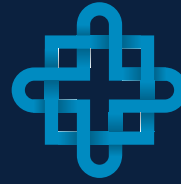




The Stimulus

Official Newsletter of the
New Zealand Brain Research
Institute

Summer 2015 Edition

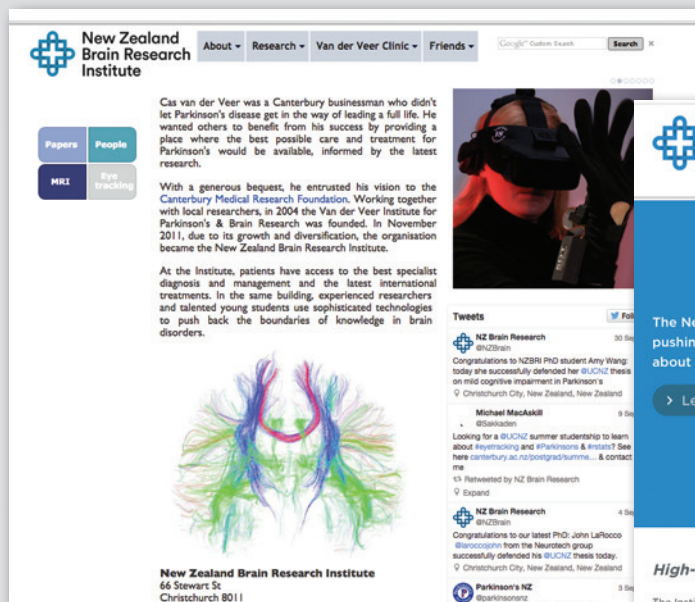


New Zealand
Brain Research
Institute

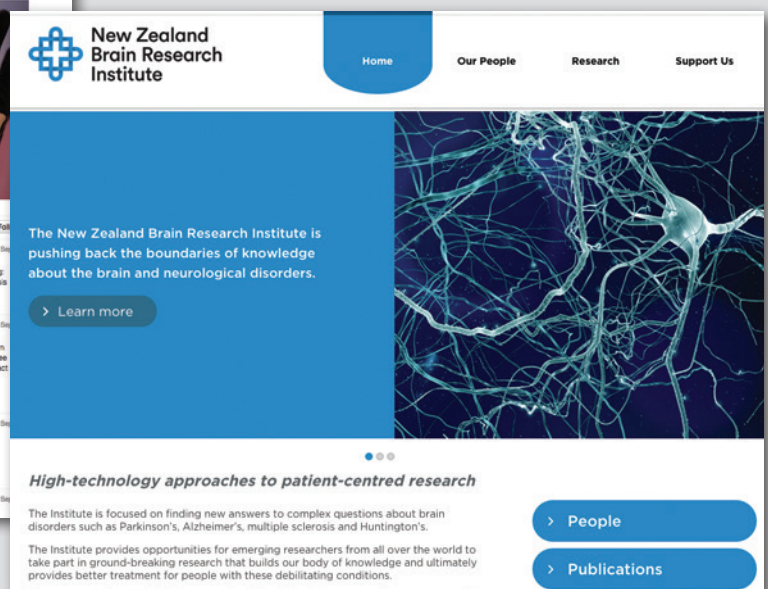
New NZBRI Website launched

Thanks to our friends at Activate Web Design, we now have a brand spanning new website which is crammed full of interesting information for those interested in supporting research into the brain.

We've gone from this:



to this



The new website brings NZBRI into line with the new branding that occurred across the Canterbury Medical Research Foundation group early in 2015.

The new site gives donors the ability to give online and will be a great place to search articles, link in with what the FBI (Friends of the Brain Research Institute) are doing and keep up with latest research news.

Our newsletters and Annual Reports will be available for download and we will list any upcoming events you can join us for.

We are always interested for our website (and for this newsletter) to hear YOUR stories. It might be why you choose to make NZBRI your chosen charity, or you might be a patient living with a neurological condition, with wisdom and experience to pass on to others. Don't be shy! Send us your article for inclusion on the website and in The Stimulus!

Please visit us at www.nzbri.org today. We are 100% reliant on the community and our charity/ research partners to help us keep our Institute going. Your donation will help us to ensure that this vital research into Neurological conditions that affect the lives of so many New Zealanders, keeps going.

Researcher Profile - Krysta Callander



I was always a curious kid growing up and eventually, I learned that it was possible to have a career solving puzzles about why people do what they do and decided this would be the best career for me! I loved learning about what makes us who we are and my first introduction to research was when I had to decide between pursuing clinical psychology or research psychology. The key difference described to me between research and clinical work, was that it helps people in the future, leaving a legacy of information or knowledge, whereas clinical work helps people in the here and now by applying what we already know. I quickly discovered that research was my passion, and that with the right project, I could be a researcher helping us understand people, but still be helping people each day, which seemed like a win-win situation!

I completed a double degree in History and Biochemistry at the University of Canterbury. In my first year I took psychology classes and decided that this was a fascinating subject. I then transferred to the University of Otago in

my second year to focus on the neuroscience side of psychology and completed my BSc (Hons) in psychology and entered the clinical psychology training in my honours year. I applied for entry in the PhD program at the University of Melbourne in Australia and found out I was accepted with a scholarship two weeks before I was due to move over! I am 3.5 years into my PhD exploring the psychological and neurobiological mechanisms of chronic tinnitus. Currently, I am back in Christchurch while I write up my PhD thesis and I am working part-time at the NZBRI.

At the NZBRI I am in the Parkinson's Research Team. I do some of the neuropsychological assessments with these people where they do some puzzles and tasks that tell us about how people are thinking and processing information. We also find out about their experiences of PD and how it might be affecting their day-to-day living. This information goes into a database where the team of researchers are able to look at how people are doing, cognitively. I'm hoping to take some of the skills I've learned in my PhD studies and apply them to help us understand different aspects of PD through my work here.

I want to establish a research career in Christchurch as I see so much potential here for world class research that has the added benefit of engagement with the community with benefits for people being involved. I think this is quite unique to New Zealand that we can be more integrated with our community and take research out of the 'ivory tower' as it really is a team effort! I hope to bring back some of the skills I have learned in Melbourne, around neuroimaging and keep applying these to health research, particularly chronic health conditions such as Parkinson's Disease and sound/hearing sensitivities. I am passionate about exploring the links between our experience of the world, the psychosocial impact of these experiences, and the neurobiology which underpins all of this.

Applying these questions to health research is what grounds these lofty questions to practical applications – if we know what makes us tick, or perhaps more importantly what is stopping us reaching our full potential, then we can look to improve treatments which target these mechanisms. I am also really passionate about making science and research accessible, from raising awareness of the impact of health conditions and what research is trying to achieve, to helping people through what we learn. I hope that communicating science is somewhere in my future as well.

What's happening with the FBI?

The Friends of the Brain Institute (FBI) meet once a month to discuss and plan our fundraising activities. One of the joys of being a member of a volunteer fundraising committee is that you have an opportunity to meet others from extraordinary walks of life. It is also a chance to observe and learn how other people think. Confucius said, "When we see men of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves". This, in truth, is a revealing and enlightening experience. I've learnt it is a dangerous thing to make assumptions about people. Sometimes the most left field, brilliant ideas come from quarters you would least expect. I'll let you in on a secret, one of those left field, brilliant fundraising ideas is now on the drawing board for some time in the future. We're hoping to surprise you so keep a close watch.

Last year the FBI welcomed the arrival of two new members to our Committee, Caroline Wagteveld McKenzie and Fay Keeling. Caroline is the Fundraising Manager for both CMRF and the NZBRI. This blessing of new people brings to our team vital "fresh air". Unexpectedly novel ideas cause pause for thought and challenge our individual notions. Just like good wine, it can take time for blending to occur, but when we achieve alchemy – magic! And what a magical year we have had with our fundraising.

Professor Ivan Donaldson's entertaining book "The Truant from Medicine" continues to sell well, with proceeds being donated to The New Zealand Brain Research Institute to help support research into neurological disorders. The book is a great read and highly recommended.

Gabrielle Tasman, a one-woman tsunami of energy, and the team did a magnificent job of selling tickets to our Court Theatre fundraiser, MAMIL, on Wednesday 30 September. It is cause for celebration to find Cantabrians in a packed theatre watching one of New Zealand's finest talents, Mark Hadlow, hold the audience's rapt attention for almost two hours. It was a relaxing evening of often earthy hilarity, a raffle and spot prizes. The proceeds from this fundraiser raised \$5,000 for the NZBRI. We sincerely thank The Court Theatre for their generous sponsorship.

**WE PUT THE
FUN
IN FUNDRAISING**

This year is the FBI's fourth Annual Golf Tournament at the Christchurch Golf Club, Shirley, on Friday 27 November. The 2015 Major Sponsor is Christchurch Radiology Group. The preceding tournaments have been phenomenally successful with last year's proceeds reaching \$30,000. We had our fingers crossed that the new Club house would be completed in time for this year's tournament, but unexpected delays intervened. It was therefore necessary to cap the number of teams and players entering and as a consequence the 24 teams plus hole sponsors sold out early. This year again promises an exciting day of cheerful competition. Strawberry Fare will supply the superb gourmet lunches and Pegasus Bay Winery the on-course refreshment station. A special treat will be pulled-pork sliders, a snack on course to help keep up energy levels, courtesy of Nature's Fresh and Heller's. We give special thanks to Sharpies Golf for their splendid sponsorship of the tournament with a trophy and prizes of vouchers for the winning teams. Most importantly, please don't forget to put the tournament in your diaries for 2016 – it will be even bigger and better! We look forward to seeing you.

I'm reminded when I attend our fundraisers and meet so many of you, just how satisfying it is to live a life of purposeful endeavour. Those two glorious ingredients, companionship and laughter, give us all a profound sense of wellbeing. When I gaze out across a sea of happy, animated, engaged supporters, it gives me a great sense of personal fulfilment. Whilst those all-important dollars are vital to the ongoing research work at the New Zealand Brain Research Institute, friendship and laughter really is the very best kind of medicine.

Thank you to all our wonderful sponsors and supporters who truly make the magic happen.

Kathryn Mulcock
Chair, Friends of the Brain Institute (FBI)

Congratulations!

The NZBRI team would like to congratulate the following people for reaching great milestones:

Dr Tracy Melzer, for securing a CMRF Major Projects grant in the 2015 Round for his work with Amyloid predictors of cognitive decline in Parkinson's.

Megan Livingston was awarded an NZBRI-UC PhD Scholarship and has commenced her studies in the CoRE Parkinson's "enrichment" project with Prof. John Dalrymple Alford.

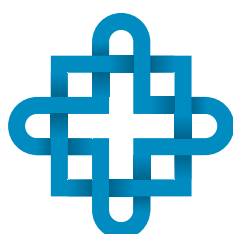
John La Rocco successfully defended his PhD thesis (Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Canterbury).

Amy Wang successfully defended her PhD thesis (Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury).

Samantha Groves will have her Masters thesis (Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch) awarded in early December.



Coming up in 2016: • "The Great Brain Teaser" Quiz night • Charity Race Day at the Riccarton Racecourse
All welcome, watch this space for details!



Yes! I would like to support the New Zealand Brain Institute

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

My gift (circle): \$50 \$100 \$500 Other \$ _____

Credit Card Name on Card: _____

Card Number: Expiry ____ / ____ / ____

Signature: _____

All donations over \$5 will receive a tax deduction receipt.

If you do not wish to receive mail from us, please email kate@cmrf.org.nz