



# THE CANCER RESEARCH REVOLUTION FORUM

Thursday 29 June 2017



## FORUM OVERVIEW

---

Cancer research is undergoing a revolution with new technologies delivering rapid advances in diagnosis and treatment.

At tonight's forum, Associate Professor Kerrie McDonald, Dr Thomas Cox and Dr Darren Saunders will explain how genomics, imaging and patient-derived models are helping us learn more about cancer. They will outline how these tools are creating a better understanding of tumour biology which will enable more effective use of existing drugs and the development of new therapeutics.

Also speaking is Ben Bravery, a cancer survivor, who was diagnosed with stage three colorectal cancer at the age of 28. Ben is now a medical student and a passionate advocate for patients and their care. He will discuss how oncology education for doctors should change to better treat and support cancer patients.

The discussion moderator is SBS Television journalist Sana Qadar.

The forum has been organised by Pathfinders, a collective-giving group who donate funds to support innovative cancer research projects.

Pathfinders would like to thank Westpac for kindly supporting tonight's event.



# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



## Associate Professor Kerrie McDonald

Chair of the Cure Brain Cancer Neuro-oncology Group  
Lowy Cancer Research Centre, University of NSW

A/Prof McDonald is the Chair of the Cure Brain Cancer Neuro-oncology Group at the Lowy Cancer Research Centre, UNSW. She leads a team of 11 scientists and students focused on two major research challenges: Firstly, to develop new treatments for brain cancer patients using state-of-the-art patient-derived models. Secondly, to develop personalised medicine for brain tumour patients.

The team is investigating how to match the right drug with the right patient to improve overall survival. It is critical to identify and validate new biomarkers that can predict clinical response to avoid unnecessary toxicity in patients that fail to respond to treatment and to better understand drug resistance.



## Dr Darren Saunders

Senior Lecturer and Lab Head, School of Medical Sciences, University of NSW

Dr Saunders is a cancer biologist, science communicator and Senior Lecturer in Medicine at the University of NSW in Sydney.

Dr Saunders' research is focused on proteostasis - the process that regulates proteins within the cell - and metabolic reprogramming in cancer and neurodegeneration, plus developing creative technology-based approaches to visualising and communicating complex data. His work integrates various platforms to better understand genotype-phenotype relationships and he has developed novel platforms for exploring diversity in cell signalling.

Dr Saunders is an active science communicator, making regular radio and TV appearances and contributions to print and online media. He presented the Cancer in the Community education campaign targeting rural/regional Australia and contributed to policy development through the Australia2050 and Future Earth Australia projects.



## Dr Thomas Cox

Group Leader, Matrix and Metastasis,  
Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Dr Cox is a cancer cell biologist who studies the importance of the extracellular matrix (ECM) in the growth and spread of cancers.

Dr Cox graduated with a Ph.D. from the University of Durham in 2008 and moved to the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) in London as a PostDoc. In 2012 he relocated to Copenhagen University to continue his research before moving to the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in 2016 to set up his own group.

Dr Cox currently leads the Matrix and Metastasis Group within The Kinghorn Cancer Centre and the Garvan Institute. The group focuses on how the matrix regulates cancer cell behaviour and how it alters the response to anti-cancer drugs. Their aim is to establish targeting of the matrix in combination with standard-of-care treatment as a viable therapeutic approach in the treatment of solid cancers.



## Ben Bravery

Cancer survivor, science communicator,  
medical student

Ben was diagnosed with stage three colorectal cancer in 2011 at the age of 28. He had been living in Beijing building a science communication business. Overnight, Ben went from researching science and technology because he enjoyed it, to researching it to better understand his disease.

Ben's first job after treatment was as a science communicator with a medical research facility. He then worked at an environmental organisation on a national conservation campaign.

Cancer has given Ben restless feet (not all of which can be attributed to nerve damage from chemotherapy) and he is currently at medical school reinventing himself as a doctor.



## Sana Qadar

Forum Moderator

Sana is a television and radio journalist who for the past decade has lived in Toronto, Washington DC, New Delhi, London, Doha and Beijing and has worked with major broadcasters including the BBC, Al Jazeera English, CTV (Canadian Television) and CRI (China Radio International). She is currently a reporter on SBS Small Business Insights.



## Pathfinders

Pathfinders is a collective-giving group whose members pool their donations to support early-stage cancer research projects. The group's goal is to kick-start research projects by donating seed funding to help a scientist take a concept into the lab to evaluate it and create a research pathway.

Supporters make a monthly \$25 tax-deductible donation to the group's pool account.

Our focus for 2017-2019 is to support cancer researchers at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research.

Pathfinders is authorised to fundraise for the Garvan Research Foundation, the Institute's fundraising arm. All donations to Pathfinders are fully tax-deductible and are processed by Garvan on our behalf.

 [www.pathfindersgroup.com.au](http://www.pathfindersgroup.com.au)



## Garvan Institute of Medical Research

The Garvan Institute of Medical Research was founded in 1963. Initially a research department of St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, it is now one of Australia's largest medical research institutions with more than 700 scientists, students and support staff. Garvan's mission is to make significant contributions to medical research that will change the directions of science and medicine and have major impacts on human health.

Garvan strives to enhance and develop research programs that combine fundamental science with strong clinical interactions.

 [www.garvan.org.au](http://www.garvan.org.au)

## UNSW Lowy Cancer Research Centre

The Centre is a cross-disciplinary team whose work spans the laboratory sciences, clinical practice and health policy. It is one of the largest dedicated cancer research centres in the Southern Hemisphere and the first in Australia to bring adult and childhood cancer research under one roof.

 [lowycancerresearchcentre.unsw.edu.au](http://lowycancerresearchcentre.unsw.edu.au)

## School of Medical Sciences, UNSW

The School is a place of work for over 200 staff, more than 100 higher degree research students, and many thousands of undergraduate students in over 90 separate courses. It features excellent facilities for research and teaching and is involved in projects ranging from molecular and cell biology to neuroscience.

 [medalsciences.med.unsw.edu.au](http://medalsciences.med.unsw.edu.au)

# EVENT SUPPORTERS



## 200 years proudly supporting Australia

Westpac is Australia's first bank with a range of innovative financial packages to support your personal, business or corporate banking needs.

 [www.westpac.com.au](http://www.westpac.com.au)



True Pictures is a digital content creative company specialising in financial markets and the non-profit sector.

 [www.truepictures.com.au](http://www.truepictures.com.au)



## NEXT EVENT

### When East Meets West (September)

Seven out of ten Australians take some form of vitamin or supplement daily. Many of us seek out alternative therapies and treatments to conventional medicine.

But are these complementary therapies and products safe? Is there scientific proof that they work as promised?

Our expert panel will discuss the potential, the promise and the current challenges associated with complementary approaches and explain how they compare with conventional medicine.

## STAY IN TOUCH

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter via our website: [www.pathfindersgroup.com.au](http://www.pathfindersgroup.com.au).

Like us on facebook to see the event photos:

 [facebook.com/pathfinderssydney](https://facebook.com/pathfinderssydney)

If you would like to learn more about what we do, please contact us:

 [www.pathfindersgroup.com.au](http://www.pathfindersgroup.com.au).

 [info@pathfindersgroup.com.au](mailto:info@pathfindersgroup.com.au)