



AMREP in 2010/2011

Andrew Way
Chief Executive, Alfred Health
Chair, AMREP Council

Since my last report, the benefits of Academic Health Science Centres have become widely discussed in Australian health and medical research organisations. The development of a virtuous spiral of healthcare delivery, education of clinical professionals and clinical research all enhancing each other to the benefit of patient care and clinical outcomes is starting to influence the way in which groups of organisations relate to each other to have an impact on the health of a population.

AMREP, established in 2002, is Australia's first and longest existing example of such an endeavour, although when created no one at the time would have thought – Academic Health Centre. Although of long standing, high quality and successful in many ways, on a world stage AMREP remains relatively small when considering patient volumes, research funding and outputs. Over the last six months, a larger collaboration has begun to emerge. The collaboration between AMREP and Monash Health Translation Precinct brings together Alfred Health with Southern Health, Monash University, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, Burnet Institute, Prince Henry's Institute, Cabrini Health and Epworth with their education and research institutes. This group will be the largest such grouping in Australia and is well equipped to be recognised for its clinical service, research and education activities on a world stage. The partnership will grow to include primary care and other education partners as it develops.

Within the AMREP family, we will continue to make a strong and often leading contribution to the emerging themes of this new organisation, with particular emphasis on

- Heart disease and diabetes
- Infectious diseases and immunity
- Blood diseases and cancer
- Trauma and critical care
- Older people and rehabilitation

The AMREP Council will continue to promote and coordinate activities on our Commercial Road campus, and to that end I am delighted to welcome Professor Stephen Jane as Director of Research for Alfred Health and Head of the Central Clinical School for Monash University.

This year has seen three major grant awards funded from The Alfred Research Trusts, each to a maximum of \$500,000. I am delighted we attracted such high quality applications, and look forward to hearing the results of these awards made to Professor Peter Cameron in Emergency, Professor Paul Fitzgerald in the Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre, Associate Professor Andrew Davies in Intensive Care and their respective research teams.

Research Performance

In 2010, AMREP's external competitive research revenue increased to almost \$95 million from \$90.9 million in 2009. Of this, half came from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the US National Institutes of Health. The number of publications (refereed journal articles, book chapters and books) rose from 1171 in 2009 to 1463 in 2010. Both research revenue and publication numbers have trebled since AMREP's establishment in 2002.

Competitive Funding Success

AMREP researchers were successful in gaining almost \$44.8 million in new direct NHMRC grant funding commencing in 2011. The major highlight was an unprecedented 57 new Project Grants totalling \$35.3 million, several with budgets well in excess of \$1 million. This level of Project Grant funding placed AMREP fourth highest in Australia for the 2010 funding round. Our early career scientists secured salary awards in a highly competitive environment, with seven new Career Development Fellowships and three Early Career (Postdoctoral) Fellowships, including the highest ranked nationally (awarded to Dr Pamela Davern of Baker IDI).

A further funding highlight announced in March was a \$1.5 million NHMRC Partnership Projects Grant awarded to Professor Sharon Lewin (The Alfred Infectious Diseases Unit and Burnet Institute) to undertake a trial of interactive self-care plans to prevent and manage chronic conditions in people living with HIV. Recently, Professor Lewin was one of a group of seven of the world's best HIV researchers (and the only Australian) to be awarded a \$20 million grant by the US National Institutes of Health to find a cure for HIV.

Australia Day and Queen's Birthday Honours 2011

Several AMREP staff and affiliates were recognised for outstanding contributions to their respective fields in this year's Australia Day and Queen's Birthday Honours. Those honoured were:

- Professor Hatem Salem, Member of the Order of Australia (AM)
- Professor Gregory Snell, Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)
- Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld, Member of the Order of Australia (AM)
- Professor Suzanne Crowe, Member of the Order of Australia (AM)
- Professor Andrew Tonkin, Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)
- Alastair Lucas, Chair of Burnet Institute Board of Directors, Member of the Order of Australia (AM)
- Natasha Stott Despoja, member of Burnet Institute Board of Directors, Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

Health Initiatives

Alfred Health recently achieved membership with the World Health Organization's International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services. This status recognises the health service's achievements to date, as well as its commitment to future health efforts.

Associate Professor Andrew Davies
(Intensive Care Unit) received the
2010 AMREP Research Prize.



Kristan Corben has been appointed as Lead for Population Health and Health Promotion to facilitate the integration of a health promotion philosophy throughout the organisation.

The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon. Mark Butler, opened Baker IDI's Healthy Lifestyle Research Centre in November 2010. The centre, supported by the Commonwealth Government, will develop health programs that will prevent, manage and treat obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Internationally-recognised teams at CSIRO and Baker IDI collaborated to produce *The CSIRO and Baker IDI Diabetes and Lifestyle Plan*, launched in May 2011. The book offers comprehensive plans to support a healthy lifestyle and covers every aspect of diabetes prevention and control. Features include exercise plans to increase physical activity, practical assistance for smart shopping and tips for healthy food choices when eating out, as well as recipes for creating healthy meals.

Promotion of Research at AMREP

The annual Alfred Week Research Poster Display, held each October for many years, showcases research carried out across AMREP. The 2010 display attracted 175 posters and generous prizes were awarded for those posters judged to be the best in their category. Thanks are extended to our prize sponsors, as well as to the many AMREP staff who judged the poster prizes. Details of the winning posters are in the back section of this report.

At the award ceremony, Melbourne Health Executive Director of Research, Professor Ingrid Winship, delivered a stimulating keynote address entitled 'The future of clinical research in Victorian hospitals', and followed by presenting the 2010 AMREP Research Prize to Associate Professor Andrew Davies (Intensive Care Unit, The Alfred). This annual prize is awarded to the AMREP first or senior author whose original research paper was published in the previous year in the journal with the highest impact factor. Dr Davies's article entitled 'Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation for 2009 influenza A (H1N1) acute respiratory distress syndrome' was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (impact factor: 30.718).

AMREP Honours Scholarships

The AMREP Honours Scholarships scheme, implemented three years ago, was devised to attract outstanding Science and Biomedical Science students to undertake their Honours year at AMREP. The scholarship recipients for 2011 were Jodie Abramovitch (Monash Department of Immunology) and Elyse Di Marco (Baker IDI). Photographs of Jodie and Elyse are on page 95 of this report.

Finally, I would like to place on record my thanks to our two very dedicated support teams in the research office and the ethics office, without whom much of what AMREP achieves would not be possible.

The AMREP Council

The AMREP Council has a major governance role in providing the infrastructure and environment in which research at AMREP can flourish.

Members

Andrew Way (Chair)
Alfred Health

Professor Stephen Jane
Alfred Health

Professor Steve Wesselingh
Monash University

Professor Hatem Salem
Monash University

Professor Garry Jennings
Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute

Hilary Bolton
Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute

Professor Brendan Crabb
Burnet Institute

Professor Mark Hogarth
Burnet Institute

Professor Mari Botti
Deakin University

Professor Karen Dodd
La Trobe University

Dr Lee Hamley
Chief Medical Officer, Alfred Health

Associate Professor Sharon Donovan/Janet Weir-Phyland
Chief Nursing Officer, Alfred Health

Professor John McNeil
Chair, The Alfred Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Andrew Giddy
Chair, AMREP Animal Ethics GAP Committee

Professor Mark Cooper
Chair, AMREP Scientific Advisory Committee

In attendance

Heather Gallichio (Secretary)
General Manager, Alfred & Baker IDI Research Office

Bill O'Shea
Alfred Health Corporate Counsel

Geoff McDonald
Director, Capital and Infrastructure, Alfred Health