

## **New Australian-led malaria research powerhouse gears up to hunt down malaria across the Asia-Pacific**

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Australia will take a leadership role in the Asia-Pacific region in a new initiative to help our nearest neighbours rid the scourge of malaria, in a new National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Centre for Research Excellence in Malaria Elimination.

Announced today by the Federal Health Minister, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, the Centre will accelerate new drugs to treat malaria and train the next generation of experts in Australia and overseas.

The \$2.5 million Centre, based at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, will include researchers from the Darwin-based, Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies).

The centre will bring together existing research groups across Australia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Indonesia and elsewhere, which are already providing high-level advice to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Health Organisation, NIH and the Wellcome Trust.

Head of Menzies' Global Health division, Professor Nick Anstey, said malaria affects more than 200 million people worldwide.

"This is a critical moment in research on malaria: nearly half the world's population is at risk of infection, and more than 70 per cent of malaria deaths are of children aged under five.

"All the countries in our region have committed to eliminating malaria by 2030, and this centre will be developing the tools, tests and treatments we need to achieve this goal, with a focus on ideas that can be quickly tested where they are needed the most."

Menzies' Professor Ric Price, a chief investigator in the Centre, said priorities would include developing better tests and drugs, and understanding more about drug resistant parasites.

"A major challenge in malaria is that we don't have good information about who has it, because the existing tests are cumbersome and expensive, so one priority is to develop simple, accurate tests that can be used in villages," Prof Price said.

"In Southeast Asia, our frontline antimalarial drugs are losing their effectiveness, with devastating consequences for local people, especially children under five, travellers, and armed forces personnel."

University of Melbourne Professor Stephen Rogerson at the Doherty Institute – who will lead the centre and is one of the 10 chief investigators, said the announcement of the Centre was critical to tackling the challenges of disease elimination.

"The Centre will bring together many of Australia's leading malaria researchers, as well as industry partners such as CSIRO, and train up a new generation of experts here and

overseas in disease elimination, whose skills will be transferable to other challenges, like HIV, tuberculosis, Zika virus and influenza,” Prof Rogerson said.

## Chief investigators

Professor Stephen Rogerson  
[Professor Ric Price](#)  
Professor Julie Simpson  
[Professor Nick Anstey](#)  
Dr James Beeson  
Professor Archie Clements  
Associate Professor Freya Fowkes  
Professor James McCarthy  
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Professor Ivo Mueller

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Burnet Institute | University of Melbourne  
Australian National University  
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QIMR Berghofer  
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## Associate investigators

Associate Professor Alyssa Barry  
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[Dr Sarah Auburn](#)  
Dr Timothy William  
Dr Zaw Lin

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Burnet Institute  
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WEHI | Burnet | PNG Institute of Medical Research  
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## Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies School of Health Research is Australia’s leading medical research institute dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. We have a 30 year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Indigenous communities across northern and central Australia. We collaborate to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.