

# media release



HMRI @ the University of Newcastle and Calvary Mater Newcastle

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Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008

## Experts to share how research is tackling cancer

Cancer touches many people, but few have the chance to meet the researchers who have dedicated their lives to tackling the disease.

This month two world renowned cancer researchers will give a free public lecture in Newcastle to explain how their research is contributing to a better understanding of cancer and more effective treatments.

The Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) Public Lecture, to be held on Friday September 12 at Newcastle Town Hall, will feature Professor Elizabeth Blackburn from the University of California and Professor John Forbes from the University of Newcastle and Calvary Mater Newcastle.

“People often ask ‘why does it take so long to come up with better treatments?’. This event is a chance for the community to discover what is involved in cancer research from the laboratory bench, all the way to the clinic,” said Dr Jennette Sakoff, a cancer researcher at Calvary Mater Newcastle and a member of HMRI’s Cancer Research Program.

Professor Blackburn has been named one of Time Magazine’s Top 100 most influential people in recognition of her research, which has revealed why cancer cells keep growing.

“Professor Blackburn’s discovery of a protein called telomerase is considered the holy grail of cancer research. Her research has allowed us to understand how cancer cells keep growing over time, which has opened up avenues for new treatments in cancer and other diseases,” said Dr Sakoff.

Professor John Forbes leads the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group, recognised as one of the premier breast cancer clinical trials research organisations. He was recognised in 2007 as one of the top 10 most cited scientists in the world, for peer-reviewed publications in 2005-2006. He was the only Australian named on the list.

“National and international clinical trials, led by Professor Forbes, have improved survival outcomes for women in the Hunter and internationally, through early detection, prevention, and better treatments for breast cancer,” said Dr Sakoff.

“New clinical treatments are based on really good science, so it’s appropriate that we are bringing together a scientist and a clinician who are working at the two ends of cancer research.”

Doors open at 6pm and entry is FREE to all. For more information visit [www.hmri.net.au](http://www.hmri.net.au).

**Professor John Forbes and Dr Jennette Sakoff are available for interview.**

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