About QIMR Berghofer

Established in 1945, the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Brisbane, is one of the largest medical research institutes in Australia, with scientists working across cancer, infectious diseases and mental health and complex disorders.

QIMR Berghofer houses more than 50 laboratories and its own 40-bed clinical trials facility – QPharm.

The Institute’s 500 researchers and 120 students work collaboratively towards new diagnostic, prevention and treatment strategies. They perform world class research with much success, and are committed to improving health worldwide.

QIMR Berghofer’s priorities are to:
- Translate findings into diagnostic and treatment tools;
- Collaborate with researchers, locally and internationally, to improve health outcomes; and
- Support and develop staff and provide funding stability for scientists.

The Institute has three state-of-the-art buildings in the heart of the Herston Health Precinct. QIMR Berghofer is on the same campus as Queensland’s largest teaching hospital – the Royal Brisbane and Women’s – and is a partner in the new Herston Imaging Research Facility. It is also near the University of Queensland Medical School and the Queensland University of Technology.

QIMR Berghofer’s research programs

- **Cancer**

  One-in-two Australian men and one-in-three Australian women will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85. For this reason, more than half of QIMR Berghofer’s research is dedicated to understanding how and why different types of cancers develop, including skin, brain, bowel and breast, and to find better ways to prevent, detect and treat them.

  The QIMR Berghofer cancer program played a key role in isolating the active ingredient in radium weed, to develop a topical gel to treat sunspots. This product is now on the market in Australia and the US.

- **Infectious diseases**

  QIMR Berghofer was initially established to help tackle infectious diseases affecting Queenslanders. In the years since, the institute’s Infectious Diseases Program has broadened its focus to major global problems including mosquito-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue virus, ebola, HIV/AIDS and scabies. In particular, the program concentrates on vaccine development.

  QIMR Berghofer is also a key player in the Australian Infectious Diseases Research Centre, which brings scientists together to support research, and the Queensland Tropical Health Alliance, which focuses on reducing the burden of tropical diseases.
The international clinical trials underway at QIMR Berghofer are positioning Australia as a global hub for research, accelerating the development of new medicines for malaria.

- **Mental health and complex disorders**

  The QIMR Berghofer Mental Health and Complex Disorders Program researches burdensome diseases, from depression, schizophrenia and dementia to asthma, endometriosis and liver disease.

  QIMR Berghofer uses brain imaging, computational modelling, epidemiological studies and gene sequencing technologies to provide unprecedented insight into the biology of cells, animals and humans and the genetic basis for a number of conditions.

  The wide-ranging program includes research into diagnostic tests for depression, bipolar disorder, dementia and schizophrenia, as well as Australia’s largest study of asthma genetics.

  New molecular techniques have enabled QIMR Berghofer to perform the vital, groundbreaking research – Anorexia Nervosa Genetics Initiative (ANGI) – into locating genes that may be associated with anorexia nervosa. This international research, of which QIMR Berghofer represents the Australian arm, is currently in the recruitment phase, aiming to enlist 13,000 participants worldwide, 2,200 of whom will be Australian.

  The program also works to improve public awareness and understanding of mental illness. QIMR Berghofer is a partner in the Queensland Mental Health Research Alliance.

**QIMR Berghofer history**

Founded in 1945, QIMR Berghofer was the brainchild of Dr Edward Derrick, an early Director of the Queensland State Health Department Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology.

Dr Derrick’s work on infectious diseases prevalent in Queensland, made him aware of the need for an institute devoted to full-time research in this field.

In the decades since, QIMR Berghofer has grown steadily to embrace cancer research and mental health and complex disorders, with more than 600 scientists, students and support staff housed in three, state-of-the-art buildings.

This year (2015), QIMR Berghofer celebrates its 70th anniversary, marking seven decades of research into improving the health and quality of life of people worldwide.

**Clive Berghofer**

In August 2012, Townoomba businessman, Clive Berghofer AM, donated $50.1 million to QIMR Berghofer, making him one of Australia’s most generous philanthropists, having previously donated more than $10 million. As a sign of gratitude, and in recognition of Mr Berghofer’s long history of support, the Queensland Institute of Medical Research changed its name to the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute.

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**References**