



## Media Release

### New Chair of Board for Schizophrenia Research Institute

**Tuesday 8 February 2011-** Chris McDiven AM has been appointed as the new Chair of the board of the Schizophrenia Research Institute. Ms McDiven will use her knowledge and experience in business, politics and education, along with her commitment to schizophrenia research to support the Institute's strategy to discover the ways to prevent and cure schizophrenia.

On Australia Day 2011 Ms McDiven was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the Liberal Party of Australia, and to the community through women's and education organisations.

"The Institute is unique in its collaborative approach, ensuring the best minds in schizophrenia research are working together to improve treatments and in time prevent this lifelong incurable illness. "We need the support of government, corporate Australia and the generosity of individuals to help fund our research," said Ms McDiven.

Chris McDiven is a former Company Director and manages a family property and investment trust. She was Federal President of the Liberal Party of Australia from 2005 until 2008, the first woman to hold this position in the Party's 60 year history. Immediately prior to her election she served for nearly 5 years as the State President of the Party's NSW Division. Additionally she has served on the Boards of various community organisations including the Association of Independent Schools (NSW), International Women's Democrat Union and the Keep Australia Beautiful Council.

Ms McDiven joined the Board of the Schizophrenia Research Institute in 2009. She replaces Peter Maher, Macquarie Group who has served as Chairman since 2006. Mr Maher will remain on the board.

For further information about the work of the Schizophrenia Research Institute visit [www.schizophreniaresearch.org.au](http://www.schizophreniaresearch.org.au).

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**For more information call: Helen Connealy, Schizophrenia Research Institute – 02 9295 8692**

## **About the Schizophrenia Research Institute**

The Schizophrenia Research Institute is the only national medical research institute solely dedicated to discovering the ways to prevent and cure schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a brain disorder that will affect one in one hundred young people in Australia. It robs them of a normal future - an education, career and future relationships and is a major contributor to youth suicide.

Established in 1996 as Australia's first virtual medical research Institute, the organisation conducts and supports schizophrenia research in hospitals, universities and research institutes across the country and internationally. As well as having two professorial chairs in schizophrenia research and cutting edge genetic research, The Institute has three major research projects which are bringing us closer to the causes of this chronic mental illness.

The Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank - the largest ever national brain research project in schizophrenia, collecting wide-ranging data on patients with schizophrenia and controls for use in research programs.

Hormone Modulator Clinical Drug Trial – conducted by Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert, Macquarie Group Foundation Chair of Schizophrenia Research and Dr Tom Weickert

Schizophrenia Library – a world first, free, one stop online shop for all evidence-based research on schizophrenia.

The Institute is NHMRC accredited and is funded by government grants (NSW Health & NHMRC), corporate and private donations. A registered charity throughout Australia, further donations can be given at [www.schizophreniaresearch.org.au](http://www.schizophreniaresearch.org.au) or by phoning (02) 9295 8688.

## **About Schizophrenia**

- One in one hundred young Australians will develop schizophrenia each year.
- 30 percent attempt suicide.
- Schizophrenia is the third leading cause of disability in young people.
- Schizophrenia is a loss of reality, with symptoms of delusions, hallucinations, social withdrawal and decline in memory and cognitive ability
- 85 percent of those diagnosed are on a pension with the total cost to the community at over \$2billion per annum.
- Schizophrenia can arise in any family.
- There is no cure and improved treatments are urgently needed.