

Melanoma Masterclass celebrates Australian luminaries who have transformed melanoma treatment worldwide

The extraordinary contribution of Australia's most distinguished clinicians and researchers in the field of melanoma is being celebrated today at a symposium hosted by Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA).

More than 350 clinicians and researchers have gathered at *The Ultimate Melanoma Masterclass* in Sydney to learn from the luminaries as well as hear a comprehensive review on the latest advances in research and clinical management of melanoma.

Professors John Thompson AO, Richard Kefford AM, Stan McCarthy AO, Peter Hersey and Roger Uren have transformed the diagnosis, treatment and management of melanoma during their long and remarkable careers.

"Their lifetime of achievements are truly remarkable and we are excited that they will share their wisdom at today's event," said MIA Conjoint Medical Director Professor Richard Scolyer.

MIA Conjoint Medical Director Professor Georgina Long added, "Through their collective brilliance, they have not only cared for and changed the lives of many thousands of patients but they have also changed the way melanoma patients are managed worldwide."

Individually and collectively, the five have made key discoveries and transformed global melanoma patient care, including the development of therapies, procedures and diagnostic tests that have become clinical practice worldwide, introducing novel treatments in patients with advanced melanoma and exploring targeted treatments and new immunotherapies.

In addition to hearing from the luminaries, renowned surgical oncologist from the MD Anderson Cancer Center in the US, Professor Jeffrey Gershenwald, is also presenting at the symposium on the future of melanoma prognosis and staging.

The other speakers at the event, all MIA clinicians/researchers, will round out the program presenting on a range of topics including the causes, prevention and diagnosis of melanoma as well as giving promising updates on the latest treatments for early and advanced melanoma.

"Through this symposium, we are bringing together the country's best melanoma specialists to collaborate and share knowledge. This truly is the ultimate masterclass in melanoma," Professors Scolyer and Long added.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS, CONTACT:

Jennifer Durante - Head of Communications - Melanoma Institute Australia

M: 0412 798 990 E: jennifer.durante@melanoma.org.au

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Melanoma

- In 2009, the 1-year survival rate for patients with Stage IV melanoma was only 30 per cent. With advances in medical research, today we are seeing survival rates of up to 75 per cent.

- Australia has one of the highest incidences of melanoma in the world and melanoma is often referred to as “Australia’s national cancer”.
- Almost 14,000 Australians are expected to be diagnosed with melanoma each year and more than 1,800 Australians are expected to die from melanoma.
- One Australian dies from melanoma every five hours.
- While 90 per cent of people with melanoma are able to be cured by having the primary melanoma cancer removed through surgery, the cancer spreads in the other 10 per cent because it is detected too late.

Melanoma Institute Australia

- Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA) pioneers advances in melanoma research and treatment that are making a difference to the lives of patients today.
- MIA is a non-profit organisation dedicated to preventing and curing melanoma through innovative, world-class research, treatment and education programs.
- MIA is a national affiliated network of melanoma researchers and clinicians based in Sydney at The Poche Centre – the world’s largest melanoma research and treatment facility. It is from here that our specialists pioneer new research, conduct clinical trials, develop new treatments and promote awareness of melanoma and where our clinics treat melanoma patients.

The Celebrated Luminaries

- **Professor John Thompson AO** has long been a world leader in melanoma research. He pioneered the novel technique of isolated limb infusion with cytotoxic agents for melanoma, a simpler, less costly form of treatment than conventional isolated limb perfusion, but one that is equally effective. A former liver transplant surgeon, Professor Thompson is the author of more than 700 peer-reviewed articles. He stepped down as Executive Director of MIA in 2016 after 18 years in the position and plans to retire from clinical work at the end of this year.
- **Professor Richard Kefford AM’s** research has played a seminal role in revealing the genetics of melanoma. He has authored more than 300 journal publications, chapters and books. He has been an investigator on more than 50 clinical trials including many that explore new immunotherapies to modify the actions of the immune system. He was named [Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year](#) in the 2017 Cancer Institute NSW Premier Awards. Professor Kefford is winding down his clinical work although he will continue his research projects for a few more years.
- Nuclear medicine physician **Professor Roger Uren** is renowned for the development of lymphatic mapping in the management of patients with melanoma. His pioneering use of lymphoscintigraphy shed important new light on lymphatic drainage pathways and was adopted worldwide. He recently retired from clinical practice.
- **Professor Peter Hersey** is recognised as a pioneer of immunotherapy for melanoma in Australia and in focusing on properties of melanoma cells that make them resistant to therapies. He has authored over 340 peer reviewed publications on melanoma and has been involved in conduct of over 50 clinical trials in melanoma. He has finished up clinical practice but continues to conduct research in the twilight of his career.
- Known as the “guru” of pathology in Australia, **Professor Stan McCarthy AO** has dedicated more than 50 years to the public health system as a senior staff specialist and histopathologist, firstly at Sydney Hospital and later at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. He is considered a world authority on melanoma pathology and although he retired in January 2018, he will continue to lend his considerable expertise to difficult cases into the future.