QUEENSLAND IMMUNOLOGY RESEARCH CENTRE

Queensland Immunology Networking Symposium

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, 7-8 October 2026

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER

10:00am-10:10am	Welcome
KEYNOTE 10:10am-10:40am	**Prof Shalin Naik - Walter and Eliza Hall Institute** Next Generation DC1 Immunotherapy for the Treatment of Solid Cancers
SESSION 1 10:40am-12:10pm	**Immune Regulation Across Tissues** *Chairs: Prof Sumaira Hasnain & Ms Jiahui Zhang* *Sponsored by Miltenyi Biotec*
10:40am-10:55am	**A/Prof Gareth Walker - University of Queensland & QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute** *The Biopsy and Beyond: Mapping Mucosal Immunity in Ulcerative Colitis*
10:55am-11:10am	**Prof Nigel McMillan – Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, Griffith University** *Delivery of Nucleic Acid Therapies to the Immune System. Current State and Future Opportunities.*
11:10am-11:25am	**Dr Adaeze Ekwe – Queensland University of Technology** *Preserving Ocular Privilege: Mapping Stromal Cell-State Transitions During Ex vivo Expansion*
11:25am-11:40am	**A/Prof Mariusz Skwarczynski - School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences, University of Queensland** *Antigen-Adjuvant Discovery, Delivery, and Distribution*
11:40am-12:10pm	Questions and Discussion
12:10pm-1:10pm	*Lunch*
1:10pm-1:20pm	**QIRC Presentation**
SESSION 2 1:10pm-3:05pm	**Infection, Vaccines & Emerging Pathogens** *Chairs: Prof Matt Sweet & Dr James Curson* *Sponsored by Pfizer Australia*
1:20pm-1:35pm	**A/Prof Benn Sartorius – Frazer Institute, University of Queensland** *From Ecology to Immunity: Mapping Japanese Encephalitis Risk and Vaccination Priorities in Australia*
1:35pm-1:50pm	**Dr Wilson Nguyen – QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute** *Defining the Neuropathology of Emerging Orthobunyaviruses*
1:50pm-2:05pm	**Dr Ariel Isaacs - School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences, University of Queensland** *Broad Spectrum Vaccines and Therapeutics for Zoonotic Bat-Borne Viruses*
2:05pm-2:20pm	**Dr Natalee Newton – School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences, University of Queensland** *Ancestral Orthoflavivirus Vaccines for Broad Protection Against Multiple Encephalitic Orthoflaviviruses*
2:20pm-2:35pm	**A/Prof Danielle Stanisic - Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, Griffith University** *A Whole Organism Vaccine Platform to Target Parasites of Medical and Veterinary Importance*
2:35pm-3:05pm	Questions and Discussion
3:05pm-3:35pm	*Afternoon Tea*

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WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER (CONTINUED)

PANEL DISCUSSION 3:35pm-4:45pm	**Invisible Science, Essential Impact: Telling the Immunology Story** *How can researchers improve public and government understanding of immunology while maintaining trust, nuance and scientific credibility?* *Moderator: Prof Kirsty Short - School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences* *Panel:* **Prof Shalin Naik -** Walter and Eliza Hall Institute **Prof Alex Loukas** - Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine, James Cook University **Prof John Hooper** - Mater Research Institute **Dr Nancy Cloake -** QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
4:45pm-4:50pm	Day 1 Close
5:00pm-6:15pm	***Networking Event*** *Pig 'N' Whistle South Bank (3/133 Grey St, South Brisbane QLD 4101)* Australian and New Zealand Society for Immunology Inc. *Sponsored by ASI QLD Branch*
6:15pm-9:00pm	***Symposium Dinner*** *Balmoral Room, Pig 'N' Whistle South Bank (3/133 Grey St, South Brisbane QLD 4101)*

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THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER

10:00am-10:05am	Welcome
SESSION 3 **10:05am-12:00pm**	**Immunometabolism, Neuroinflammation & Cell Fate** *Chairs: Prof Katharina Ronacher & Dr Huiyang Yu* *Sponsored by Millennium Science and 10x Genomics*
10:05am-10:20am	**A/Prof Katharine Irvine – Mater Research Institute** *Adoptive Transfer of Wild-Type Bone Marrow Cells Mitigates Age-Dependent Neuropathology in Microglia-Deficient Mice*
10:20am-10:35am	**Dr Harindra Sathkumara - Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine, James Cook University** *Mucosal rBCG Drives Safe and Effective Immunity Against TB in Immunocompromised Hosts*
10:35am-10:50am	**Prof Marc Ruitenberg – Mater Research Institute** *Inflammatory Signatures and Host Factors Driving Recovery from Spinal Cord Injury*
10:50am-11:05am	**Dr Julie Wixey - Frazer Institute, University of Queensland** *Exploring Mechanisms of Brain Injury and Treatment Options in Fetal Growth Restriction*
11:05am-11:20am	**Dr James Curson - Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland** *Leveraging Immunometabolism for Anti-Infective and Anti-Inflammatory Design*
11:20am-11:50am	Questions and Discussion
11:50am-12:00pm	**Travel Award Presentation**
12:00pm-1:00pm	*Lunch*
SESSION 4 **1:00pm-2:45pm**	**Immunotherapy & Precision Medicine** *Chairs: A/Prof Simon Foster & Soi Cheng Law* *Sponsored by United Bioresearch*
1:00pm-1:15pm	**Dr Dharmesh Bhuva - Frazer Institute, University of Queensland** *Computational Models to Study the Tumour Immune Microenvironment in NSCLC*
1:15pm-1:30pm	**Dr Paulo Martins - QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute** *Allogeneic EphA3-CAR T Cell Therapy*
1:30pm-1:45pm	**A/Prof Sonia Henriques - Queensland University of Technology** *Defense Peptides to Fight Drug Resistance*
1:45pm-2:00pm	**Dr Kylie Alexander - Mater Research Institute** *Glucocorticoids as Regulators of Heterotopic Ossification Following Spinal Cord Injury*
2:00pm-2:15pm	**Dr Melissa Reichelt - School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Queensland** *The Heart as an Unintended Target of Anti-HER2 Antibody-Mediated ADCC*
2:15pm-2:45pm	Questions and Discussion
2:45pm-3:15pm	*Afternoon Tea*

QUEENSLAND IMMUNOLOGY RESEARCH CENTRE

THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER (CONTINUED)

SESSION 5
3:15pm-5:00pm

Barrier Immunity, Microbiome & Mucosal Systems

Chairs: Dr Amanda Oliver & Mr Connor Mchugh

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3:15pm-3:30pm	**Prof Alex Loukas – Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine, James Cook University** *From Worms to Drugs: Harnessing Hookworm Immunology to Treat Inflammatory Disease*
3:30pm-3:45pm	**Dr Edwige Roy – Frazer Institute, University of Queensland** *Transcriptional Rewiring of the Skin Exposed to Chronic Ultraviolet Radiation is Maintained During Progression to Skin Cancer*
3:45pm-4:00pm	**A/Prof Elise Pelzer – Queensland University of Technology** *More Than Genes: The Microbial Legacy of Pregnancy*
4:00pm-4:15pm	**Dr Manasa Mellacheruvu - Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland** *Molecular Mechanisms for NLRP3 Inflammasome Localisation and Activation*
4:15pm-4:45pm	Questions and Discussion
4:45pm-5:00pm	Close Meeting

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

PROF GABRIELLE BELZ FI-UQ
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PANEL DISCUSSION

Invisible Science, Essential Impact: Telling the Immunology Story

How can researchers improve public and government understanding of immunology while maintaining trust, nuance and scientific credibility?

PANEL:

PROF SHALIN H. NAIK

Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI)

Professor Naik is a graduate of the University of QLD, did his PhD at WEHI, and his postdoc at the Netherlands Cancer Institute. Since 2014, Prof Naik has been a Laboratory Head in the Immunology Division where his lab creates novel technologies and applies these using single cell and clonal systems biology. Prof Naik has made major contributions to haematopoiesis, immunology and cancer using these approaches. This has in turn led to several translational endeavours including next-generation Dendritic Cell Immunotherapy, and the correction of blood and immune disorders through stem cell editing and engineering. He is also an occasional TV and podcast host.

PROF ALEX LOUKAS

Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine, James Cook University

Professor Alex Loukas is a NHMRC Level 3 Leadership Fellow and Director of the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine at James Cook University in Cairns, QLD. He obtained his BSc and PhD from University of Queensland, and has held positions at the University of Edinburgh, George Washington University, and Queensland Institute of Medical Research before moving to JCU in 2010. Loukas' research interests focus on the molecular basis of host-parasite interactions and exploiting that knowledge to develop anti-helminth subunit vaccines, diagnostics and next-generation anti-inflammatory biologics. Loukas is co-founder of Macrobiome Therapeutics, a start-up biotech company developing helminth-derived protein therapeutics to treat inflammatory diseases. His work is funded by national and international government grants, philanthropy, venture capital and pharmaceutical companies. Loukas has received numerous awards, prizes and international fellowships for his research, including a Fulbright senior scholarship at University of California Irvine.

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PANEL DISCUSSION CONTINUED

PANEL CONTINUED:

PROF JOHN HOOPER

Mater Research Institute – The University of Queensland

Professor John Hooper leads the Cancer Biology Lab at Mater Research Institute, The University of Queensland, where his team is investigating better ways to detect and treat a range of cancers. His team is developing new agents for fluorescence-guided surgery, PET/CT imaging, antibody-drug conjugates and theranostic agents. One of the PET/CT imaging agents developed by his lab is currently being tested for safety and tumour/normal biodistribution in clinical trials in ovarian, bladder, breast and pancreatic cancer patients.

DR NANCY CLOAKE

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute

Dr Nancy Cloake is responsible for coordinating QIMR Berghofer's Consumer and Community Involvement Program called *Better Health Together*, which sees community members and people with lived experience of illness or chronic conditions partner with the our scientists to influence, shape and co-deliver research projects. She supports both researchers and members of our community at all stages of the research cycle, ensuring involvement is meaningful for all.

Nancy's PhD focused on novel treatments for Multiple Sclerosis. Since leaving the bench she has held roles in communicating research, inspiring curiosity in science within the community and attracting support for research innovation.

MODERATOR:

PROF KIRSTY SHORT

The University of Queensland

Prof. Kirsty Short is based at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia where her research focuses on pandemic preparedness for influenza viruses and coronaviruses. Her research includes understanding how viruses spill over from animals into humans, who is most at risk when they do, and how we build the diagnostics, therapeutics, and policy frameworks to respond before the next pandemic gains momentum.

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