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## Special edition – Highlights of Spark of Genius

With much generosity and support, 400 guests, 80 volunteers and 40 Genii, Spark of Genius raised \$240,000 for schizophrenia research.

## Key Role in Global Genetics Study

The Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank has played a key role in a global study that investigated genetic variants associated with schizophrenia.



The study replicated findings from previous genetic research and made new discoveries.

This is the Bank's first contribution to an international study, which involved over 51,000 individuals, and marks an important step, as one of the new genetic discoveries may be implicated in contributing to particular brain abnormalities in schizophrenia. When cases of bipolar disorder were added to the study sample some genetic findings indicated shared genetic susceptibility for both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

The study by the Schizophrenia Psychiatric Genome-Wide Association Study Consortium used blood samples from a large number of international projects, including the Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank, and is published in Nature Genetics. The findings identified five genomic loci that

are newly associated with schizophrenia and confirmed two genomic loci previously identified in schizophrenia.

"Our involvement in this global replication study is a first for the Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank, and one that marks the beginning of a more extensive contribution to the international research community," said Prof. Vaughan Carr, CEO of the Schizophrenia Research Institute.

The Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank was established to provide researchers with a unique set of data including blood samples, brain scans and clinical information to further research into schizophrenia within Australia and across the world.

"As the Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank continues to grow, the scientists and clinicians at the Schizophrenia Research Institute, along with our colleagues and affiliates in other institutes and organisations across the globe, are realising the significance of having access to such a valuable resource as this." Prof. Carr said.

# CEO's Report

The Institute's gala ball, Spark of Genius brought together a multitude of supporters for the Institute, with generous contributions from our Genii, all of those that supported the event, and of course everyone who attended on the night to raise money for the Institute.

Thank you to Helen Connealy, Sharne Nicholls and all the team from the Institute for their amazing work pulling together this event and raising \$240,000 towards Prof. Cyndi Shannon Weickert's work at the Schizophrenia Research Laboratory.

At the Institute we take a three levelled approach to our research – at the population level, at the individual human level and thirdly at the microscopic level. Cyndi's work focuses at this microscopic level,

concerned with molecules and cells and neurobiological processes that are important for schizophrenia.

With the very generous assistance of Macquarie Group Foundation and NSW Health, the Institute was able to bring Cyndi on board in 2006 and establish the Schizophrenia Research Laboratory to unravel some of the mysteries of the neurobiology of this condition, laying the foundations for more effective treatments and ways of preventing it.

Our work at the Institute has also contributed to an international study that involved over 50,000 people taking part, including almost 1000 through the Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank and our partners at the University of Queensland.



Prof. Vaughan Carr, Chief Executive Officer

The study replicated findings from previous genetic research and made new discoveries. A number of our scientists are now looking at whether these findings can be related to clinical subtypes, risk factors and changes in brain structure in schizophrenia.

## Thank You to FSC

Thank you to the Financial Services Council for the outstanding fundraising contribution from the annual conference in August, totalling over \$182,000 donated to the Schizophrenia Research Institute.

The Financial Services Council represents Australia's retail and wholesale funds management businesses, superannuation funds, life insurers and financial advisory networks.



## Christmas Card Fundraising

It's almost that time of year again! Order your personalised Christmas Cards now and 40c from each card will go to the Schizophrenia Research Institute. Order online by 26 November and you will receive a 5% discount.

[www.christmascards4charity.com.au/sri](http://www.christmascards4charity.com.au/sri)





# Spark of GENIUS

The Institute's signature gala black tie event, 'Spark of Genius' was held on 9 September at Sydney Town Hall to support Prof. Cyndi Shannon Weickert's work at the Schizophrenia Research Laboratory\*.

Master of Ceremonies Gretel Killeen was thrilled to see so many people coming together in support of the illness, "With some contributing their minds, some contributing their dollars and some contributing their time," she said.

Each of the 40 tables of guests were hosted by a Genius, all leaders in their fields ranging from the Arts, Media, Sports, Politics, Entertainment, Corporate and Academia.

Journalist Kerry O'Brien, actors Robyn Nevin and Barry Otto, author Thomas

Keneally, retired High Court Judge The Hon. Michael Kirby, the guys from The Chaser, writer Anne Deveson, and NRL legend Nathan Hindmarsh were just some of the Genii at the event.

The Institute thanks all of our Genii, our Principal Supporter Macquarie Group Foundation and major sponsors, The Ainsworth Family, Brookfield Multiplex, City of Sydney, Etihad, KPMG, Mulyan Wines, the Northside Group – Ramsay Health Care and Schweizer Kobras. Thanks to the event supporters, donors

and everyone that joined us on the night for an evening of fun and fundraising.

To find out about all the Spark of Genius Genii, visit [www.schizophreniaresearch.org.au](http://www.schizophreniaresearch.org.au)

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\*The Schizophrenia Research Laboratory is a joint initiative of the Schizophrenia Research Institute, University of NSW, Neuroscience Research Australia, and the Macquarie Group Foundation. It is supported by NSW Health.

"If we can understand the cellular and molecular basis of this condition then we may be able to find more effective treatments and ways of preventing it."

Prof. Vaughan Carr, CEO  
Schizophrenia Research Institute



Andrew Hansen and Chris Taylor from The Chaser



Ben O'Donoghue arriving with wife De-Arne



“Sometimes I felt like I was in a ship that was sinking and I was trying to hang on to my three children without letting them fall overboard. It was at times very frightening, but it has changed.”

– Anne Deveson, mother.



Prof. Cyndi Shannon Weickert with MC Gretel Killeen

“The real reason that we are here tonight is for people that are in need, people with schizophrenia. And you are making an investment in them.”

– Prof. Cyndi Shannon Weickert, Macquarie Group Foundation Chair of Schizophrenia Research



Anne Deveson, author and mother



Author Thomas Keneally and actress Robyn Nevin



The Chaser's Andrew Hansen and journalist Kerry O'Brien

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# Thank you to all our Spark of Genius Supporters

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