

## **NEWSLETTER: Issue 4**

### **Sept 2004**

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### **NSW Stem Cell Network goes National**

With support from the Australian Stem Cell Centre (previously the National Stem Cell Centre) over the next year, Prof Bernie Tuch and Dr Daniella Goldberg co-convenors of the NSW Stem Cell Network will play a pivotal role in establishing the Australian Stem Cell Network (ASCN).

"The plan is to build on the NSW model to create an Australian Stem Cell Network" says Prof Tuch, Director of the ASCN. It will be done on a step by step basis,". Dr Goldberg, the ASCN co-ordinator, and I will be consulting with the key players in each state to assist them in building up a stem cell network suited to their needs. It is recognised that each state will have their own stem cell vision and so there will be scope to be an independent Network as well as part of a larger national Network. "The ultimate goal is create a national Network with semi-autonomous branches, especially in Qld, Vic, SA and WA" says Tuch.

Dr Hugh Niall, CEO of the ASCC, who has been instrumental in this national initiative writes, "the ASCN will aim is to create a strong stem cell community in Australia that is internationally competitive and ready to respond to the challenges of a rapidly developing scientific, legal, ethical and social environment." It may also provide an opportunity to collaborate with other international Stem Cell Networks such as in Canada , Scotland and Europe .

### **General Practitioner Stem Cell Seminar**

The first in a series of stem cell seminars for General Practitioners will be held Tues Sept 28<sup>th</sup> at the Crowne Plaza in Coogee. Sponsored by Biotechnology Australia as part of their initiative to inform the public about biotechnology, this seminar will inform GP's about the latest science and the terminology for stem cells. Prof Bernie Tuch from the Diabetes Transplant Unit and Ms Tamra Lysaught from the Centre for Values Ethics and Law in Medicine, University of Sydney are speaking at this evening seminar. It is co-jointly presented by the NSW Stem Cell Network and the South Eastern Division of General Practitioners, specifically for GP's in that division. Prof Tuch, NSW Stem Cell Network convenor says "the plan over the next year is to present this seminar to many GP divisions in NSW".

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**Register for 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual ASCC National Conference and AH&MR Congress**

The Second Annual ASCC Meeting will be held in Sydney , Mon-Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2004 in conjunction with the Australian Health and Medical Research Congress 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2004.

The topics are adult and embryonic stem cells covering many diseases including diabetes, heart disease and blood disorders as well as the latest advances in stem cell technology. International invited speakers include the outspoken Prof Irv Weissman from Stamford University , USA the world 's first scientist to isolate blood forming stem cells in humans and Prof Silviu Itescu from Columbia University USA , well known for stem cells and heart disease.

Senator Natasha Stott Despoja, a strong advocate for stem cell research in Australia will open the meeting. The ASCC is sponsoring 3 major Symposia on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the Congress and has organized Workshops, free communications and poster sessions including poster prizes. For more details on the ASCC meeting and the Congress go to: [www.ahmrccongress.org.au](http://www.ahmrccongress.org.au) or see the attached [ASCC program](#)

## **Team effort brings in 1 million dollars for stem cell research**

The NSW Ministry for Science and Medical Research has awarded a team of leading Sydney researchers \$1 million over 4 years last month. This project grant is part of the \$5.4 million recently awarded by the NSW Government to Australian researchers working in spinal cord injuries and neurological conditions.

The team led by University of NSW Prof Phil Waite is aimed at developing stem cell therapy particularly in the area of spinal cord injury and neurological disorders. The DTU will provide the embryonic stem cells. "This research is at the cutting edge of international research in animal models for cord repair" said Prof Waite

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## **Book Review: A Passion for Life**

Paul Brock is an inspiring man who was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease, a degenerative muscle disease, less than 10 years ago. In September 2004, ABC books published his life story entitled 'A Passion for Life', now available in ABC Book shops.

The autobiography covers everything from his life in a ministry his professional years in public education and politics, his devotion to his family loving wife Jaquie, and of course his outspoken advocacy for stem cell research.

Confined to a wheelchair, Paul presented his experiences at a NSW Stem Cell Workshop in 2003 bringing many of the audience to tears. In 2002, he presented his case for stem cells to the Senate together with others and soon after this led to a bill being passed that would contribute to the advancement of stem cell research in this country.

Further information about Paul Brock's inspiring autobiography download [pdf flyer](#).

## **Events for the Diary**

**22-24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2004:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual NSCC National Conference, Darling Harbour , Sydney  
[www.nscce.edu.au](http://www.nscce.edu.au)

**25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2004:** Society of Reproductive Biology Symposium, Darling Harbour , Sydney [SRB Program](#)

**21<sup>st</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2004:** Australian Health and Medical Research Congress, Sydney  
[www.asnevents.net.au/congress/](http://www.asnevents.net.au/congress/)

**9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Nov 2004,** 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Bioethics, University of NSW  
[www.bioethicsworldcongress.com](http://www.bioethicsworldcongress.com)

**12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Nov** Australasian Bioethics Association 10<sup>th</sup> Conference, University NSW  
[www.australasian-bioethics.org.au/conference/index.html](http://www.australasian-bioethics.org.au/conference/index.html)

**16<sup>th</sup> March 2005** Hypothetical: “Stem Cells - Mean Business”, UNSW, presented by the NSW Stem Cell Network (TBC)