



An eventful year

Milestones, the Safari and research, research, research



Australian Rotary Health Research Fund (ARHRF) Immediate Past Chairman John Ranieri accepts life membership of the ARHRF from current Chairman Ian Oliver.

I don't believe it's an exaggeration to report that last year was an "eventful" year for the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund.

We celebrated the Centenary of Rotary as well as our own 25th anniversary. The Rotary Health Safari completed its epic journey around Australia raising community awareness about mental illness and the role of the ARHRF. Due to

strong support from sponsors and the general public the Safari not only covered its costs but made a small profit! (A full report from the Safari can be obtained from our website www.arhrf.org.au)

The ARHRF Board also agreed to allocate \$A2.2 million to research grants by the end of 2006, a 46 per cent increase on the \$1.5 million in grants awarded in 2005.

In summary, in 2006:

- Seventeen new mental health projects have grants totalling \$753,424.
- Seven existing mental health projects have second or third grants totalling \$302,105.
- Eleven researchers undertaking graduate or postdoctoral studies have been awarded scholarships totalling \$364,000.
- This includes four new Ian Scott Fellowships (*see the students' profiles on the next page*).
- The Royce Abbey Fellowship was awarded to Dr David Hawes from the University of New South Wales.
- The inaugural Geoffrey Betts Postdoctoral Fellowship was awarded to Dr Melanie Porter from Macquarie University (*articles on these two researchers also follow*).
- Seven research projects and 13 PhD scholarships will share \$572,269 in grants through the Funding Partners program.
- This includes four new research projects and four new PhD scholarships.

The Funding Partners program is a partnership between Rotary clubs, districts or universities and the ARHRF to

fund research outside the Fund's current research focus area of mental health. Research has been sponsored in areas as diverse as rheumatoid arthritis, ovarian cancer, motor neurone disease and malaria.

This year students from the Universities of Western Australia, Melbourne, Sydney, Tasmania, Wollongong and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research will all complete their PhD studies thanks to grants from this program. (*A full list of clubs and Districts involved can be seen at www.arhrf.org.au.*)

The Indigenous Health Scholarships program is now in its fourth year. Seventy-seven students have been involved in the program, with 30 already graduating. Sixty scholarships are expected to be awarded in 2006.

Our Bowlescan and Community Awareness Forums on mental illness programs also continue to grow.

Finally, I'd like to mention that this year's ARHRF Medal to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the ARHRF was awarded to Phil Francis from the Rotary Club of Balwyn in Victoria for his work on the AFL's *Toss the Coin* competition. Another person who has made an outstanding contribution to the ARHRF is John Ranieri, chairman of the ARHRF for the past two years. Thank you, Phil and John.

Ian Oliver
Chairman

ARHRF Funding Partner program NEW SCHOLARSHIP FOR MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE RESEARCH

The Australian Rotary Health Research Fund, with the Rotary Club of Bendigo South in Victoria has launched a three-year PhD research scholarship to find causes and cures for Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

The scholarship is named in honour of Margaret Roberts from Bendigo, who was national president of Inner Wheel in 1992-1993 and recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow with the Rotary Club of Bendigo South. She endured MND for three years before her passing in 2005.

The \$A25,000 a year funding for the scholarship is made up

of \$10,000 from the sponsoring club, \$9,000 from the university where the study takes place and \$6,000 from the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund which administers the project.

The scholarship has been awarded to Adam Walker at the University of Melbourne.

Donations to the scholarship fund are tax deductible and can be sent to the Rotary Club of Bendigo South, Post Office Box 345, Bendigo Vic. 3552. Please make the donations payable to the ARHRF's Margaret Roberts MND Scholarship.