



Australia's  
Global  
University

## St George & Sutherland Clinical School March 2017 Newsletter

### Update from Clinical Associate Dean



Welcome to the March newsletter of the Clinical School. And welcome to the new academic and teaching year for our medical students. As always, changes are afoot that have the potential to reinvigorate and/or distract us – it will be interesting to see how things develop.

The **UNSW 2025 strategy** is a major player for the university and its affiliates. There are substantial changes to the way that both academic and professional staff are assessed. Much of this is about bringing rigour and discipline to our activities as well as creating efficiency rather than disruption, but the things unlikely to be adversely affected are our teaching organisation and management of research support. For updates on the UNSW 2025 Strategy, visit <https://www.2025.unsw.edu.au/staff>.

It comes at a time when we have had internal **changes in our administration**, with the departure of our longstanding stalwart staff members, Laura Golland, Wendy Baird and Val Reid. We welcome Marina Margarian to the office, and hope to soon announce new staff to fill the other vacancies. In addition, we farewelled Cathie Lane from our academic ranks at Sutherland Hospital, and in her place welcome **Dr Michelle Julian**, to take on critical aspects of student education in that hospital.

The Clinical School is playing its own part in advancing the faculty's and university's research strategies. **Prof Emad EI-Omar** is in the process of establishing Australia's first clinically-oriented **Microbiome Research Centre**, with initial funding from UNSW and funds from the Commonwealth Dept of Health gained by the efforts of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation. Extensive redevelopment of the laboratory spaces on level 2 of the Research and Education building is an essential part of this, as is the recruitment of new research staff and the forging of multiple local, national and international collaborations. This is a very exciting time for our local research programs, and you can read more about this elsewhere in this newsletter.

At St George we are also unusually well placed to take advantage of the newly created alliance between the research powerhouse, **The George Institute** (based in Newtown) and UNSW. John Myburgh's division at TGI has always played a major role in our research productivity but the new linkages

will create increased collaborative capacity, with the prospect of greater numbers of cross-disciplinary research students and global clinical research projects in which many of us will potentially participate.

All years of the **Medicine Program** have now returned to their studies, with all of them represented at St George and Sutherland. Most of you will not get to see or interact with phase 1 (years 1 and 2) students, who only have a few hours each fortnight with their predominantly GP tutors in the clinical setting, but I hope many of you are able to spend time, formally and informally, with year 3, 5 and 6 students in clinical settings and tutorials, and year 4 students undertaking **Independent Learning (Research) Projects**. And for those of you not familiar with ILPs but interested in knowing what they are about, I'd encourage you to attend the information session being held on **Thursday 23 March at 6pm** in the Clinical Teaching Unit. Click [here](#) for further information.

Finally, the Faculty with the University is currently re-examining its system of **conjoint appointments**, on which UNSW is so reliant for its clinical teaching and research productivity in hospitals. There are no fixed ideas about how this will develop, but be assured that any potential changes will be communicated and feedback sought before changes are wrought.

**Prof Michael Grimm**  
*Clinical Associate Dean*

---

### Update from the Professor of Medicine

Well, it has been a very exciting and successful last few months. First and foremost, we have recruited three outstanding post-docs who have already initiated very interesting research projects looking at the role of the gut microbiota in colorectal cancer, liver disease and pre-eclampsia. Their work will transform the research landscape in these fields. We have also concluded the recruitment of a top class scientist from the UK who is an international authority in the field of microbiome research. She will join us towards the end of this year and we are very excited about her arrival.



Locally, we have set up several collaborations with our colleagues on the St George/UNSW campus (hepatology, oncology, obstetrics, metabolic medicine, bariatric surgery)



and we plan many more collaborations across the UNSW campus and Sydney generally. We have established very fruitful collaborations with colleagues at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne. Several internationally renowned research groups from Asia are also very eager to collaborate with us here at St George/UNSW.

Perhaps the most notable achievement over the past few months has been the establishment of the **St George and Sutherland Microbiome Research Centre (MRC)**. Thanks to a very generous grant of \$4.4M from the Federal Government to the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation (SSMRF), this dream has become a reality and the MRC promises to rejuvenate and energise research across the whole of this region. Our ambition is to transform the MRC into a world-class hub of high impact clinically relevant research that will benefit the population of Australia and the world.

It will also act as a magnet attracting top quality researchers and doctors and will facilitate the recruitment, training and inspiration of the next generation of clinical and academic leaders in medicine and all allied health specialties.

**Prof Emad El-Omar**  
**Professor of Medicine**

## Postgraduate Update

The St George & Sutherland Clinical School Postgraduate Student Program currently has 22 enrolled students (15 enrolled in a PhD and 8 in Masters).



We **welcome** the following new PhD students in 2017:

- **Mathew Kozman** (Supervisor: Winston Liauw)  
Research topic: *Management strategies for Stage 4 colorectal cancer*
- **Wing Chi (Gigi) Yeung** (Supervisor: Sunil Badve)  
Research topic: *Vitamin D therapy in chronic kidney disease-mineral and bone disorder*

Congratulations to the following students on the completion of their PhD over the last 6 months:

**Graduations:** Julia Beretov (Supervisor Yong Li) - Aug 2016

**Awaiting conferral:** (Jan - March 2017)

- **Supriya Venugopal** (Supervisor: Deedee Murrell)
- **Eric Kit Chung Hau** (Supervisor: Kerrie McDonald)
- **Philip Young-III Choi** (Supervisor: Beng Chong)
- **Adam Harris** (Supervisor: Deedee Murrell)

**Annual progress reviews** are currently being held during March and April. We are always looking for panel members to sit on each review. If you are a conjoint or academic staff member with a PhD who could spare 2 hours to sit on a panel, please keep an eye out for the email seeking panel members. You can also express your interest [here](#). The next round will be held in September/October. Students are reminded to ensure their supervisors are available to attend the reviews.

## Postgraduate Students - Dates for your diary

- **Induction for Postgraduate Researchers** - 11 April, 4pm
- **Research Progress Review Seminar** - 26 April, 10am
- **Thesis Submission Seminar** - 3 May, 10.30am

See also the [Graduate Research School newsletter](#).

## Update from Clinical Teaching Unit

St George CTU farewelled Wendy Baird in February. Until further notice, please continue contacting Joanna Tjojoatmodjo for all St George enquiries. Sutherland CTU farewelled Dr Cathie Lane in December. We thank Cathie for all her hard work and dedication during her time with us. Cathie will still be involved with the school in a conjoint capacity. We welcome **Dr Michelle Julian** who has replaced Cathie and commenced mid-February.

The **supplementary Phase 2 medical examinations** were successfully held in February at St George. To all the staff who contributed their time to the exam process, a very big "Thank you".

The St George CTU is organising an **ILP/Hons Information Session** for potential supervisors. The session is aimed towards Conjoint Senior Lecturer and above who may be interested in taking on independent learning project students. This event will be held on **Thursday 23rd March 2017 from 6-7pm**.



**Phase 2 students** underwent orientation in early March before commencing tutorials and lectures. The first group of year 5 students started back in January and are attached to various medical and surgical teams. The year 6 students started in early March in either emergency or selective terms at both St George and Sutherland hospital.

**Examinations** will be held later in the year in September, November and December. More information will follow in the future.

**Joanna Tjojoatmodjo**  
**St George CTU**

**Justin Joynes**  
**Sutherland CTU**

## Research in Progress Meetings 2017

We are back in 2017 with an exciting line of speakers from within our School and beyond. Below is our program for your diaries. Most seminars will be held on Wednesday every fortnight with a few exceptions scheduled on Thursday. Please note that schedule may be subject to change so look out for the posters around the school and hospital.

We are lucky to have two new committee members Dr Howard Yim and Dr Meera Esvaran who will join us this year.

We hope to see you at our first meeting on **Wednesday 12th April** presented by Dr Valery Combes from the ithree Institute, University of Technology Sydney.

### Venue:

Auditorium, Research and Education Centre  
St George Hospital, Ground floor  
4 – 10 South St, Kogarah  
1.00 - 2.00pm

See also: [www.stgcs.med.unsw.edu.au/ripm](http://www.stgcs.med.unsw.edu.au/ripm)

Register for next seminar

**Fatima El-Assaad, Meera Esvaran, Freda Passam & Howard Yim**

Research In Progress Committee Members

St George & Sutherland Clinical School  
**Research in Progress Meetings 2017**  
April to November 1 - 2 PM  
Sessions are free!  
RSVP for lunch  
Location: Auditorium  
Research & Education Centre  
St George Hospital  
4-10 South Street  
Kogarah

Look out for details of our next meeting on posters around the hospital or contact a committee member below

Dr Valery Combes  
v.combes@utsm.edu.au

Dr Meera Esvaran  
m.esvaran@unsw.edu.au

Dr Freda Passam  
f.passam@unsw.edu.au

Dr Howard Yim  
h.yim@unsw.edu.au

[www.stgcs.med.unsw.edu.au/ripm](http://www.stgcs.med.unsw.edu.au/ripm)

## RIPM 2017 Dates & Speakers

|                     |                       |   |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 12 April            | Dr Valery Combes      | University of Technology Sydney, ithree Institute           |
| 26 April            | Dr David Simar        | UNSW Sydney, School of Medical Sciences                     |
| 10 May              | A/Prof Paul Witting   | University of Sydney, Department of Pathology               |
| 24 May              | Prof Kate Moore       | UNSW Sydney, School of Women's and Children's Health        |
| 7 June              | Dr Christos Venetis   | UNSW Sydney, School of Women's and Children's Health        |
| 21 June             | Dr David Ziegler      | UNSW Sydney, School of Women's and Children's Health        |
| 5 July              | Dr Amary Zekry        | UNSW Sydney, St George and Sutherland Clinical School       |
| 12 July             | Prof Nicholas Shackel | UNSW Sydney, The Centenary Institute                        |
| 3 August * (Thurs)  | Dr Cristan Herbert    | UNSW Sydney, School of Medical Sciences                     |
| 16 August           | Dr Sheila Donnelly    | University of Technology Sydney, ithree Institute           |
| 31 August * (Thurs) | Dr Anthony Cesare     | University of Sydney, Children's Medical Research Institute |
| 13 September        | Dr Ben Roediger       | University of Sydney, The Centenary Institute               |
| 27 September        | Dr Patrick Bertolino  | University of Sydney, The Centenary Institute               |
| 11 October          | Prof Roland Stocker   | UNSW Sydney, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute        |
| 25 October          | Dr Geoffrey McCaughan | University of Sydney, The Centenary Institute               |
| 8 November          | Prof Chris Goodnow    | Garvan Institute of Medical Research                        |
| 22 November         | Dr Oliver Fischer     | UNSW Sydney, St George Hospital                             |

## St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation

The Federal Minister for Health, The Hon. Greg Hunt MP, has confirmed \$4 million funding to the SSMRF to establish a research centre at St George and Sutherland hospitals

Doctors and scientists at the centre will focus on the microbiota in the gut, looking at how imbalances occur and how it causes disease, a critical step in preventing it happening in the first place.



It will be called the **Microbiome Research Centre** and will be led by the hospitals' Professor of Medicine, **Emad El-Omar**.

Minister Hunt met with researchers, the Board of SSMRF, Professor Rodney Phillips, Dean of Medicine from UNSW and Mr Michael Still, South Eastern Sydney Health Chair, and made the announcement at St George Private Hospital. Also attending was David Coleman, MP for Banks, who has taken a deep interest in the Foundation's work.

Speaking to national and local media, he said: *"Great researchers are to be found here; people such as those young PhD graduates that we've met today. Their job is to diagnose what as previously been impossible to detect, and then to treat the conditions..."*

*"And whether we've seen colorectal cancer being researched, whether it is the treatment for women with pregnancy conditions such as pre-eclampsia or gestational diabetes, there is hope, and the work of (Prof) Emad (El-Omar) and his team is about providing the hope."*

Imbalances in microbiota connected to diseases include stroke, asthma, obesity, diabetes, mental health, and pre-eclampsia in pregnant women.

Having a healthy gut is essential to living a healthy life and all Australians will benefit from the findings of the Microbiome Research Centre.

St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation has been supporting important research for 10 years and Prof El-Omar and his team will lead the world.



The new centre will also improve research capacity by attracting more expert researchers to the region.

This Centre's ground-breaking work will create new strategic links with national and international centres of research excellence.

It will provide an embedded research hub at the heart of a major health care campus in southern Sydney in partnership with the UNSW.

As part of its goal, the Foundation has attracted world-renowned researchers to develop research projects at St George and Sutherland Hospitals.

SSMRF Chair Professor Edmonds said: "We would like to thank the Australian Government for their support. We want to attract more of the best researchers to the region because we know that medical research saves lives and improves lives, "The region's hospitals deserve the best, and the Foundation is determined to make sure that happens."

**Further information and video:** [SSMRF website](http://www.stgeorgemrf.com.au)

**Virginia Venckus, Executive Director  
St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation**



(L-R) Prof. Rodney Phillips, Mr David Coleman MP, Prof. Emad El-Omar, The Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Prof. John Edmonds, Cathy Yuncken, Bruce Spaul, Paul O'Sullivan, Michael Still, Assoc Prof. Peter Gonski

## Updated UNSW Branding - Co-branding and 'Mock Certificates'

NSW has been through a brand refresh to align with the 2025 Strategy. Key changes include:



- UNSW Australia is now called **UNSW Sydney**. Canberra's location is called **UNSW Canberra**
- The new tagline is *Australia's Global University*
- The logo has been updated with a refined University crest
- The yellow band has been replaced with a shorter yellow 'flag' with a variation to the yellow
- Typefaces include **Sommet** and **Arial**



New templates have been rolled out incorporating the changes and are available for download under myUNSW >> Branding Requirements.

Branding is managed by [Marketing Services](#). For branding questions please contact them on 9385 3777, visit the [FAQ page](#) or email: [branding@unsw.edu.au](mailto:branding@unsw.edu.au).

### Co-branding on Hospital letterhead

If you are using the UNSW logo to co-bran with a hospital letterhead or document, please contact [branding@unsw.edu.au](mailto:branding@unsw.edu.au) to ensure you are using the correct guidelines.

### Mock Certificates

Recently there have been a number of instances where UNSW has been contacted to verify qualifications for hospital fellows on co-branded certificates generated by hospital departments. UNSW cannot verify the qualifications as they are not an official UNSW qualification. This causes problems for the individuals seeking verification from UNSW.

Any qualifications or fellowships (and associated certificates) can only be issued for accredited UNSW courses, through UNSW Student Administration and Records, not by individual university or hospital departments.

## Work Health & Safety

The Clinical School L3 WHS committee is due for **re-election** of its members. All research groups are required to nominate a representative for the committee. Current and nominated members are in the table below.

The committee is involved in stimulating a culture of safety within all areas of the school and ensures that any health and safety issues and concerns are raised and addressed. **If you are interested in joining the committee or if you would like to nominate someone please vote by 31 March 2017.** Please send any nominations to [j.akhter@unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.akhter@unsw.edu.au).

**Minutes** of the last committee meeting held in February 2017 are on the School's website [WHS page](#).

An internal **Taskforce audit** of the research laboratories on Level 3 of the Research & Education Centre took place in October 2016. We achieved a fantastic result with only minor housekeeping corrective actions. We have an upcoming external **WorkCover audit** scheduled for mid 2017.

### Javed Akhter, WH&S Chairperson

#### Current committee & employee representatives

| Area                       | Current                               | Suggested Nominee           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chairperson                | Javed Akhter                          | Lan Gong                    |
| Secretary                  | Marina Margarian (prev Laura Gollard) | Marina Margarian            |
| <b>Research Labs:</b>      |                                       |                             |
| Immunology                 | Jian Cheng Qi                         | Jian Cheng Qi               |
| Cancer Care                | Vacant                                | Julia Beretov               |
| O&G L1 Pitney              | Ying Cheng                            | Ying Cheng                  |
| Level 3, REC               | Sinead O'Reilly                       | Sinead O'Reilly             |
| Level 2, REC               | Javed Akhter                          | Javed Akhter                |
| Haematology                | Jose Perdomo                          | Feng Yan                    |
| Gastroenterology           | Michal Szczesniak                     | Michal Szczesniak           |
| Biological Research Centre | Marcelle Dugo                         | Marcelle Dugo/Ben Tuckfield |
| St George CTU              | Vacant (Wendy Baird)                  | Joanna Tjojoatmodjo         |
| Sutherland CTU             | Justin Joynes                         | Justin Joynes               |

## New Conjoint Appointments

We have had many new appointments since our last newsletter:

**Conjoint Associate Professors:** Sunil Badve, Julia Maclean

**Conjoint Senior Lecturers:** Andrew Finckh, Leonard Kalish, Phillip Malouf

**Conjoint Lecturers:** Andrea Bell, Julia Beretov, Murali Krishnaraj, Rasanga Liyanage, Penelope Mackenzie, Justine Millar, Brian O'Connell, Kris Yuen

### Conjoint Associate Lecturers:

Su Chien Ang, Kerri Basile, Stephanie Blake, Arthur Chee, Uphar Chamoli, Emily Forward, Timothy Gilbey, Jeffrey Tsun Kit Ha, Hussein Hussein, Matthew Knox, Joanna Lee, Kit Ho David Lee, Joseph Magdy, Christopher Middlemiss, Swapnil Pawar, Abhishek Prashar, Wassim Rahman, Michael Reyes, Jawad Saab, John Slaven, Jose Antonio Umali