



MEDIA RELEASE

MND Global Day Tuesday 21 June 2011

MND Australia research grants pave way for more funding

Australian researchers are pioneering important work into the cause and cure of Motor Neurone Disease, with the help of public donations.

The research into this fatal and debilitating neurological condition that kills more than 10 Australians every week continues in the lead up to Global MND Day on June 21 - a solstice or a turning point – when the MND community hopes for a turning point in MND research.

Executive Director, MND Australia, Ms Carol Birks says that while all recipients of MND Australia research grants continue to make significant progress towards this turning point, two emerging scientists recently demonstrated how a small start-up grant can generate a giant leap forward.

Dr Bradley Turner, from the Florey Neuroscience Institutes at the University of Melbourne, and Dr Justin Yerbury from the University of Wollongong, NSW, were both acknowledged by their Institutions for their achievements in MND research.

These young scientists were given a boost by MND Australia to get started and now they are on their way to big things with large grants from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia.

“MND research is gathering pace, attracting more funds and more people to work on projects that will help to unravel the causes of nerve cell death in MND. They are unlocking mysteries and leading the way to treatments.

“We are getting closer to finding the causes, treatments and a cure for this devastating disease through research, made possible by public donations” says Ms Birks.

Ms Birks urged the public to support MND research on June 21 - MND Global Day.

“It’s an important day in the calendar for thousands around the world who are living with or have been affected by MND. MND Global Day is a day to raise awareness and much needed funds to support this research,” she said

People can support MND research by:

- Wearing a blue cornflower – a symbol of hope – available through MND State Associations by phoning 1800 777 175
- Donating funds to MND associations to support research into the cause, control and cure www.mndaust.asn.au
- Joining the **Walk to D’feet MND** Canberra 10am Sunday 19 June Lake Burley Griffin– www.mndnsw.asn.au or www.mndaust.asn.au
- Getting involved with State MND association Global Day activities <http://www.mndaust.asn.au/upcoming-events/>

About Motor Neurone Disease:

MND is a rapidly progressive, terminal neurological disease for which there is no known cure or effective treatment. MND robs the body of its limb function and takes away a person’s ability to speak, swallow and to breathe, whilst their mind and senses usually remain intact. On average each week in Australia, 10 people die from MND and another 10 are diagnosed.

About MND Australia:

MND Australia allocates MND research grants to scientists and clinicians throughout Australia.

For further information and interview requests, please contact Julie Morgan or Anna Anderson at JMM Communications 03 9696 5060.