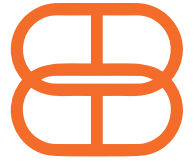


Thanks to you...

Spring 2023



Burnet
reach for the many



An update on what your support
is achieving in Papua New Guinea
and Myanmar

[DONATE NOW](#)

Message from the CEO

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE MEETING IN PERSON IS THERE?

Welcome to your new look Thanks to You newsletter. Yes, we've updated our visual identity, but our vision remains unchanged, our research priorities are ongoing, and our gratitude to our supporters remains constant. We could not continue our critical work without you.

In this edition of the newsletter you will find updates on some of the work you are helping to make possible, as well as messages of thanks directly from the scientists whose research you are supporting.

When COVID-19 first appeared in Australia we paused in-person Burnet events. However, after hearing from so many of you via our mini-survey in the last edition of this newsletter, it was clear that there is a great appetite out there to begin in-person events again. So, throughout July that's exactly what we did.

We had a total of three in-person events:

- an update from the senior leaders of our in-country programs in Papua New Guinea and Myanmar;
- a lecture by the winner of the prestigious Alastair Lucas Prize for Medical Research;
- and the presentation of the donor supported staff awards.

You can read about all these events (and watch a video of the presentations) in this newsletter.

This is an exciting 'return to form' for me as I've always enjoyed the opportunity to meet with our supporters and have a chat.

Having said that, another thing to come out of the survey was that many of you are unable to attend events in person. For that reason we will always strive to create hybrid events, accessible to everyone, whether you're joining us in-person, online, or simply watching the recording we send out after.

As always, I'm pleased to have this opportunity to thank you for your incredible support and look forward to meeting with you (perhaps in-person) in the future.



Professor Brendan Crabb AC
Director and CEO





Your gifts in action

AN UPDATE ON BURNET PROGRAMS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND MYANMAR

In July 2023, a delegation of Burnet staff members from our Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Myanmar offices visited Burnet in Melbourne. This provided a rare opportunity for our supporters to hear directly about specific health challenges faced in each country, updates on Burnet in-country programs made possible by your support, and future plans.

Dr Kudakwashe Chani, Burnet Institute's PNG Country Director, reported that maternal, child and adolescent morbidity and mortality in PNG, whilst still dangerously high, is in fact declining. This is a fantastic testament to the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB) program our donors have supported for many years, along with other programs across PNG. He said that HMHB had gained significant knowledge and evidence about the causes of poor maternal and child health, identified gaps in health care and designed new strategies to improve health care access and coverage. There is a long way to go, but it is incredible to hear about some of the key achievements that have been made thanks to donor support.

Dr Phone Myint Win, Burnet Institute's Myanmar Country Representative, shared details of programs being run in monastic schools throughout Myanmar, including **Healthy Mind, Healthy Future which aims to improve adolescent mental health, as well as sexual and reproductive health. He also highlighted the specific challenges in Myanmar, including a fragile public health system, supply shortage, and public distrust of leadership following the coup in 2021.**

This was our first in-person donor event since COVID-19 hit, and it was fantastic to see people on-site in the Burnet offices again. If you couldn't be there, please enjoy the presentations by scanning the QR code below.

Scan the QR code
to watch the full
presentation.



Your gifts in action

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE

Below: Dr Michelle Scoullar. Inset: the late Dora Lush.



“

I am absolutely thrilled to receive this Dora Lush award. It makes a huge difference to what I'm able to consider when it comes to sharing my research at conferences or undertaking professional development. I'd like to say a huge thank you to the family of Dora Lush who have continued to enable this award, and have increased it in recent years, it makes the world of difference!"

**DR MICHELLE
SCOULLAR**

DONOR FUNDED STAFF AWARDS

Fostering a talented workforce creates the next generation of research leaders. Thanks to your support that's precisely what we've been able to do through the Burnet Staff Awards 2023.

Fellowships, prizes and travel grants play a big part in shaping researchers. They provide an important opportunity to attend overseas conferences, expand their research, receive mentorship, maintain their career while being a primary care giver, develop networks, strengthen their CVs, form collaborations, enhance technical skills, and importantly help establish research careers.

Special thanks to the below donors, trusts, foundations and estates who supported the Burnet Staff Awards in 2023.

- **Dora Lush Academic Excellence Award.** Supported by Dr Margaret Lush and family and named in memory of Dora Lush who worked with Sir Macfarlane Burnet (see story following). **2023 winner: Dr Michelle Scoullar.**
- **The Miller Foundation Public Health & The Miller Foundation Biomedical Research.** The Miller Foundation is a very generous and long-term supporter of Burnet Institute. **2023 winners: Jenny Cao, Emily Adamson, Dr Katherine O'Flaherty and Dr Liriye Kurtovic.**
- **Geoffrey Stewardson Travel Grant.** Thanks to Geoffrey Stewardson for his ongoing support of this travel fellowship for researchers working in the area of HIV. **2023 winner: Sarah Amir Hamzah.**
- **The Hon Geoffrey Connard Travel Fellowship.** This award is supported by the estate of The Hon. Geoffrey Connard, a politician and Burnet's first chairman. We acknowledge his foresight and generosity in leaving provision for this grant in his Will. **2023 winners: Annie McDougall and Clarissa Moreira.**
- **Pauline Speedy Biomedical Research Fellowship.** With thanks to Jenny Tatchell for her ongoing support of this fellowship in memory of her late partner. **2023 winner: Dulcie Lautu.**
- **Harold Mitchell Foundation Postgraduate & Postdoctoral Travel Fellowship.** Harold Mitchell has supported Burnet Institute for many years and is a passionate advocate and supporter of medical research. **2023 winners: Ellen Kearney and Dr Michael Curtis.**
- **Margaret Harrison Parental Leave Grant.** Very special thanks to Margaret Harrison for her ongoing support. **2023 winner: Stephanie Levy.**

DORA LUSH AND HER LEGACY

Dora Lush was two months shy of her 33rd birthday in May 1943 when she died after a needle-stick injury. That makes 2023 the 80th anniversary of her death, and Burnet is pleased to take this opportunity to acknowledge Dora Lush's scientific excellence, and her ongoing legacy at Burnet Institute.

In a time when women were expected to resign when they married, Dora dedicated her life to a career in science. She worked for a time in London, in the midst of the WWII air-raids, working on the influenza virus, and later alongside Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet (Mac Burnet) in a small team examining viruses and the human immune system.

While conducting experiments on the deadly scrub typhus infection in 1943, Dora accidentally pricked her finger with an infected needle. Scrub typhus was a serious health risk to Australian soldiers engaged in jungle warfare in Papua New Guinea during World War II. Within a week she had symptoms of the disease – fever, headache, rash. She died a few weeks later, and sadly, it was discovered soon after that scrub typhus could be treated with antibiotics.

Margaret Lush, Dora's niece, and her family fund an annual academic excellence award at Burnet Institute in the name of Dora Lush, a woman who lived and ultimately died for science.

Scan the QR code to watch the Burnet Staff Awards Presentation.



Your gifts in action

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE

Clockwise from top left: the late Dr Alastair Lucas AO, Dr Lindi Masson receives her prize from Professor Brendan Crabb AC, Professor Joshua Vogel



Scan the QR code to watch
Dr Lindi Masson accept the
Alastair Lucas Prize for
Research Excellence





Left: Dulcie Lautu, winner of the Pauline Speedy Biomedical Research Fellowship.

THE ALASTAIR LUCAS PRIZE FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Alastair Lucas AO was a long-serving Board Director and Chair of Burnet Institute and a tireless advocate for medical research in Australia. This prize, established thanks to donor contributions, in memory of Alastair Lucas, celebrates research excellence and supports career development for one very deserving Burnet researcher every two years. **2023 winner: Dr Lindi Masson.**

The prize will support Dr Masson's research focused on the vaginal microbiome and its association with increased risk of HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and adverse reproductive health outcomes more generally. It will give her the opportunity to build her research program in Australia and South Africa.

"I'd like to thank and acknowledge the women who participate in our studies. Nothing that we do could be done without their generosity and giving their time to take part in our work."

THE GUST-MCKENZIE MEDAL

Named in honour of founding directors of the Burnet and Austin Research Institutes, Professor Ian Gust AO and Emeritus Professor Ian McKenzie AM, the Gust-McKenzie Medal is presented annually to an outstanding mid-career Burnet staff member in recognition of excellence in research and/or public health. **2023 winner: Professor Joshua Vogel.**

THE CROCKETT MURPHY AWARD

Established in 2014 to honour the contributions of former staff members Dr Sue Crockett and Clare Murphy, open to support Burnet staff outside Australia. Both Sue and Clare were really cherished members of the Burnet family. This award is specifically to support Burnet staff not in Australia. **2023 winners: Dr Win Htike in Myanmar, and Ruth Bala in PNG.**



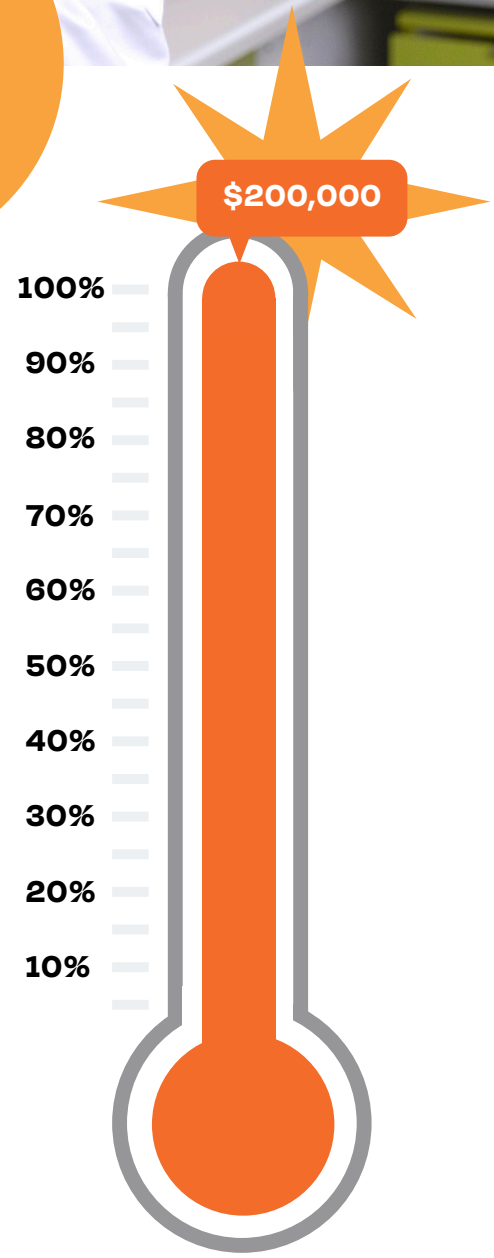
Your gifts in action
**ONE STEP CLOSER TO A
UNIVERSAL COVID VACCINE**

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our mid-year appeal raising funds in support of development of the ground-breaking Burnet-engineered universal COVID vaccine.

Our goal was to raise \$200,000 to support validation studies, and we are thrilled to say that we reached that goal, which is fantastic – thank you very much.

“Thanks to everyone for their incredibly generous support,” said Dr Andy Pournourios. “I can now get cracking in the lab on validation studies. Just last week we met with our collaborators to design and plan the next set of experiments. That means that your donations have turned into actual hands-on research in the lab in literally weeks! Your support really is transforming our research here at Burnet, and for that I thank you all.”

Validation studies on the Burnet-engineered universal COVID vaccine candidate will take three to four months, and we aim to be finished by the end of 2023.



Donor Profile

INSPIRED TO GIVE

Previous page: Dr Andy Poubourios
Below: Dr Jerry Koliha and Ms Marlene Krelle



A special thanks also to Dr Jerry Koliha and Ms Marlene Krelle, who threw their support behind the appeal, and agreed to match all gifts up to \$10,000.

Matched giving lets you, our supporters, know that others are standing alongside you in support of a project. It also adds value to your own gift, by making it go twice as far and have twice the impact.

"Marlene and I are thrilled to have been involved," said Jerry. "And we'd like to thank all the other supporters of Burnet who came on board alongside us to get the next phase of Andy's research underway."

A universal COVID vaccine has the power to not only ease the burden of COVID on families here in Australia, but also has the potential to change the face of COVID vaccination in low- and middle-income countries around the world.



Donor Profile

HEATHER PHIDDIAN: 'A MOST GENEROUS LASTING LEGACY'

Above: Heather Phiddian; Heather in Cohuna where she established a kindergarten; Heather with Jane, her god-daughter

Heather Phiddian was a private, unassuming person with a curious, outwards looking nature. A stickler for proper behaviour and good manners, she was also friendly, warm and gregarious with those she loved and cared for. She spent her early years training to be a mothercraft nurse and worked with families all over Victoria and New South Wales caring for their children.

But then, in July 1958, at the age of 27, as Heather herself put it: "disaster struck".

She contracted polio whilst working in a crèche in Footscray. She was hospitalised at Fairfield Hospital, the institution that was the forerunner of Burnet Institute.

These were tough and worrying times. Heather threw herself into her rehab with determination – she eventually regained 35 per cent use of her right hand and became quite proficient with her left. The polio affected her back, neck and legs, but Heather always considered herself lucky. She used to regularly visit friends she had made during her recuperation who had survived the iron lungs and were wheelchair bound.

Heather went on to live a full and varied life. Her list of 'loves' is long and broad: she loved dogs, a party, dressing up, the Berwick Show, tennis, the outdoors, caravanning, the performing arts, writing poetry, gardening, golf, choir, and volunteering.

In later life Heather chose to quietly and generously support a range of selected charities, especially those focussed on medical research. After giving to Burnet every year for more than a decade, Heather also set up a charitable trust in her Will, leaving the annual income to five of her favourite charities – with Burnet being one of them.

"Heather was quite an amazing lady despite her trials and tribulations," said Jane Leahy, Heather's god-daughter. "She has left a most generous lasting legacy in more ways than one. As her god-daughter I was privileged to have her in my life and I'm now happy to see her wishes come to fruition."

Here at Burnet, we are incredibly grateful to Heather for her support during her lifetime, and for the very generous legacy left after her death.



**INCLUDE
A CHARITY**

Events

INCLUDE A CHARITY WEEK 4 - 10 SEPTEMBER

**RESEARCH SHOWS AT LEAST
A THIRD OF AUSTRALIANS ARE
CONSIDERING LEAVING A GIFT
IN THEIR WILL BUT HAVE NOT
YET GOT AROUND TO DOING SO.
ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?**

A philanthropic gift in your Will can be for any amount, large or small, or can be a percentage of your estate, or whatever is left after your friends and family have been taken care of. Any gift you feel able to leave will have a huge impact.

Include a Charity is a campaign of Fundraising Institute Australia. Their goal is to encourage more people in Australia to expand the impact they have on society by leaving a gift in their Will to their favourite charity or charities.

**For more information or to discuss the
impact your gift can have, please contact:**

Penny Burke,
Planned Giving Manager
m: 0429 461 661
e: penny.burke@burnet.edu.au

“

Philanthropic gifts in Wills play a vital role here at Burnet. Without them we simply could not achieve what we do.”

**MARY PADBURY,
BURNET CHAIR**



WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 'RESEARCH ACTION PARTNERS'

“

A very special thanks this month goes out to every single one of our very generous Research Action Partners who give a regular gift every month. Here at Burnet we work month-by-month towards our broader goal of a healthier world, so it's great to know our Research Action Partners are beside us every step of the way.”

PROFESSOR BRENDAN CRABB AC

FIONA ATHERSMITH, RESEARCH ACTION PARTNER SINCE 2011

“Being a Research Action Partner is important to me. Every month when I make my contribution, it reminds me of how grateful I am to be in a position where I can help improve life for others who are living in far less privileged circumstances.”

LIBANO DIAS, RESEARCH ACTION PARTNER SINCE 2016

“I have always possessed a keen interest in medical research. It's one of the reasons why I support Burnet and the important and impressive work they do. I believe a monthly commitment can better assist Burnet to continue their amazing ongoing work.”

MARGERY NASH, RESEARCH ACTION PARTNER SINCE 2015

“When I found out about the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies program being run in Papua New Guinea by Burnet, it spoke to me. I thought of all the young women in PNG expecting babies, wanting just what young mothers here want – a healthy baby. I've been donating every month ever since.”

If you would like more information about becoming one of our Research Action Partners, please contact:

Phone: + 61 3 9282 2111

Email: giving@burnet.edu.au

Web: donate.burnet.edu.au

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OVERSEAS

We have offices or representatives in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Myanmar, and also contribute to activities in other Asian, Pacific and African countries.

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