in 2025. With 17 grants, we achieved a 35% success rate, significantly higher than the 10% national rate, and increased funding by $14 million compared to the previous year. These were in addition to $10 million for two WEHI-led projects awarded through the NHMRC Synergy Grants scheme, which supports multidisciplinary teams collaborating to address major problems in human health.
- Supporting the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes' 2025-26 Pre-Budget Submission, which called on the Australian Government to urgently address the structural funding shortfall that threatens the viability of medical research.
- Running seven subsidised screens at the National Drug Discovery Centre (headquartered at WEHI), which supports Australia's world-class researchers to turn their cutting-edge science into new treatments for patients. Since launching in 2020, the centre has analysed over 10 million compounds for more than 30 projects working towards new life-saving medicines.
- Implementing new systems, including for media ordering and research sample management, alongside major updates to the chemical safety and inventory system, the grant management system and the Animal Management System (AMS).

WEHI welcomed US Ambassador Caroline Kennedy as part of her visit to the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct. Ambassador Kennedy toured our labs to learn about the exciting research underway at The Brain Cancer Centre. L–R: Dr Edwin Schlossberg, Caroline Kennedy, Kylie Luong

Backing brilliance

We nurtured and cultivated big ideas from emerging science leaders, including through:

- Our Innovation Challenge and InnoVision program, which empower emerging leaders to transform ambitious ideas into impactful projects. In 2024, InnoVision winner Mihin Perera received a $10,000 travel stipend to advance a pioneering device for cryogenic electron microscopy, which is vital for understanding how proteins function in death and disease. Mihin's innovative solution streamlines the critical and expensive sample preparation stage, reducing time and costs.
- Participation by our researchers in prestigious external initiatives, including the aMoon Innovation Fellowship, CSIRO ON, Proto Axiom Challenger Summit and AusBiotech Early Stage Investment Forum, that drive collaboration and advance innovation.
- The Jenny Tatchell Awards for Blue Sky Research, which support WEHI postdoctoral researchers to explore groundbreaking ideas that have the potential for transformative outcomes. The two winning teams each received $40,000 towards their research, thanks to a generous donation from supporter Jenny Tatchell, matched by WEHI.
- Our Research Computing Student Internship Program, which had 94 participants in 2024. The program offers students the opportunity to improve research and workflows at WEHI and is the biggest intern recruiter in the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Science.

Spinout to revolutionise cancer treatments

We celebrated the launch of Ternarx, a globally competitive biotechnology company dedicated to finding new treatments for hard-to-treat cancers. A WEHI spinout, Ternarx is the first of its kind in Australia dedicated to developing targeted protein degrader medicines and technology – a powerful new tool for destroying disease-causing proteins that cannot be targeted by conventional drugs.

Australian Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler, joined Ternarx Chief Executive Officer, Dr Joanne Boag, and WEHI director Professor Ken Smith (pictured L–R) for the launch. Ternarx is funded through a $15 million grant from the Medical Research Future Fund's Frontier Health and Medical Research initiative, and is a collaboration between WEHI, the Children's Cancer Institute and Monash University.

Empowering consumer collaboration

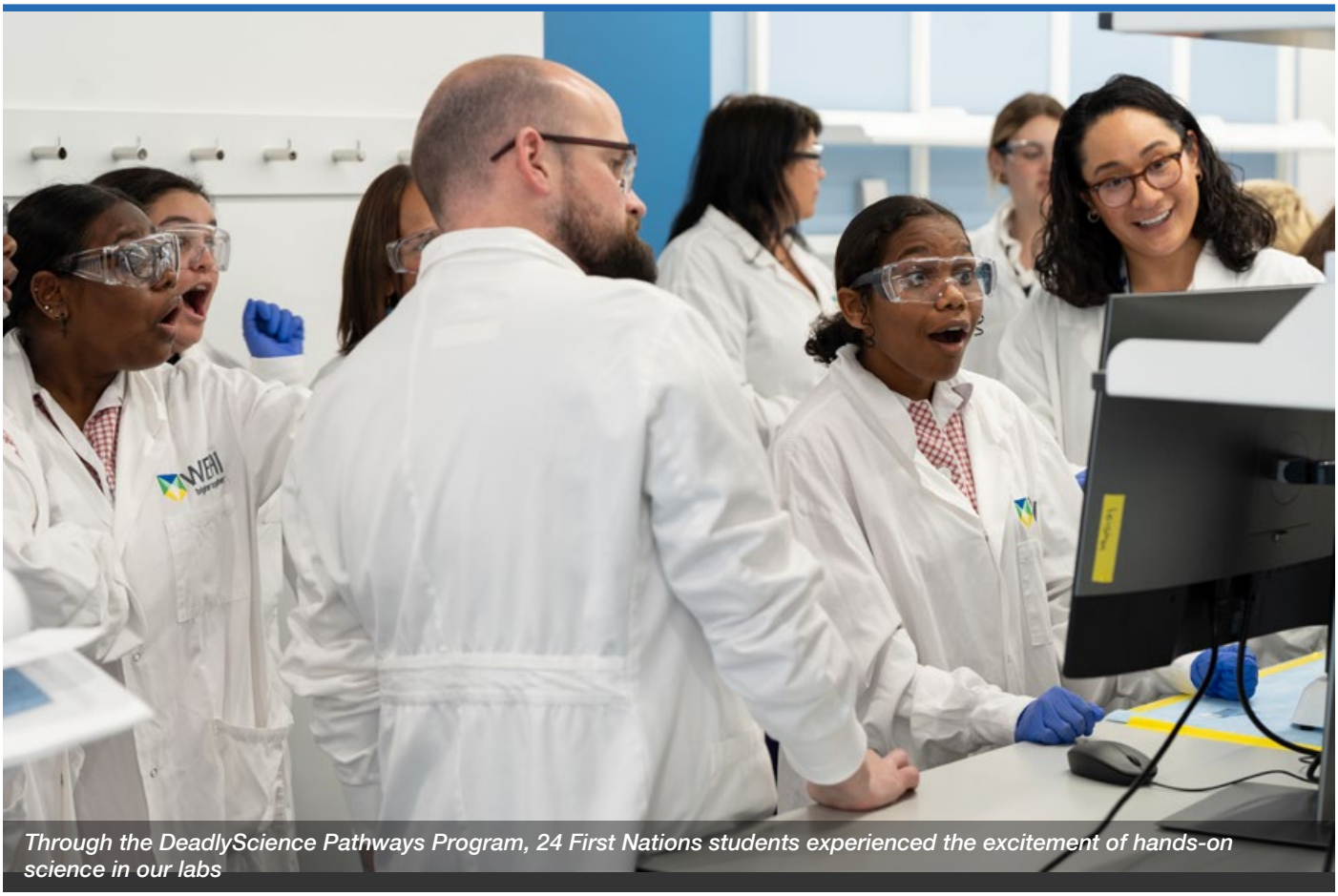
Consumers involved with WEHI contribute a lived, carer or community perspective from both disease and professional backgrounds, and are a valued part of our research efforts. Our Consumer Program is the largest of its kind among Australian fundamental medical research institutes and continues to grow and have an impact, as demonstrated by:

- The completion of a detailed evaluation of the program, which identified the value of bringing a strong consumer voice to the research process. The evaluation, which was published in the journal *Health Expectations*, found that genuine consumer-researcher interactions, relationship development and mutual respect were key elements in the success of the program.
- The expansion of the involvement of consumers more widely across the institute. Consumers are now integrated across all divisions, contributing to 60% of laboratories and multiple centres.
- The appointment of a new Consumer Advisory Panel Chair, Dr John Hamill. This followed the retirement of Dr Judith Slocombe AM, who stepped down after 10 years of dedicated service to WEHI.
- The launch of a new donor-funded initiative, Seriously Fun Philanthropy, which supports consumers to help researchers with communicating their science clearly and accessibly.

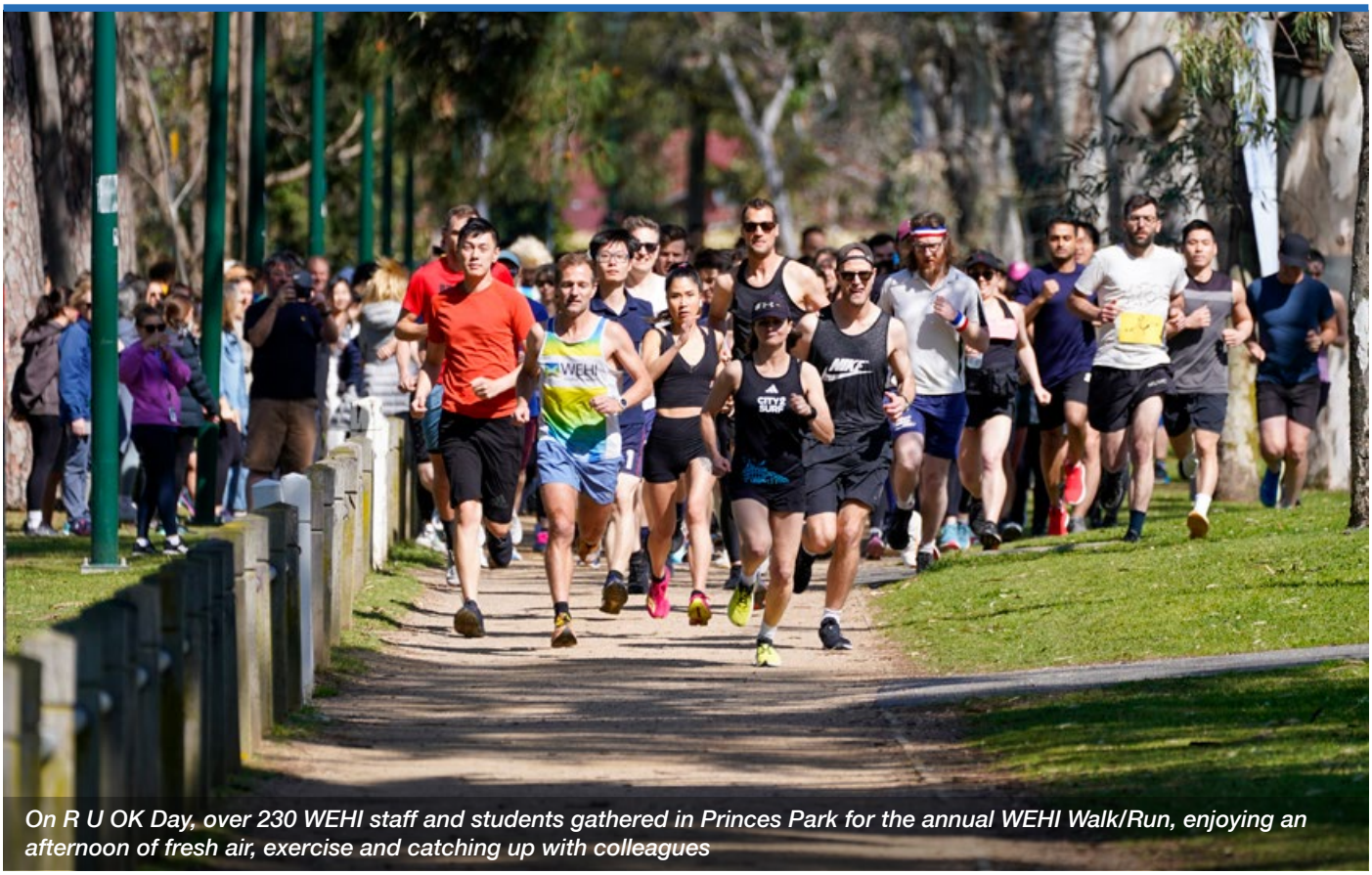
First Nations focus

Advancing reconciliation and taking meaningful action to contribute to improving health outcomes for First Nations Peoples remain integral to our purpose at WEHI. We furthered our efforts by:

- Building on our partnership with leading not-for-profit DeadlyScience and hosting the second DeadlyScience Pathways Program. Students from regional and remote schools in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria travelled to WEHI to tour our facilities, explore the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct, and experience hands-on science in our labs. The program, which aims to foster the next generation of First Nations scientists, is expanding rapidly and received more than double the number of school applications compared to 2023.
- Continuing our longstanding support of CareerTrackers, which helps pre-professional First Nations university students to participate in paid, multi-year internships. WEHI has supported 31 students through the program since 2015.
- Marking Reconciliation Week and celebrating NAIDOC week with activities for staff including a guided art walk that delved into the stories behind WEHI's First Nations artworks, and a seminar presented by proud Gunditjmara man and Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, Rueben Berg.



Through the DeadlyScience Pathways Program, 24 First Nations students experienced the excitement of hands-on science in our labs



On R U OK Day, over 230 WEHI staff and students gathered in Princes Park for the annual WEHI Walk/Run, enjoying an afternoon of fresh air, exercise and catching up with colleagues

Operating with integrity

Research integrity and ethical practice are at the core of our work. Key initiatives included:

- Acting on our commitment to being more transparent about the use of animals in research. WEHI is an inaugural signatory of the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) Openness Agreement on Animal Research, which came into effect in August 2024.
- Implementing new research integrity training for all scientific staff and students, to help ensure we continue to achieve the highest standard of trust, credibility and reliability in our findings.

Sustainable progress

In 2024 we made significant strides in environmental and organisational sustainability. Initiatives underscoring our commitment to a sustainable future included:

- Ongoing work to optimise the energy efficiency of WEHI's buildings, initially focusing on power consumption at our Parkville campus. We also progressed towards our target of 100% renewable energy for electricity, which will commence by mid-2025.
- Our Green Team, comprising over 60 staff and students who volunteer to promote energy efficiency and improved waste management activities across WEHI. One of the team's key projects focused on maximising the efficiency and longevity of our energy-intensive ultra-low temperature freezers, which also supported better use of space and reduced the need to purchase new freezers as frequently.
- The introduction of an environmental data platform to facilitate streamlined data collection and emissions reporting. The platform will prepare us for future mandatory and voluntary greenhouse gas reporting and help evaluate the impact of our environmental sustainability activities.
- Marking World Environment Day in June with a director's seminar delivered by Dr Madeleine Skellern, Director of the National Health, Sustainability and Climate Unit within the interim Australian Centre for Disease Control. Dr Skellern, who led the development of Australia's first National Health and Climate Strategy, discussed the role of medical research in supporting the health system's response to climate change.

We enhanced our organisational sustainability through:

- CyberStrong, a program of initiatives, technological solutions and improved user awareness designed to strengthen WEHI's cyber security efforts, with all initiatives focused on enhancing the systems and expertise that support great science, organisational resilience, and sustainability.

Fostering respect and equality

Great science thrives in a workplace that is safe, respectful and offers everyone equal opportunities to succeed. By fostering an inclusive culture, we provide a great place to work and drive progress across our sector and beyond. Key activities included:

- Publicly reporting on our gender pay gap, which at 3.5% is significantly lower than our industry average (29.3%). This reflects women at WEHI holding leadership roles, and a gender-balanced distribution of staff in entry- and mid-level positions. We remain committed to reducing this gap in our workplace, and supporting the national effort to address the structural and systemic challenges behind gender pay gaps.
- Implementing a new Workplace Adjustments and Accessibility Policy, to ensure all staff have equitable access to opportunities, and have the support to perform their roles effectively and inclusively.
- Welcoming accomplished IT expert, AI specialist and 2023 Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll honouree Dr Ruwangi Fernando to deliver our 2024 International Women's Day address. Dr Fernando's presentation on diversity in STEM highlighted how cultural bias impacts the employment experience of women of colour in Australia.

Proudly inclusive

We are dedicated to cultivating an inclusive and dynamic workplace where everyone feels empowered to bring their whole self to work each day. Our commitment is reflected in our actions, such as:

- Receiving our first SAGE Cygnet Award, in recognition of our efforts to facilitate a more safe and respectful work environment for trans and gender diverse staff and students. The recognition is both a welcome milestone for WEHI and a reminder of our ongoing journey toward full inclusivity.
- More than 40 staff, students, friends and family joining WEHI's LGBTQIA+ and ally network WE-Pride at the 2024 Midsumma Pride March. This was the seventh time WEHI has taken part in this iconic march, which celebrates solidarity in gender and sexual diversity.
- Recognising International Day of LGBTQIA+ People in STEMM with a special director's seminar on the rainbow ceiling, which brought together LGBTQIA+ people working in medical research institutes to share their lived experiences.

WEHI staff, students, friends and family proudly flew the rainbow flag at our seventh Midsumma Pride March

WEHI Voice culture survey

Our team continued to record strong engagement with our annual survey, which had its highest ever level of participation at 69%, up from 64% in 2023. The survey results indicated a high level of staff engagement across WEHI, and our culture that fosters collaboration, recognition and professional growth. Key strengths:

Peer relationships: 8.8/10, indicating our team can rely on their peers for support

Freedom of opinion: 8.4/10, demonstrating a high level of trust and comfort in expressing opinions at work

Recommend WEHI as a place to work/study: 8.5/10, showing high workplace satisfaction among our team

Community connections

Developing and delivering programs and activities to engage closely with the community remained a priority, including through:

- Our discovery tours, which offer the chance for the community to look behind the scenes at WEHI. We ran tours for 17 school, community and stakeholder groups, with our scientists presenting current research and guiding attendees through our working labs.
- Citizens of Science, a fun, hands-on course that introduced 34 members of the community and institute staff to scientific principles. The 2024 initiative was delivered by 22 PhD students and scientists from WEHI and six other leading medical research institutes.
- Opening our doors for Open Day, where 300 prospective students were welcomed to WEHI by 100 of our staff and students. Prospective honours, masters and PhD students met with researchers, toured our labs and got a first-hand experience of student life at WEHI.
- Our new advertising campaign *You are the cure*, which highlights the integral role of our supporters in advancing breakthrough discoveries and brought a focus on the experience of people living with diseases and conditions that WEHI scientists are researching. The campaign reached more than 7 million people.
- The annual Art of Science competition and online exhibition, showcasing brilliant and engaging biomedical artwork captured by our talented scientists during the course of their research into cancer, infection and immunity, and lifelong health.

WEHI worldwide: alumni living and working in Singapore came together to celebrate at a reunion event, catching up with old friends and building new relationships

Celebrating our graduating students

Students are highly valued members of research groups at WEHI and receive world-class training in medical research and broader skills equipping them for a range of careers. We are proud that many go on to become leaders of our sector. Congratulations to the following students who successfully completed their studies at WEHI during 2024.

Doctor of Philosophy, University of Melbourne

Dr Caitlin Bourke
Multi-omic investigations of *Plasmodium vivax*
Professor Ivo Mueller, Associate Professor Aaron Jex, Dr Shazia Ruybal

Dr Karen Broderick
Understanding epilepsy genetic risk: integrating common and rare genetic variation
Professor Melanie Bahlo, Professor Sam Berkovic, Professor Ingrid Scheffer

Dr David Bryan
Development of a microfluidic and quantitative microscopy platform for studying blood-stage malaria
Professor Kelly Rogers, Dr David Collins, Professor Alan Cowman, Professor Mitchell Arnan

Dr Jinjin Chen
Marker gene identification and cell annotation approaches for multi-scale transcriptomic data to unravel tissue cellular heterogeneity
Dr Chin Wee Tan, Professor Melissa Davis, Professor Terrence Speed

Dr Danielle Clucas
Studies of *Plasmodium*-Iron interactions
Professor Sant-Rayn Pasricha, Professor Wai-Hong Tham, Professor Beverley-Ann Biggs

Dr Brigette Duckworth
Defining the intranodal spatial requirements for the formation and maintenance of long-lived T cell memory
Associate Professor Joanna Groom, Professor Gabrielle Belz

Dr Yunfan Fu
Understanding protein variants with high-throughput mutagenesis and machine learning
Professor Tony Papenfuss, Dr Alan Rubin, Dr Justin Bedo

Dr Huimin Hu
Characterisation of MLKL-mediated necroptosis via live cell imaging and phenotypic screening
Professor Guillaume Lessene, Professor James Murphy, Dr Ying Zhang, Professor Kelly Rogers

Dr Hannah Hughes-Parry
Characterisation of dual-specific chimeric antigen receptor T cells against heterogeneous tumours
Professor Misty Jenkins, Dr Ryan Cross

Dr Anja Kopp
From pattern recognition to pro-inflammatory cell death - functional characterisation of the proteins NLRP7 and GSDMD
Professor Seth Masters, Dr Elisabeth Mulazzani

Dr Sabrina Lewis
3D imaging and cellular barcoding: novel tools for exploring cancer heterogeneity
Dr Verena Wimmer, Professor Delphine Merino, Professor Shalin Naik, Professor Kelly Rogers

Dr Kunlun Li
Investigating the function of the SOCS2 SH2 domain
Professor Sandra Nicholson, Dr Nadia Kershaw, Associate Professor Jeff Babon

Dr Mengbo Li
Linear models and empirical Bayes methods for mass spectrometry-based label-free proteomics data
Professor Gordon Smyth, Associate Professor Andrew Webb, Dr Yunshun Chen

Dr Jackson McDonald
Mouse models of regulatory genes in lung development and thoracic cancers
Professor Kate Sutherland, Dr Sarah Best, Professor Marco Herold

Dr Stefanie Mendes Bader
The role of programmed cell death and inflammation in the pathogenesis of SARS-CoV-2 disease
Professor Marc Pellegrini, Professor Marco Herold, Professor Andreas Strasser

Dr Gemma Moir-Meyer
Characterising the molecular regulation of erythroferrone
Professor Sant-Rayn Pasricha, Professor Marnie Blewitt

Dr Margaret Potts
Identifying novel oncogenes and tumour suppressor genes in cancer
Professor Marco Herold, Professor Andreas Strasser

Dr Thomas Reygaerts
Sequencing and validation of variants causing autoinflammatory diseases
Professor Seth Masters, Professor Ian Wicks

Dr Ushma Ruparel
Manipulation of host defence mechanisms by *Toxoplasma gondii*
Associate Professor Chris Tonkin, Dr Alessandro Uboldi

Dr Kaiseal Sarson-Lawrence
Structural studies of type-I haematopoietic cytokine receptors
Dr Nadia Kershaw, Associate Professor Jeff Babon, Dr Josh Hardy

Dr Benjamin Seager
A conserved molecular mechanism of erythrocyte invasion by malaria parasites
Professor Alan Cowman, Dr Wilson Wong

Dr Stephanie Studniberg
Identification of molecular pathways associated with susceptibility and immunity to severe dengue and malaria
Professor Diana Hansen, Dr Alex Garnham, Professor Wei Shi

Dr Antoine Terreaux
Defining the mechanics driving platelet formation via megakaryocyte membrane budding
Associate Professor Edwin Hawkins, Associate Professor Samir Taoudi, Dr Alison Farley

Dr Sara Tomei
Haematopoiesis at a clonal level using novel barcoding technologies
Professor Shalin Naik, Dr Tom Weber, Professor Mark Dawson

Dr Xiangyi Wang
Molecular study of LUBAC and its subunit HOIL-1
Dr Bernhard Lechtenberg, Professor John Silke

Dr Jianan Wang
Statistical models for pre-processing and simulating single cell RNA-seq data
Professor Terence Speed, Professor Sherene Loi, Dr Belinda Phipson

Dr Panxue Wang
Activation and regulation of TNFR1 signalling
Professor John Silke, Dr Lorraine O'Reilly

Dr Yuntong Wu
Structural and pharmacological investigation of the JAK/SOCS1 interaction
Associate Professor Jeff Babon, Dr Nadia Kershaw

Dr Kelin Zhao
Resolving new features of thymic involution and regeneration using 3D imaging approaches
Professor Daniel Gray, Dr Verena Wimmer

Master of Philosophy, University of Melbourne

Hui Shi Saw
Defining the regulatory role of Bcor in Flt3L-dependent DC development
Professor Shalin Naik, Dr Cindy Audiger

Master of Biomedical Science, University of Melbourne

Sannia City
Exploring sexual differentiation in malaria parasites
Dr Matthew Dixon, Professor James McCarthy

Amelia De Smet
Defining the role of mammary fibroblasts in tumour progression
Professor Jane Visvader, Professor Geoff Lindeman, Dr Rosa Pascual

Ziyan (Jasmine) Zhang
Investigating the roles and dynamics of TSPAN8 protein in hepatocellular carcinoma cells
Associate Professor Naiyang Fu, Dr Jicheng Yang

Bachelor of Science (Degree with Honours), University of Melbourne

Dylan Antolasic
Dead or alive – does it matter? Investigating mechanisms of neutrophil extracellular trap heterogeneity during *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection
Dr Anna Coussens, Dr Nash Peton

Jack Edwards
Development of deep, rapid plasma proteomics for pediatric cohorts
Dr Samantha Emery, Dr Laura Dagley

Jacob Ellis
Exploring the role of NIX/BNIP3-dependent mitophagy in mitochondrial quality control and neurodegeneration
Associate Professor Michael Lazarou, Professor David Komander

Cindy (Yuting) Shen
Functional characterisation of the DNA-binding SAND domain of Speckled Protein 140
Dr Hamish King, Dr Shabih Shakeel

Ishrat Zaman
Exploring the spatial landscape of *Toxoplasma gondii* infections in the brain
Professor Kelly Rogers, Associate Professor Chris Tonkin

Bachelor of Biomedicine (Degree with Honours), University of Melbourne

Jason Bong
Targeting mitochondrial biology to enhance cancer therapy
Professor David Huang, Dr Mark van Delft

Taylah Miranda
Investigating the role of the Epstein Barr virus (EBV) on lymphoma growth and response to therapy in EBV-positive diffuse large B-cell lymphoma
Professor Gemma Kelly, Dr Aisling Ross

Tin Nguyen
Investigation of a lipid binding pocket in frizzled-dishevelled complexes
Dr Alisa Glukhova, Dr Wessel Burger

Raihanah Pranggono
Experimental validation of *de-novo*-designed minibinders against tumour-associated antigens in glioblastoma
Dr Daniel Brown, Dr Rory Bowden

Dan Thy (Melissa) Singh
Loss of tumour suppressor Keap1 increases resistance to KrasG12D inhibitor MRTX1133 in KrasG12D lung adenocarcinoma
Professor Kate Sutherland, Dr Mara Zeissig

Charlotte Williams
Macrophage receptor regulation upon dead cell clearance
Dr Maria Tanzer, Professor James Murphy

Jessie Xue
Optimising rePEat: a novel technology for sequential recording of molecular events at a single locus
Professor Shalin Naik, Dr Tom Weber

Boya Zhang
Exploring the role of epigenetic modifier p400 in X chromosome inactivation
Dr Andrew Keniry, Professor Marnie Blewitt

Shengsheng (Jackson) Zhao
Investigating novel sugar ubiquitination by HOIL-1 and other E3 ligases
Dr Bernhard Lechtenberg, Professor David Komander

Amelia Zhu
Investigating the role of translational repressor protein PDCD4 in T cell immunity
Dr Julia Marchingo, Professor Andreas Strasser

Bachelor of Biomedicine graduate Amelia Zhu received the 2024 Colman Speed Award, which recognises her achievement as WEHI's top honours student

Thank you to our supporters

Your support allows our researchers to advance critical research and translate their discoveries into disease diagnosis, prevention and treatment for the benefit of the whole community.

Below is a list of our generous donations and grants of $10,000 or more between 1 January and 31 December 2024. A full list of donations, grants and bequests of $1000 or more can be found on our website.

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Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
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veski

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L-R: WEHI Board members Professor Mark Cassidy, Malcolm Broomhead AO, Carolyn Viney (stepped down: December), Geoff Roberts, Jane Hemstritch AO, Professor Sir John Savill, Dr Angeli Weller, Kee Wong, Marie McDonald. Board members not present in group photograph (inset, from top): Pippa Connolly, Professor Shelley Dolan AO, Paul Donnelly, John Dyson, Professor Jane Gunn AO, Professor Duncan Maskell (stepped down: May)

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Appointed Honorary Treasurer: May 2023

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Appointed: August 2024

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Stepped down: May 2024

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Stepped down: December 2024

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Appointed: July 2021

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As of 31 December 2024

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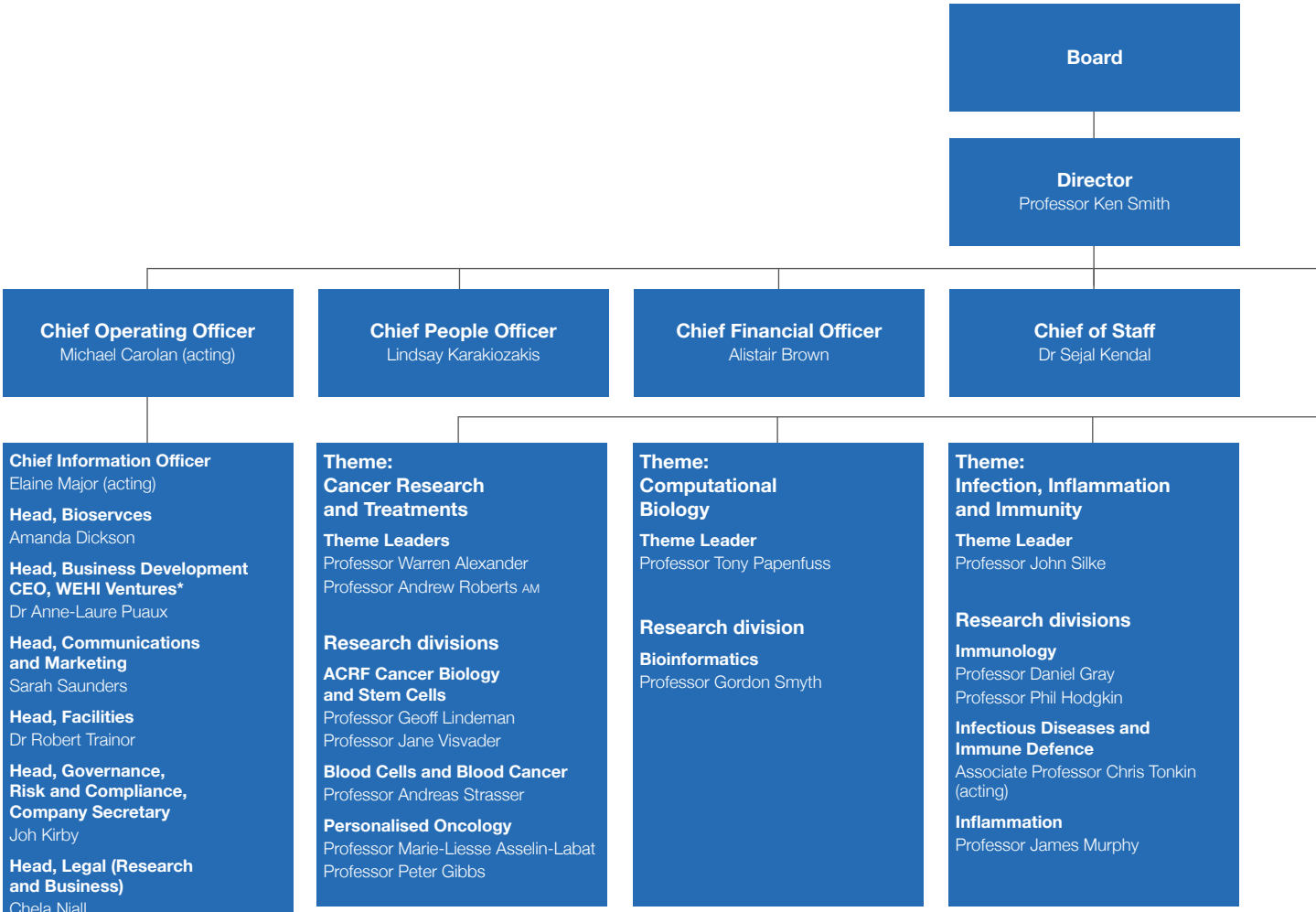
Organisational structure

31 December 2024

To see our new organisational structure, in effect from 1 January 2025, please visit www.wehi.edu.au/org-structure



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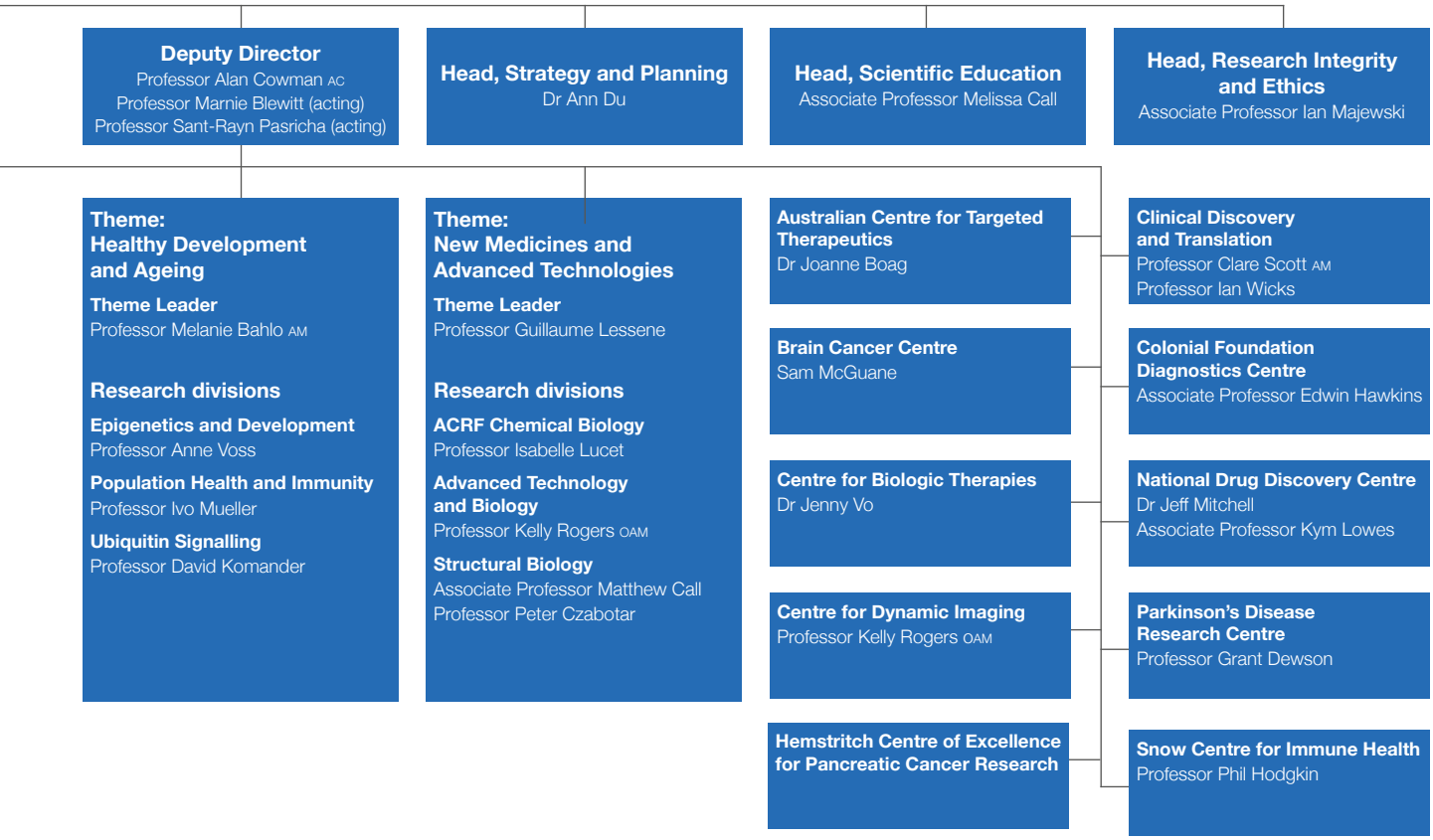

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To 31 December 2024

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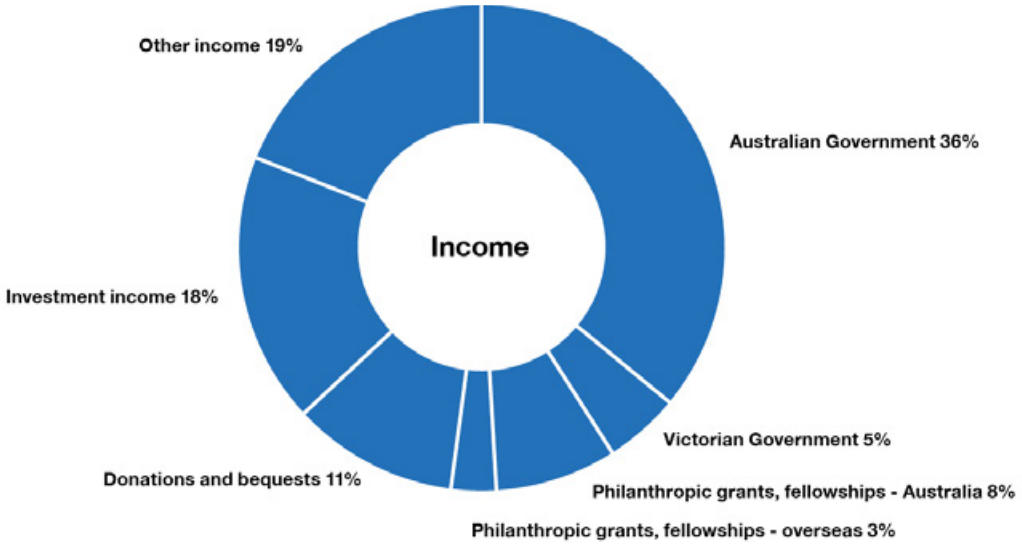
Professor Quan Zhao

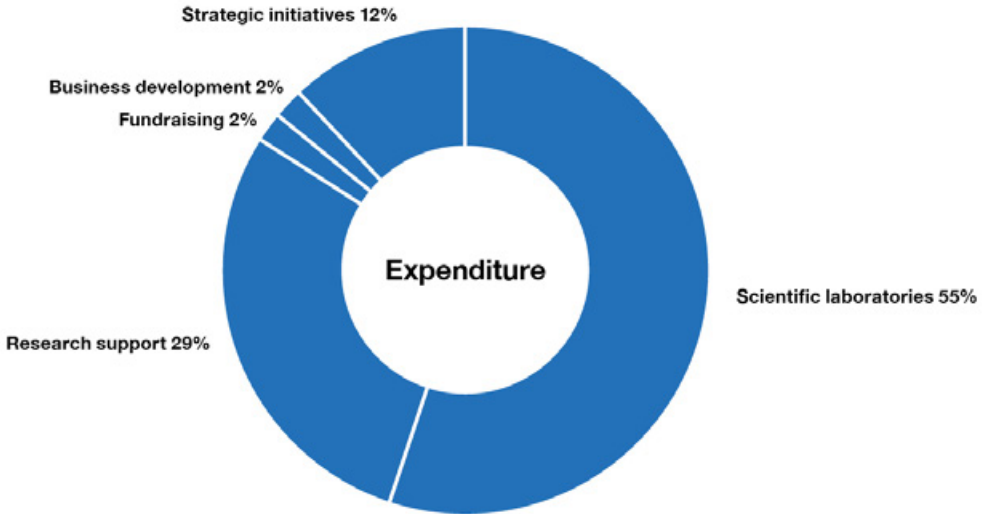
Statistical summary

For the year ended 31 December 2024

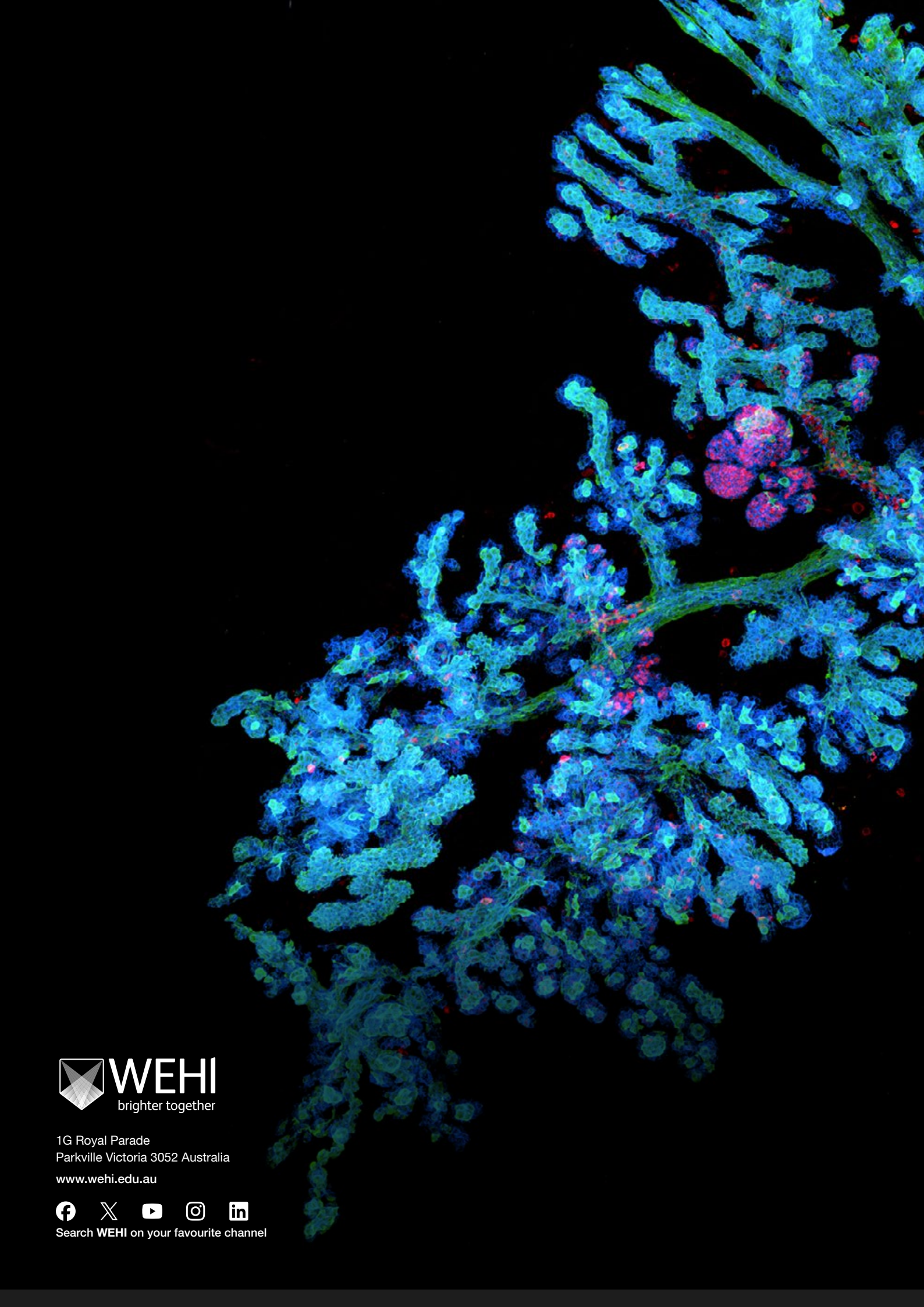
	2024 $'000	2023 $'000	2022 $'000	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Operating revenue					
Australian Government	63,599	56,864	56,930	59,900	64,798
Victorian Government	9,633	9,175	9,598	9,883	10,311
Foreign governments	1,217	725	380	35	-
Government revenue	**74,449**	**66,764**	**66,909**	**69,818**	**75,109**
Industrial grants and contracts	16,411	20,732	17,588	12,181	13,439
Philanthropic grants and fellowships - Australia	14,059	15,874	10,510	12,563	9,870
Philanthropic grants and fellowships - international	4,746	6,119	6,007	2,885	4,649
Investment income	32,677	33,221	35,740	29,518	19,996
Royalty income	5,249	611	2,434	770	1,654
General revenue	9,594	7,481	7,300	9,105	6,842
Donations and bequests	20,399	20,958	31,949	28,227	26,522
Royalty monetisation revenue	-	-	-	27,590	38,961
Non-government revenue	**103,135**	**104,996**	**111,528**	**122,839**	**121,933**
Total revenue	**177,584**	**171,760**	**178,437**	**192,657**	**197,042**
Operating expenditure					
Staff costs	142,812	137,819	121,581	109,662	102,547
Scientific laboratories	28,988	29,718	26,535	24,561	20,212
Building operations	7,910	6,544	6,254	5,585	5,092
Administration	20,918	24,874	13,233	14,716	11,520
Fundraising	906	919	911	518	502
Business development	1,927	3,423	2,355	9,200	2,725
Allowance for credit loss increase/(decrease)	(801)	1,551	-	(32)	(30)
Royalty monetisation costs	-	-	-	(4,418)	2,239
Net foreign exchange loss/(gain)	(2,544)	(1,010)	(6,413)	(4,669)	10,282
Total expenditure	**200,126**	**203,838**	**164,455**	**155,123**	**155,089**
Results from operating activities	**(22,542)**	**(32,078)**	**13,981**	**37,534**	**41,953**
Other income					
Profit/(loss) on sale of long-term assets	-	-	-	161	(135)
Fair value gain/(loss) on investments	10,704	3,501	(8,432)	10,549	816
Share of profits/(loss) of equity accounted investments	(1,266)	457	2,011	-	-
Gain on merger	-	-	4,068	-	-
Donations and bequests capitalised to Permanent Funds	3,705	161	1,620	26,659	673
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	(1,101)	-	-	-	-
Other loss	(120)	-	-	-	-
Total other income	**11,922**	**4,119**	**(733)**	**37,369**	**1,354**
Other expenses					
Depreciation and amortisation	(17,456)	(14,185)	(13,746)	(12,959)	(11,871)
Impairment of property, plant and equipment	-	-	(142)	(4,422)	-
Total other expenses	**(17,456)**	**(14,185)**	**(13,888)**	**(17,381)**	**(11,871)**
Net operating (deficit)/surplus	**(28,076)**	**(42,144)**	**(640)**	**57,522**	**31,436**
Capital funds					
Permanent invested capital funds	240,666	244,672	240,122	229,672	202,322
General funds	395,684	416,697	408,197	419,077	394,285
Royalty fund	-	-	55,822	56,389	56,135
Leadership fund	37,880	37,353	35,259	30,225	28,927
Discovery fund	4,532	6,785	6,341	5,746	5,484
Investment revaluation reserve	171,703	118,084	82,526	125,878	70,311
Non-controlling interest	9	-	-	-	-
Total funds	**850,474**	**823,591**	**828,267**	**866,987**	**757,464**
Capital expenditure					
Property, plant and equipment	12,886	15,146	15,266	15,710	24,195
Staff numbers: (FTE)					
Scientific research staff:					
- Senior faculty	77	80	82	74	85
- Postdoctoral scientists	265	285	276	252	224
- Visiting scientists	5	7	12	8	32
- Other laboratory research staff	339	345	347	313	240
Supporting staff:					
- Other support services	220	223	193	180	177
Total staff and visiting scientists	**906**	**940**	**910**	**827**	**758**
Students	**213**	**182**	**197**	**194**	**159**
Papers published	**483**	**478**	**484**	**477**	**424**

The year at a glance





The year in brief	2024 $'000	2023 $'000
Income from operations	**177,584**	**171,760**
Expenditure in operations	**(221,003)**	**(217,786)**
Non operating items	**15,343**	**3,883**
Net deficit	**(28,076)**	**(42,143)**
Number of staff and visiting scientists (FTE)	**906**	**940**
Number of postgraduate students (FTE)	**213**	**182**
Total staff and students (FTE)	**1,119**	**1,122**



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