

# 3 Research/Research Training

## THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE, DENTISTRY AND

Health Sciences is Australia's leading – and largest – medical research faculty. Our strength is reflected not only in our ranking, but also in the breadth of our expertise and endeavour. We support a broad spectrum of activity, from basic biomedical science through to clinical and epidemiological research and have a long history of achievement in tackling some of society's most important health and social challenges.

Despite an increasingly challenging environment, it is an exciting time to be involved in health and medical research in Australia. The \$20 billion Medical Research Future Fund and recent changes to NHMRC funding programs provide us with a potentially transformative opportunity to bolster our research, innovation and impact. Greater collaboration between departments and disciplines will become increasingly important as we expand our research emphasis to include more patient-focused and commercial outcomes.

Over the next five years, we will take steps to ensure that we enhance our position as a world leader in cutting-edge research. We will drive research excellence across the Faculty through a comprehensive research performance framework and strategic investments in carefully selected areas of research. We will support our researchers across all levels by providing more targeted training and mentoring programs to develop the next generation of leaders, and we will ensure our higher degree research students are provided with a learning environment that enables them to succeed.



**Dr Stefan Bode**  
Head of the  
Decision  
Neuroscience  
Laboratory,  
Melbourne School of  
Psychological Sciences

“Solving society's biggest health problems will require great collaboration between departments, faculties of the university and our partners.”

Pictured with PhD candidate Katharina Voigt. The Decision Neuroscience Laboratory aims to investigate the cognitive and neural basis of decision-making from an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating methods from experimental psychology, cognitive and behavioural neuroscience, public health and economics.

## WE WILL . . .

### 3.1 Deliver a major boost to our research performance through the development of a new strategy that reflects the strength and breadth of research across the Faculty and its six Schools.

This will include:

- Developing a Research Investment Strategy to strengthen our investments in the four research pillars of cancer, child health, neuroscience, immunity and infection, but also in areas of specialised excellence (such as cardiovascular and mental health), and areas of societal or government priority (such as ageing, family violence)
- Developing, in consultation with our partners, comprehensive strategies for the Commonwealth's new Medical Research Future Fund and reworked National Health and Medical Research Council grant schemes
- Developing a research equipment and platform strategy with a focus on implementation of a 'fee-for-service' approach to ensure access to modern infrastructure in a cost-effective manner
- Implementing a comprehensive research performance framework with transparent and objective expectations that are followed through

### 3.2 Ensure that the University of Melbourne continues to be the leading place for health and biomedical researchers, with a reputation for nurturing talent and supporting a motivated and engaged workforce.

This will include:

- Expanding the mentorship program, with an expectation that all staff actively seek opportunities to mentor and be mentored
- Developing a formal Researcher Training Strategy
- Establishing the Dean's Fellowship to support early career researchers and higher degree research students to undertake an independent 'proof-of-concept' project in an area of their own devising
- Working with the proposed 'Kafka Committee' to reduce, where possible, the level of administrative burden and red tape for researchers
- Developing a new agenda to support women researchers to make the transition from postdoctoral fellows to laboratory heads

### 3.3 Be, with our partners, at the forefront of the changing nature of health and biomedical research practice, and advocate that major infrastructure investments in the Precinct facilitate new, more productive research practices.

This will include:

- Strengthening collaboration and research translation with our partners in the Precinct
- Developing a major data and health informatics agenda
- Identifying new opportunities to bring differing disciplines together around health problems