

Dear Researchers and Colleagues,

Introduction

Letter from the Centre for Brain and Mental Health Research (CBMHR), comes from the Centre Directors of this Priority Research Centre. Brian Kelly and I would like to extend a belated warm welcome to all new and current CBMHR members. As with all UoN PRCs, resolving CBMHR finances has been a slow arduous process (see *Breaking News* below). Nevertheless, your Executive and Directors have been busy working away since January, planning for the rest of year so that once the monetary situation was sorted we could hit the ground running.

With the dedicated help of the PRC's new administrator, Angela Hawke, we have managed to clear all the hurdles that were required, including establishing Cost Centres and organising account transfers, etc. etc. etc.. As a result of Federal Government changes to funding new rules and regulations had to be sorted before any money could be distributed to the PRCs. So now we can get down to business, which is to foster interdisciplinary co-operation between broad ranging research groups within this unique umbrella organisation called the CBMHR.

A Change in the Office

Speaking of Administrators, we were sorry to say goodbye to the Centre's long-serving (and long-suffering) 'Chief Fixer', Annalese Johnson. Annalese was with the PRC (in all its various guises) since inception, 11 years ago. Annalese had an innate navigational sense of how to reach an outcome despite the formidable bureaucratic obstacles in the way of progress. Brian and I and the rest of the Executive would like to take this opportunity to publically thank Annalese for her dedicated service to the PRC. Without Annalese's guiding hand we would not be here today.

Luckily for us, we were able to attract another high quality individual to fill Annalese's role. Angela Hawke joined the PRC at the beginning 2017, and has been learning the ropes from Annalese, who has agreed to assist us when things get bureaucratically arcane. Angela comes to us from the School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy where she is a fully paid-up member of the Pharmacy profession, and still serves as an occasional Associate Lecturer. But Angela has a varied background that has allowed her to fit seamlessly into the demanding part time role. With an undergraduate degree in Biomedical Sciences, and experience as a Clinical Data Manager and Trials Co-ordinator, she has a broad understanding of science and research from the bench-top to bedside to public policy. In addition, having been associated with UoN for over 20 years, she has many years' experience dealing with UoN administration. I hope you will join us in welcoming Angela to the PRC, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to call her.



Breaking News

So let's start with very recent news. As of last week we can say that we have now received funding from nearly all our sources of financial support. This support comes from: Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation); Faculty of Health and Medicine; Faculty of Science and Information Technology; and Hunter Medical Research Institute (through the NSW Medical Research Support Program - MRSP). We very much appreciate your patience regarding CBMHR funding, especially since we are almost half way through the year before the first CBMHR initiatives could be rolled out. But as mentioned above, the circumstances were well beyond the control of the CBMHR.

Announcements

Also mentioned above, behind the scenes, the Executive Committee and the Early Career Research Committee have been busy preparing for the day when we could access the accounts so that we can instigate the Centre's overall objectives. As a result, last week we were able to announce travel funds for CBMHR particularly aimed at our junior members, with little or no access to alternative funding sources. Similarly, we will be announcing an equipment/infrastructure round shortly, particularly targeted at supporting cross-disciplinary collaborations, with junior researchers in mind.

The Early Career Research Committee has taken responsibility for organising two public forums in 2017, and a post-graduate conference day in November. So far, we have one Public Forum organised for the evening August 31st. The invited speaker is Ben Newell. He is Professor of Cognitive Psychology and Deputy Head of the School of Psychology at the University of New South Wales. Professor Newell's research generally investigates how people

make decisions based on risky or uncertain information. He does this across a range of contexts from laboratory studies through to how people make decisions on climate change, superannuation investments, and choices regarding medical treatment. This should be a fascinating evening, and we hope to have hold it in *New Space*, downtown. Our thanks go to the ECR committee for their continued hard work. We should mention that Michelle Kelly has stepped down from the Committee and recent recruit, Guy Hawkins, has joined the Committee. We thank Michelle for her efforts and welcome Guy to the ECR Committee.

Your representatives

As reminder, here are the eight-member **Executive:**

Directors



Professor Alan Brichta
Director (Basic Science)



Professor Brian Kelly
Director (Clinical Science)

Deputy Directors

The three CBMHR Hubs and Hub Leaders are:

1. *Mental Health* –



Professor Sally Chan



Associate Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin

2. *Psychological Processes* –



Professor Scott Brown



Associate Professor Juanita Todd

3. *Preclinical Neurobiology* –



Associate Professor Brett Graham



Associate Professor Doug Smith

ECR Committee

Members of your ECR Committee are Dr. Agatha Conrad, Dr. Sally Hunt, Dr. Jiann Yeoh and Dr. Guy Hawkins and are listed on the CBMHR website:

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/cbmr/early-career-researchers>

If you have any questions, feedback, or achievements and successes you would like to share, we would love to hear from you so please do not hesitate to contact your representatives or Centre Administrator, Angela Hawke.

Once again we thank you for selecting CBMHR as your preferred PRC, and we look forward to working with you and your research group in the months and years to come.

Best wishes for the rest of 2017.

Alan Brichta
Director (Basic Science)

Brian Kelly
Director (Clinical Science)