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Stem cells are the body's own biological repair kit.



Australian Stem Cell Centre

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Media release

New Chair and Board Appointed to Lead Australian Stem Cell Centre

Friday, 8 May 2009, Melbourne Australia:

The Australian Stem Cell Centre (ASCC) today announced the appointment of Professor Graham Macdonald as Chair of the new ASCC Board of Directors and the appointment of Professor Steve Wesselingh as a Director of the new Board.

The ASCC today welcomed the permanent appointment of Professor Graham Macdonald as Chair of the Board of Directors. Professor Macdonald stepped into the position of the Centre's interim independent Executive Chair in September 2008 and, working with the interim Board, guided the Centre through a period of considerable uncertainty. As interim Chair, he has been pivotal in the development of a new strategy for the ASCC, which will consolidate past achievements and enhance Australia's excellence in stem cell research into the future.

Today the ASCC is also pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Steve Wesselingh, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University as a director of the Board. Professor Wesselingh, an infectious diseases physician by training, is highly regarded as a leader in Australian biomedical research, sits on several Boards and was Director of the Macfarlane Burnet Institute in Melbourne before assuming his position at Monash University. "His skills and experience will be invaluable as the ASCC positions itself for its next phase of development" said Professor Macdonald.

Commenting on his own appointment, Professor Macdonald said "I am very pleased to be given the opportunity to continue to lead the Centre with the support of the new Board". He went on to say that "stem cell science is an exciting field of research that Australia, and the ASCC have made a large contribution to and I look forward to building on these successes".

Professors' Macdonald and Wesselingh join Professor Richard Smallwood, Dr Peter Riddles, Dr Graeme Blackman, Professor Brandon Wainwright and Dr Christopher Juttner who were appointed to the Board on 1 April 2009. Interim Board Members Dr Henry De Aizpurua, Head of Business Development from the Howard Florey Institute and Professor Edwina Cornish, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Monash University will remain on the Board for a short period to ensure a smooth transition.

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About the new Board Members

Emeritus Professor Graham Macdonald (Chair)

Professor Macdonald retired in 2007 from his former position as External Licensing Coordinator Merck Sharp & Dohme, Australia. Between 1974 and 1998, Professor Macdonald was an academic nephrologist at the Prince Henry and Prince of Wales Hospitals Clinical School of the University of New South Wales. His research interests centred on the role of the uridine nucleotides in vascular modulation and sodium metabolism. Other significant projects included non-pharmacological control of high blood pressure and interaction of cardiovascular risk factors, psycho-social disorders in patients on dialysis with emphasis on thirst mechanisms, high blood pressure in pregnancy, the role of gut peptides in regulating renal sodium excretion, and normal and disordered regulation of angiotensin II receptors in various disease states.

Professor Steve Wesselingh

Professor Steve Wesselingh is currently Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University. Prior to taking up the Deanship in October of 2007, Professor Wesselingh was Director of the Macfarlane Burnet Institute, Melbourne Victoria. Initially trained as an infectious diseases physician, Professor Wesselingh completed a Ph.D. titled "Response of Astrocytes to Viral Infections". In 1991 he was awarded a NHMRC Neil Hamilton Fairley Fellowship to continue the study of the neuroimmunology of HIV at the Neurovirology Unit in the Department of Neurology, Johns Hopkins University. In 1993 he was appointed to the faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine as Assistant Professor and was co-investigator on a successful National Institutes of Health (NIH) program grant. He returned to Australia in 1994 to set up a Neurovirology Research Unit at Flinders University. In addition he also commenced an innovative program developing oral plant-derived vaccines. This ongoing program is currently developing an oral plant-derived avian flu vaccine for the protection of poultry. From 1994 to 1997 he was on the Board of the Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) and in 1998 he was elected President and was closely involved in working for the doubling of NHMRC funding that occurred in 1999. In January 1999 he was appointed Professor and Director of the Infectious Diseases Unit, The Alfred Hospital, Monash University. In 2002 he was appointed Director of the Burnet Institute.

Emeritus Professor Richard Smallwood AO

Professor Smallwood is Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of Melbourne. As Professor of Medicine within the University of Melbourne, Professor Smallwood was Head of the Department of Medicine, Chairman of the Division of Medicine and Director of Gastroenterology at the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centres. He has published over 250 clinical and scientific papers, primarily in the field of the liver and its diseases. Professor Smallwood was President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians from 1996 to 1998. In addition to his extensive Australian and international clinical and research experience, Professor Smallwood has served as chair of a large number of organisations including the National Health and Medical Research Council, the National Influenza Pandemic Advisory Council, the National Health Information Management Advisory Council, the National Health Priority Action Council, the National Blood Authority and the Ministerial Taskforce for Cancer in Victoria. Professor Smallwood has also been a member of the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council and was seconded to Canberra as Australia's Chief Medical Officer. He also provided consultation and advice on international aspects of health, and in 2000 was a Vice President of the World Health Assembly in Geneva. Professor Smallwood's other current appointments include President of the Australian Medical Council and Chair of its Specialist Education Accreditation Committee, and Member of the Boards of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Vision 2020 Australia, the National Stroke Foundation and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. He was made a Fellow of Trinity College, the University of Melbourne and was also made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1997 for services to medicine.

Dr Peter Riddles

Dr Riddles has extensive experience in biotechnology where he has been a board member of numerous biotechnology companies. Additionally, Dr Riddles has also served on a number of



advisory committees including the Innovation Australia Board, the Queensland Biotechnology Advisory Council and the Industrial Biotechnology Capability Review for Federal Government Advisory Council. Dr Riddles is founder and Director of ViciBio Pty Ltd, an organisation that provides advisory services in policy, governance and strategy to governments, organisations and enterprises involved in science and technology innovation and new venture creation. He is also an honorary life member of AusBiotech, Australia's biotechnology industry organisation. In addition to this extensive biotechnology experience, Dr Riddle's also has extensive research experience where he led major research projects at CSIRO and was appointed an adjunct professor at The University of Queensland.

Dr Graeme Blackman

Dr Blackman is a former Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry at the Victorian College of Pharmacy. He is presently Chairman of IDT Australia Ltd, an ASX listed public company employing over 140 scientists and providing research and development and manufacturing services for the pharmaceutical industry locally and internationally. He has been an active participant in various policy discussions concerning the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry for several years. In particular he has chaired the Commonwealth Government's Pharmaceuticals Industry Action Agenda which developed a policy framework for the industry over a ten year period. He has been or continues to be a member of various Commonwealth and State advisory committees and working groups in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, including the Australian Biotechnology Advisory Council (ABAC), the Pharmaceutical Industry Working Group (PIWG) and the Pharmaceutical Industry Strategy Group (PISG).

Dr Christopher Juttner

Dr Juttner has more than 35 years experience in providing, analysing and developing advanced medical care in haematology, cancer and general clinical medicine. Amongst many achievements, he established the Bone Marrow Transplant program for South Australia at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) and served as Director of Clinical Haematology at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Head of the Division of Haematology at the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science. In addition to his clinical career, Dr.Juttner has extensive biotechnology experience which includes senior management appointments in Australia and the United States. He served as Vice President of Clinical Development at SyStemix Incorporated (USA), then later with Genetic Therapy Incorporated (USA), where he managed clinical development programs. Dr Juttner also served as an independent and later executive director and Senior VP of Clinical Development of BresaGen Ltd, a pioneer Australian stem cell company. Drawing upon this considerable experience, Dr Juttner continues to provide consultancy services to Novartis Australia and Stem Cells Inc (USA).

Professor Brandon Wainwright

Professor Wainwright has an extensive academic record that included appointments at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, The University of London, where he served as a MRC Senior Research Fellow. Upon returning to Australia, Professor Wainwright began an association with The University of Queensland where he is currently Director of the Institute for Molecular Bioscience. His current research focus is the identification of genes responsible for common genetic diseases, in particular cystic fibrosis and basal cell carcinoma of the skin. Professor Wainwright has received a number of awards including the Boehringer Mannheim Medal of the Australian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, the Gottschalk Medal of the Australian Academy of Science and the Fisher Prize, the University of Adelaide. In addition to this appointment, Professor Wainwright has also served as Scientific Director, Co-operative Research Centre for the Discovery of Genes for Common Human Diseases and Research Executive and Chair, Project Grants Committee for the National Health and Medical Research Council. Professor Wainwright also currently serves on the boards of the Australian Genome Research Facility and the Australian Phenomics Facility and is a member of the Health and Medical Research Council of Queensland.

For further information or to arrange an interview, contact:

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The **Australian Stem Cell Centre** is Australia's Biotechnology Centre of Excellence. The ASCC was selected in 2002, in a competitive bid process, as Australia's Biotechnology Centre of Excellence (BCE), to capitalise on Australia's significant strengths in the general field of stem cell research. The Centre provides a unique opportunity for stem cell researchers to deliver outcomes that will benefit the wider Australian biotechnology industry and ultimately contribute innovative solutions to human health challenges. The Centre was established with the financial and in-kind support of institutions ("Stakeholders"). The current voting Members, who retain ultimate oversight of the Centre, are: Monash University, University of Queensland, Howard Florey Institute and University of Adelaide. The additional Stakeholder institutes are: University of Melbourne, Baker IDI, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and Mater Medical Research Institute.

The ASCC is governed by a Board of Directors with independent scientific oversight and support from an eminent Scientific Advisory Board.

Total funding of \$100 million has been awarded to the ASCC by the Australian Government and is administered by the Australian Research Council and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. The funding is provided in instalments from 2002 to 2011. To complement Australian Government funding, the State Government of Victoria's *Science Technology and Innovation* program awarded the Australian Stem Cell Centre a further \$11 million to support some key infrastructure in Victoria.

Together the ASCC and partnering organisations support a critical mass of Australian stem cell research that is internationally competitive. The ASCC currently funds research at leading institutes and universities in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales with the major hubs of activity centred in Victoria and Queensland. By providing stem cell specific funding, the Centre in its first seven years of operation has supported in excess of 200 researchers, more than 70 students in over 30 research projects across Australia.