

2777

THE KIRBY INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

PATRON'S FOREWORD

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

THE KIRBY INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

PATRON'S FOREWORD

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG*

The year 2014 was a year of major milestones in the life of the Kirby Institute:

- * It moved its premises from its long-time base in Darlinghurst to the Kensington campus of UNSW. The move brought together the new facility and unites our previous three locations into a combined home of world standards. Celebrations were held honouring some of our biggest supporters, including private donors and backers in the UNSW and State and Federal Governments. Their generosity made the dream of a combined cutting edge location a reality.
- * Also in the year past, the Kirby Institute renewed its commitment to strengthening relationships, and securing closer involvement with, relevant stakeholder communities. A *Framework* will be developed in 2015 to seek to improve, integrate and further expand this engagement so as to extend the outreach of the research programs so they reach those most affected.

* Justice of the High Court of Australia (1996-2009); Member of the Eminent Persons Group on the Future of the Commonwealth (2010-11).

- * Several very important trials were launched in 2014 and the story is told in this report. The PrELUDE study is examining the use of HIV treatments by HIV negative people to study reductions in their risk of acquiring the virus. Prevention is a major thrust of global and local efforts. A second trial is studying the new Hepatitis C treatments. Starting in September 2014, it has recruited prisoners in NSW correctional facilities to an informed consent participation in the SToP-C survey. Early access to antiviral drug therapy dramatically reduces the risk of passing HIV. SToP-C will investigate whether there is analogous advantage in Hepatitis C infections.

In addition to these outstanding local initiatives, the Kirby Institute has been strengthening its international capacity building and working with friends and colleagues in our region:

- * At the World AIDS Conference in Melbourne in July 2014, following the terrible loss of colleagues in the MH17 disaster, the Institute played its part in emphasising positive engagement with countries and colleagues in the Asia/Pacific region. I had the privilege of speaking at the Opening Ceremony. David Cooper launched the new initiative to increase HIV testing and the uptake of treatment in Indonesia. Government efforts in Indonesia to roll out universal access to ART has been hampered by low participation rates. Our study will hopefully help Indonesia to overcome this impediment.

- * As Patron of the Institute, I participated in the ABC television program Q&A with Nafsiah Mboi (the former Indonesian Health Minister) and with famed Françoise Barré-Sinoussi (Nobel Laureate). I co-chaired the Conference with Professor Sharon Lewin. Earlier in the week, David Cooper presented Dr Barré-Sinoussi to Chancellor David Gonski for the award of an Honorary Degree of UNSW. In Melbourne, the Institute and its staff were on constant display.
- * Researchers from the Kirby Institute have partnered with the World Bank to develop *Optima*. This is an HIV optimisation and analysis tool to help countries analyse their epidemic and program strategies to suggest optimal distribution of investment to best serve patient needs and the demands of donors and local decision makers in a shrinking pool of available funding.
- * Work continues in the Institute on the assessment of Human Papillomavirus prevalent in Papua New Guinea. This study will sustain development of prevention strategies to control cervical and other cancers.
- * Work has continued in the Kirby Institute on the world's first comparative trial of mass drug administration of scabies control in Fiji. One year after the commencement of the trial, Institute researchers found an over 90% reduction in prevalence. They are now planning large scale implementation.

The new facility at UNSW is a joy to work in and to be in. We thank Professor Fred Hilmer, retiring UNSW Vice-Chancellor, for his support in making it happen. We thank our many donors including Atlantic

Philanthropies (Chuck Feeney), Lord Glendonbrook CBE, the Berg Foundation, Charles Curran AC and many others. We could not have achieved so much without support from them and many others.

The year 2015 will open with the unveiling of the Rainbow Flag by the new UNSW Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Jacobs. This is also another initiative for which the Kirby Institute can be thanked. When I first entered UNSW back in 1962, I could not have dreamed that this would have happened. It shows that, with the help of science, rationality, persistence and goodwill, anything is possible from the combination of the human mind and the human heart.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Jacobs', positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.