

Testimonials on the work of IRCHAL and the International Conferences on Healthy Aging and Longevity.

Dr. Alexandre Sidorenko, MD, PhD. Chief, United Nations Focal Point on Ageing, Division for Social Policy & Development, New York, NY, USA.

“The Inaugural International Conference in Sydney and the launch of the International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing and Longevity are two essential steps towards strengthening partnerships between researchers and practitioners addressing the issues of healthy ageing and longevity.”

“IRCHAL is adequately positioned to provide support for addressing the challenges and opportunities of ageing societies around the world, in both developed and developing countries, through promoting interdisciplinary collaboration amongst the world’s leading experts on health and ageing and the dissemination of evidence-based knowledge to all major actors in government and civil society. I am confident that the support of IRCHAL will enhance the capacity and validity of the Research Agenda project as the implementation tool for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.”

Dr. Alexandre Kalache, MD, PhD. Coordinator, Ageing & Life Course Programme, Department of NCD Prevention & Health Promotion, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

“This is going to grow like a forum, and I can only make the parallels to the World Economic Forum, which discusses economic issues and endeavours, and the Aspen Institute, the think tank in the United States. Well, this has all the makings in Australia to bring the best brains related to ageing, so that we can discuss the most important demographic issue of the 21st century, which is of course ageing.”

“I think that a forum like this is inevitably an opportunity for practitioners, policy makers, lay people, students, and hopefully the civil society and non government organisations to all get together so that we can discuss about ageing.”

“You cannot understand ageing unless you have all of the sectors together. Ageing, by definition, is interdisciplinary, it is multisectoral. This is why we need everybody together, and what we have with this opportunity is exactly the chance of getting all these people together to speak freely.”

“What a difference a man makes. And what a difference a family makes altogether. It is the commitment, the passion, it is the vision that you have shown.”

“I said at the opening here that WHO was proud to be co-sponsoring, and we have now the logo attached to this initiative...We have seen that we have two years behind us with two excellent conferences, and the promises of an even better in Melbourne, and better and better and better.”

The highlights of the programme are multiple:

For the next three days some of the best researchers and practitioners from several countries will be discussing a variety of important themes - ranging from social, biological and economic to health services, wellbeing in older age and specific ageing-related conditions.

Ageing as an issue with huge global Development implications has started to percolate through the programme and my sincere wish is that for the 4th conference this will be an even more prominent theme to be addressed by the participants.

I will be particularly interested to hear from you the outcomes of your discussions focused on the research agenda needed to advance our understanding about the longevity dividend and indeed, most intrigued about the top ten tips for healthy ageing to be selected by the panel of leading experts at the very last plenary session. I found this to be a most innovative way to conclude an international conference: practical, no doubt provocative, laying down a way forward. WHO will certainly consider disseminating widely the ten tips as soon as you let me know the results of your consensus and once we are able to endorse them through our panel of experts and advisors.

My sincere thanks to the organizers, the International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing and Longevity (IRCHAL), whom I commend for their commitment and dedication. I wish you the very best for the next three days and look forward to meet you all in one year from now.

Prof. Gary Andrews, MD, PhD (1940-2006). Former Professor of Ageing, University of South Australia and Former Professor and Director of the Centre for Ageing Studies, a WHO Collaborating Centre on Population Ageing and an affiliated Research Centre of Flinders University and the University of South Australia. Former Academic Director of the Australian Centre for Community Ageing. Past President of the International Association of Gerontology.

“And my role now is to launch the Research Centre.

This, I think, is a very important moment. In fact I think it is so important that you should fuse it in your minds, because at some time in the future you will be able to tell your children, your grandchildren, and anyone else that wants to listen:

“Yes”, you will be able to say. “Yes, I was there, at the launching of the International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing and Longevity, so many years ago, and how wonderful it’s become.

So it is with great pleasure that I have this task. Because indeed the issues around healthy ageing and longevity have become of tremendous importance, and have been widely recognised in recent times, and the Conference has attested to that. But everybody seems to want to be in it, and in the business, and doing something about it. And in Australia and internationally there are many things going on, some of which we have heard about during this conference.

But I also have to say to you, in my experience great breakthroughs, seminal moments, have generally not been achieved by institutions, by governments, by international institutional agencies, but by individuals. But we have quite a bit of work to be done yet in putting it together. And the idea of something that will explore the advances in these fields, will monitor and report them, will help facilitate development at many, many levels, through universities, research institutes, individual researchers and so on is a very positive one indeed.

And even more positive, given certainly my views about the need for the Ionian Enchantment, and consilience and a broader approach. The fact that they're doing something that has an inclusivity to it, that invites everybody to the table, is I think is absolutely critical.

Ageing is a fact of life. But I wanted to say something else. Ageing is THE fact of life. I think much of what we have heard has demonstrated for us that ageing is essential to life. That if we didn't age, we couldn't live. And understanding that, and getting that message over, could have a profound influence on the way we see ageing in ourselves and in others.

"This has been a fabulous conference. Its great strength has been the diversity of the topics and of the people who have come from all over the world, but also from many disciplines. So it's an opportunity to network in a way that is rarely available, where people can exchange views, can learn from one another, and when you are talking about the very top people in the world that are present, then that is an extremely valuable experience for anybody."

"I have enjoyed it immensely, and I am absolutely certain that everybody else that has been here has had great enjoyment out of this meeting, as well as its intellectual stimulation and knowledge, and the understanding that has come over during the process."

"There are just too many conferences on these days, and so you have got to be selective. You have got to find one that actually does provide you with some really new information, some new insights, perhaps changes your outlook on things. This conference does that, and that makes it nearly unique and certainly very valuable."

Prof. Hal Kendig AB (Calif), MPL, PhD (SCalif), FASSA. National Convener, ARC-NHMRC Research Network on Ageing Well. Research Professor of Ageing and Health, University of Sydney, NSW, Australia.

This letter is written in support of the International Research Centre on Healthy Ageing and Longevity (IRCHAL). I know very well the IRCHAL Centre and its directors John and Noah Weller. I contributed to the last IRCHAL Conference in Brisbane last year and will do so again to

the conference in Melbourne in October. I serve on the IRCHAL International Advisory Council and was pleased to contribute to its comprehensive research agenda.

IRCHAL is making a very valuable contribution to the development of international research on the determinants of healthy ageing and the application of this knowledge to improvements in the health and longevity of the baby-boomer generation and older people. IRCHAL has the strong involvement of multi-disciplinary researchers in ageing of the highest international standing and it has their enthusiastic support and commitment. IRCHAL is a high point in bringing international expertise to Australia, involving Australian researchers in leading international research, and increasing communication on healthy ageing between the research, philanthropic, professional and government sectors in Australia.

I strongly recommend the annual IRCHAL Conference to Australian researchers and research students, as well as medical and allied healthcare practitioners and students who wish to know of the 'leading edge' of international research on healthy ageing. The 2005 IRCHAL conference presented highpoints in international science in a way that intelligent people of a variety of disciplines could understand and make sense of it. The program represented the full range of studies of ageing from the most basic cellular biology through to the society, social and government programmes, and it had strong involvement of older people and their representatives as well as the United Nations and the World Health Organisation. It was a splendid effort, and I am strongly recommending the IRCHAL conference to researchers, practitioners, educators, policy makers, students and others concerned with healthy ageing.

IRCHAL also provides an outstanding opportunity to translate and disseminate findings from leading science to improve actions in health care practice, health promotion, and self help and advocacy by older people themselves. IRCHAL is particularly effective in media publicity bringing research-based science to broader public audiences.

The Management Committee of our ARC-NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well recognizes the value of IRCHAL and we have agreed to collaborate with them. Professor Colette Browning – Professor of Healthy Ageing at Monash University and Convenor of our Network Healthy Ageing theme – is active in the 2006 Conference planning and I will present a keynote address. After the October Conference, IRCHAL and our Research Network will jointly convene a high level workshop to develop research collaborations on bio-psycho-social determinants of healthy ageing and longevity. The Workshop aims to stimulate ongoing and deep collaboration between the best of Australian researchers and international IRCHAL members.

As a Research Professor, I particularly commend any efforts that can be made to support the participation of Australian health and medical students, postgraduate research students and other early careers researchers in the IRCHAL conference. IRCHAL provides Australia's best opportunity for students to hear directly from leading international researchers in multi-disciplinary ageing research from the core biomedical and related sciences in Europe, North America and Asia.

The Conference allows for informal discussions between the international 'greats' and the next generation of emerging researchers who can benefit greatly from their

inspiration and advice. I support strongly any efforts that can be made to enable more Australian health and medical students, postgraduate research students and early career researchers to participate in IRCHAL.

In summary, IRCHAL and its conference and other activities are making a very valuable contribution to Australian and international research on healthy ageing and longevity. I am happy to support IRCHAL and its Directors without reservation. I commend IRCHAL to others who wish to join us in building and applying this knowledge base which is vital to the future of Australia and an ageing world.

"I feel privileged to have been part of this conference. I think it has been particularly good at bringing the best science to a wide variety of people in a way that seriously intelligent people can understand and make sense of it."

"The particularly good thing was the bringing of overseas speakers with the best in Australia, and to see the diversity and the representation across the range of studies of ageing in particular from the most basic cellular biology all the way through to the society, social and government programmes, and the involvement of older peoples groups themselves. It has been a splendid effort, and I will be sure to be here next time."

"Different conferences have different objectives. The people who I would especially encourage to come to this one are serious scientists who want to hear about equally good science in related fields other than their own, and to look at ways to make linkages across the different fields, and secondly intelligent people who would like to know the best science and to consider its implications for their own area of applied work, whether it be practice, application to groups of older people, or whatever. So I think that it has been a fine effort and I encourage people to be here."

Prof. John McCallum, BEcon Hons Psych(Qld), MPhil, DPhil(Oxon). Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Victoria and Director of TAFE, Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

“A stunning, rich, refreshing conference. Some of the best minds in the world articulating really advanced ideas.”

“It has been developed and financially supported not by professional, University and Government bodies but by benevolence of the Weller family.

It brings to Australia at one time the best international thinkers and researchers in ageing. It brokers dialogue between groups who don't usually connect in their professional lives e.g. Complementary Therapies and scientific researchers on ageing.

The ageing problems are now, and we need to know what works now.

The Continuing Collaboration:

- *Australia has much to learn from our international guests and from one another.*
- *This is an opportunity for different ‘tribes’ to listen and talk to one another.*
- *We need capture the positive realities of ageing and develop innovative ideas for our big challenges in ageing.*
- *We can grow the ageing ‘business’ together.*

Let's relax and enjoy the feast of ideas!”

Dr. George Roth, PhD. CEO, GeroScience Inc.; Senior Guest Scientist, National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, Baltimore, MD, USA.

“I think it is a great idea. I think that IRCHAL is going to occupy a unique niche in the world of biogerontology, social gerontology, and clinical geriatrics. It is an attempt to put together international experts on these various areas to address the problems of an ageing society.”

“I have had a wonderful time here, it is an opportunity to informally exchange some of the newest ideas with people at all levels, and I would encourage everyone to come to the next one in Melbourne.”

Dr. Bradley J. Willcox, MD, MSc. Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Geriatrics, John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii. Investigator, Geriatrics, Pacific Health Research Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Co-Principal Investigator, Okinawa Centenarian Study, Japan.

“The Conference was absolutely fantastic. We have the crème de la crème of ageing researchers. It was extremely stimulating. The world's top researchers in ageing, a lot of divergent opinions – what, and how, we can think about the ageing process, how can we age more successfully.”

“I would recommend, absolutely, by any means possible, just to come and experience this event. It is absolutely unforgettable.”

The Hon. John Howard, MP. Prime Minister of Australia, Canberra, ACT, Australia.

MESSAGE: 3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HEALTHY AGEING AND LONGEVITY

"I am pleased to send my very best wishes to those participating in the 3rd International Conference on Healthy Ageing and Longevity at the Melbourne Convention Centre on 13-15 October 2006.

Like many other countries, Australia's population is ageing. The challenges flowing from this inevitable demographic change will have significant implications for all sectors of our nation.

Australia has a well developed health and aged care sector and is responding to address the needs associated with an ageing population. The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia was developed to provide a coordinated national response to issues surrounding population ageing. Australian researchers are also leading the world in aged healthcare research in areas such as Alzheimer's disease, other dementia and depression.

An event such as this is important to facilitate the exchange of ideas and strategies in relation to the health and wellbeing of an ageing population. While governments should play a leadership role in preparing the country for an older population, it is also the responsibility of the whole community to be involved in shaping the policies and putting the policies into action.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the event organisers, the International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing and Longevity, on convening a conference on this important issue and wish all those in attendance well for the future."

MESSAGE: 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HEALTHY AGEING AND LONGEVITY

"I am pleased to send my very best wishes to those participating in the 2nd International Conference on Healthy Ageing and Longevity at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on 18-20 March 2005."

"The international trend towards an increase in the proportion of older people in our population brings both challenges and opportunities. This conference is important in bringing world experts together to discuss how we face some of these challenges and benefit from these opportunities. It will enable representatives from government, research, the medical profession and the broader community to share information and ideas."

"My government has established a strong record in making a tangible and significant difference to the day-to-day lives of older Australians. We have invested significantly in order to improve the sustainability of aged care services in Australia and continue to support programmes that help older people to live healthy, productive lives and continue to be active in our community."

“I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the event organisers, the International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing and Longevity, on convening a conference on this important issue and wish all those in attendance well for the future.”

Prof. S. Jay Olshansky, PhD. Professor, School of Public Health, University of Illinois, Chicago, IL, USA.

“This conference has been absolutely spectacular. Last year and this year the quality of the conference has been outstanding, the quality of the science has been outstanding, the focus of the conference itself, the focus of the delegates, the focus of the scientists, is to bring together people from all walks of life, from the world of science, from the general public, practitioners, and bring them all together and teach them the latest science that can be brought out to the public, that can be used to help improve medicine, to help improve public health. That’s really the focus: to disseminate information, to debate, to discuss the latest issues on public health across the globe.”

“This is the kind of meeting that scientist’s dream of quite frankly. It’s the kind of meeting that we love to go to. We love to meet up with the public; we love to meet up with practitioners. This is the kind of place that brings us together in an ideal environment, and next year of course in Melbourne, in fact, we expect conditions will be even better than they are now. Scientists will be competing to come to this. They will be contacting those of us who have already been here, begging us to get them on [the programme] and to get involved, and my guess is that it will only be a very short matter of time before the public gets heavily involved as well. In fact, my guess is that in Melbourne and subsequent meetings, we are going to get high school students and college students involved at levels that we have never seen before.”

“And it’s going to change the landscape of ageing, and this is the right time. We know when ageing is going to hit the developed and developing world. It is going to hit in about 6 years, and so this meeting and this organisation is coming to be at exactly the right time – right at the cusp of population ageing and hopefully we will be able to make it an easy transition throughout the developed and developing world.”

“Anytime you bring together the top scientists in the world who are working in the field of ageing, it is an opportunity for healthcare practitioners and the general public to come, to learn, to understand the latest about what’s going on in the field of ageing. If they don’t come, they will be missing an extraordinarily valuable experience. In fact, when we have had these sorts of meetings in other parts of the world they are extraordinarily popular, they are much needed in an ageing world, and in deed I would encourage people to come out in droves.”

“I think I can safely speak on behalf of the scientists who have attended this conference that we would certainly like to thank the Weller family, and all of the people involved in creating what was to us a seamless conference from beginning to end. It was absolutely amazing.”

“We have attended many of these before, and just from the ambiance and the environment, the one that we had last year, the way in which everything was set up was absolutely perfect and I predict, I certainly anticipate, that this will be one of those kinds of conferences that - my guess is that by next year – will be the one where the scientists are going to be clambering to be invited. They are going to want to come to this kind of meeting and participate. And my guess is

also that the same is going to happen for the public. The public is going to want to come in and interact with the scientists, and I hope that we are able to see a lot more students the next time around, it would certainly be an ideal thing to happen.”

Dr. Narimah Awın, MBBS, MPH. Director of Family Health Development, Ministry of Health, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

“After coming here I am so very happy to have been here. For one thing, the scientific sessions were organised in such a way that they covered everything possible, from the molecular level, to the very basic science, to social science, and when my session came this afternoon, because I was invited in that capacity as a policy maker and programme planner, it fitted in like a wonderful jigsaw puzzle. So I think that they have addressed it in its totality and I am very impressed.”

“But more important than that is the fact that the Weller family have taken it upon themselves as a social responsibility, and I am so impressed with the passion they have and the commitment they have towards ageing and health. I think that it is a wonderful thing the family is doing and I am very thankful to have been invited.”

“I think that it is important for Australian scientists and policy makers in ageing to know what is happening on the other side of the world, because as we know ageing is a huge challenge...I think that people from developing countries, from all walks of life, whether they are scientists, biologists, physiologists, policy makers, I would really encourage them to come to the next conference and I think that they will really benefit a lot.”

Prof. Suresh Rattan, DSc, PhD. Research Professor, Danish Centre for Molecular Gerontology, Department of Molecular Biology, University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark

“These Conferences by the International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing and Longevity (IRCHAL) are very unique conferences. They are trying to bring together the best of the best from biology, sociology, psychology, spirituality – that doesn’t happen everywhere. Wherever people have tried in other places they have very narrow interests, but this one is purely with an aim to give some message, to educate people, to make them aware of the importance of this issue. So that’s why this conference, the Second Conference, also really fulfilled my expectations or actually more than what I expected will happen, and I am sure that it is going to be repeated again and again.”

“We want to build communication, especially with the younger generation, with the students of the universities and research centres that they need to also meet these original thinkers. Those are the sources of inspiration! That’s how I get my inspiration! I would like to meet my mentors. So the 2006 Conference, I hope that’s going to be even better”

Dr. James Joseph, PhD. Lead Scientist, Laboratory Chief, Laboratory of Neuroscience, Jean-Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, Tufts University, Boston, MA, USA.

“What I really liked about the Conference was that it was eclectic, it covered a lot of different areas from basic research to a lot of psychosocial kinds of issues, which I think are very important also - things like the spiritual part of this, the family part of this.”

“I think one of the highlights of the meeting for me was when they actually brought in the centenarians, and we got to talk to them, so you get to see how sharp they are cognitively. Most of us, like myself who work in a laboratory, don't get to see the other side of this, so for me it was great and I would certainly recommend it to other scientists next year, students who want to possibly see a career in ageing, then I would certainly recommend that they come. I thought that the conference was well done, it was well orchestrated, with a lot of good speakers.”

Prof. Andrus Viidik, MD, DMSci. Guest Senior Scientist, SMZ Sophienspital, Vienna, Austria.

“I have during the last 40 years participated in many congresses, organized two myself as well as taken part in organizing a number of Scandinavian, European and international congresses, most of them in various fields of gerontology. With this background I must say that participating in your congress was a unique experience - with so many invited speakers covering so many of the relevant topics of gerontology without going too much into technical details of their own recent research (which is of interest only for a few experts in the same field and is often the case with "normal" congresses). The success of your congress is emphasized by the turnout of participants from the many fields of gerontology. Your plans to follow up the congress with educational material are also a unique and laudable initiative for which I wish all success.”

“We hope that it will be possible for us to have the privilege to participate in one of your future congresses. Also, if I can in any way contribute to your International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing & Longevity (IRCHAL) I will be happy to do so. Once again, our sincere thanks for enabling us to have this unique experience.”

Dr. Bruce Carnes, PhD. Associate Professor, Reynolds Department of Geriatric Medicine, University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, Oklahoma, OK, USA.

“I think that this conference this year - I thought last year's conference was excellent - this is even better. They brought in a really high quality group of speakers. It's a diversified meeting, it covers a wide range of topics, and I'm recommending it to my colleagues back home”

Mr. Fred Delbridge, OAM. Past President of the Australian Council on the Ageing (ACOTA), Salisbury, QLD, Australia.

'Centenarians are "stress shedders" who are able to handle their loss and disappointments...' was one of the many memorable statements which those privileged to attend the 2nd International Conference on Healthy Ageing and Longevity held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (March, 18 – 20)."

"I commend the organisers on their excellent and empathetic introduction of a variety of topics and speakers – from many levels of expertise and vocations – and look forward to the 2006 Conference in Melbourne."

Feedback from General Practitioners who received 30 Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Continuing Professional Development points for attending the Conference

“Interesting and informative with practical applications. I will become more proactive with weight reduction strategies, giving up smoking, exercise, and stress reduction.”

“Excellent conference - learnt a lot about the issues of ageing. Good evidence based clinical trials. Will now consider alternative medication where clinical trials support them.”

“Excellent. Good topics, relevant, good speakers. Now interested in herbal medicine not as alternative to regular medicines but as preventative or additional.”

“Most enjoyable- learnt a lot of new things/ reinforced others. Will encourage lifestyle change with new vigour and use of herbal medication as preventative - green tea/ glucosamine, chondroitin; also encourage co-enzyme Q10 for people on lipid medication/cardiovascular disease.”

“I gained new medical knowledge and brushed up on my biology, chemistry and pharmacology. Very relevant to general practice. The conference made me more aware of the importance of primary prevention.”

“These series of lectures has filled in a lot of the theory background and other people’s clinical work to which I am doing and I should be able to adapt a great deal of it to the benefit of my patients.”

“Good conference. Interesting new research on anti-ageing molecules and compounds. I will now aggressively treat risk factors for the metabolic syndrome. I will initiate resistance training exercise programmes and graded exercise especially with older people. Judicious use of antioxidants and specific herbs.”

“Good level of knowledge presented - particularly epidemiological work, nutrition and exercise. Will make nutritional and exercise changes.”

“Good source of information - learnt a lot about issues of ageing”

