

## RESEARCH ROUNDUP continued....

Months later, at the Society for Neuroscience Conference in New Orleans, Meas showed how he could now stand without the aid of stimulation. He has also gained increased bowel and bladder control, improved sexual function and better temperature control. Two other volunteers have also shown heartening outcomes.

The marvellous thing about these results is that they indicate that the spinal cord is able to recover its function years after being damaged.

We can all take great encouragement from the fact that these therapies are finally moving out of the laboratory and being trialled on actual people with spinal cord injuries.

## 4 WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- ▶ **Help spread the word**  
"Like" us on Facebook and forward our e-newsletter to a friend
- ▶ **Get fit and raise funds**  
Visit [www.everydayhero.com.au](http://www.everydayhero.com.au) and sign up for the next fun event, choosing SpinalCure as your charity
- ▶ **Make a gift to SpinalCure Australia in your Will**  
A bequest is a wonderful way to help all those affected by spinal cord injury
- ▶ **Make a donation**  
Online at [www.spinalcure.org.au](http://www.spinalcure.org.au) or complete the form below.

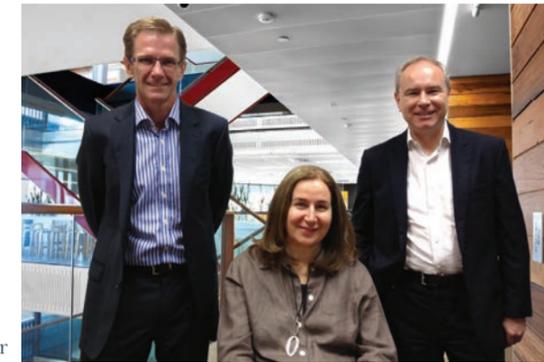
THANK YOU



[www.spinalcure.org.au](http://www.spinalcure.org.au)  
**connect**  
Funding research to cure spinal cord injury

## A NEW BOARD MEMBER JOINS THE TEAM

SpinalCure welcomes Duncan Adams to our Board of Directors. A long time SpinalCure supporter, Duncan has personal experience with spinal cord injury after a suspected cervical break landed him in the Royal North Shore Hospital for a few days and ended his rugby playing days. In 2007 Duncan took on the incredibly daunting challenge of swimming the English Channel, raising much needed funds for SpinalCure. Although his first attempt was thwarted by the Channel's typically hostile weather, Duncan returned and successfully swam the 33km the following year.



SpinalCure Directors L to R: Duncan Adams, Joanna Knott and Gabriel McDowell

Duncan has 25 years experience in investment banking and chartered accounting in Australia and the United Kingdom. Prior to founding a property leasing business in Canberra, Duncan was a Director of Investment Banking at Deutsche Bank and later at JB Were where he specialised in mergers and acquisitions and corporate financial advice.

Duncan's experience and qualifications are an excellent addition to our Board and make him perfectly suited to the role of Company Secretary which he has kindly taken on. All our Directors generously give their time and expertise on a voluntary basis.

## SPINALCURE EQUIPMENT GRANT FOR DR DAVID BROWN'S LAB

In 2006 Dr David Brown, from the Laboratory of Neuroinflammation at Sydney's St Vincent's Hospital, commenced work on a project funded by a \$300,000 SpinalCure Australia/NRMA Insurance Senior Research Fellowship. The results of this project were published last year in the prestigious Journal of Neuroscience. Dr Brown's lab continues to bring us closer to a cure for spinal cord injury by focussing on the puzzling role of inflammation. While being a major cause of neuron loss in traumatic spinal cord injury the white blood cells involved may also prevent nervous system damage and help heal it.

In November, SpinalCure was pleased to provide a \$20,000 equipment grant to Dr Brown's lab to assist with their ongoing work. CEO Duncan Wallace presented the cheque to Dr Brown and his colleagues after a fascinating tour round the lab.



Dr David Brown (left) with Duncan Wallace

## FIND US ONLINE

Stay up-to-date with the latest in research and SpinalCure news.

Visit the website and sign up for monthly email updates via e-Connect, follow us on Twitter or join the conversation on Facebook.

## IT'S EASY TO DONATE

Check out our website [www.spinalcure.org.au](http://www.spinalcure.org.au) or simply use the form on the back page



## DONATION FORM

Our quest for a cure for spinal cord injury relies on your generous support. On behalf of all those living with this devastating condition, we thank you.

Dr  Mr  Mrs  Ms  Miss  Other

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my donation of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to **SpinalCure Australia**  Please send me an Annual Report

or charge my  Mastercard  Visa  Amex  Diners  Please send me Bequest information

I would like to make regular donations through my credit card:

Amount to be debited automatically \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please complete the credit card details on left)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency:  Monthly  Quarterly  Other

Card expiry date: / \_\_\_\_\_ Commencement date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail FREEPOST to: SpinalCure Australia, Reply Paid 908, Mona Vale NSW 1660 or donate online at [www.spinalcure.org.au](http://www.spinalcure.org.au) A receipt will be issued to all donors. Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible.

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## A LASTING LEGACY

Gwendoline Emmie Woodall lived a long life, seeing out her days on the Central Coast of New South Wales. She raised two sons, one of whom suffered a spinal cord injury.

Sadly, Gwendoline was not known to SpinalCure in life but the tragedy of her son's injury led her to leave her entire estate to help in our work. We are humbled by such selflessness and will ensure that her substantial bequest is put to the best possible use in the search for a cure for spinal cord injury.

A bequest is a wonderful way to support our cause and help the millions around the world living with a spinal cord injury. To remember SpinalCure Australia in your will please get in touch with our CEO, Duncan Wallace (Ph 1800 774 625).

## RACING FOR A CURE!

Motorsport has always been Matt Speakman's passion. On a happy morning in 1993 he signed a deal to compete on two wheels in the Australian 600 Super Sport Championship. Tragically that evening a drunk driver ended this fledgling career knocking Matt off his road bike – an accident that left him a paraplegic. However Matt's spirit and ambitious nature were undaunted and his motorsport ambitions soon returned, this time focussed on four wheels. His success here has been even more impressive.

*"...my long term goal is to travel to Europe and race in the Porsche Supercup. And I know I will do it" says Matt.*

Last month he won the Queensland Under 1600 Improved Production championship using hand controls against able bodied drivers – the first time in Australia that someone with a spinal cord injury has become a state champion in an open sport!



This achievement resulted in Matt taking his spot in the National finals which were held at Tasmania's Baskerville Raceway in November.

His prowess behind the wheel has now earned him a place on the Porsche racing team under the direction of ex touring car legend, Tomas Mezera, and racing champion, Andy McElrea.

As a SpinalCure Ambassador, Matt's car is adorned with the SpinalCure logo and he is making good use of the well deserved publicity to promote our cause. Matt is the perfect example of someone living life to the fullest, despite their disability, while still enthusiastically looking forward to a time when a cure will make that disability a thing of the past.

## RESEARCH ROUNDUP

News from the scientific community continues to boost our morale and give us hope that a cure will be found in a matter of years. Scientists funded by SpinalCure are continuing to solve the mysteries of the inflammatory process. Dr Mark Ruitenberg from the University Queensland, who received a SpinalCure Fellowship earlier this year, gave us an inspiring update on his work when he visited Sydney for the Connections 2012 conference in August.

Around the world stem cells have again been in the news showing great promise for spinal cord injury repair. Back in 2011 we were all really disappointed when Geron announced the closure of its stem cell programme even though it had conducted a decade of research and treated five people with spinal cord injuries in the world's first clinical trial of human embryonic stem cells. Now, Geron's former head Thomas Okarma, founder Michael West and the subsidiary company BioTime have together put in a bid to buy

Geron's stem cell assets in an effort to revive the programme. Dr Hans Keirstead who developed the stem cells says of the five patients already treated, "Their interim clinical results are excellent and we have every reason to believe that the treatment is working." (TEDx Orange Coast, Nov 3 2012).

Other companies have also reported positive results using a variety of stem cell based therapies. StemCells Inc have announced that six months after receiving neural stem cell transplantations, two of the three patients treated have regained normal sensory function on their torsos. The Company has now proceeded to phase II trials where they are treating patients who have retained some feeling below their level of injury.

Also hugely exciting are the results of experiments using electrical stimulation to activate nerves below the site of injury and facilitate repair.

Results from the laboratory of Prof Grégoire Courtine at the Ecole

Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland showed that, in paralysed rats, it was possible to stimulate complete recovery using a combination of therapeutic drugs and electrical stimulation. Courtine is optimistic that human phase-two trials will begin in a year or two.

Complementary research from Kentucky, USA involved the implantation of a simple 16-electrode array into the lower spinal cord of volunteer Andrew Meas who had a "motor complete" cervical injury. Prior to implantation, Meas had undergone several months of physical training during which no improvement was observed. Then, with the new electrode array turned on he succeeded in standing on his first try.

The marvellous thing about these results is that they show that the spinal cord is able to recover its function years after being damaged.

*continued overleaf...*

## RUNNING FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T

The popularity of fun-runs and ocean swims around Australia has never been greater. People of all ages are signing up for these community events to get fit, have fun, raise funds and increase awareness for a charity dear to their hearts.



Hugh O'Brien after completing 42km in 3hr 51mins

At the more serious end of running, Hugh O'Brien gallantly put his name down for the daunting challenge of the New York marathon. After months of training, Hugh arrived in New York for the race only to see it cancelled at the last minute due to the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Sandy. As disappointing as this was for Hugh he still raised an impressive \$3800 for SpinalCure and more for CatWalk, our counterparts in New Zealand. And he and many others went ahead and ran the 42km in Central Park instead!

**To help SpinalCure supporters accept sponsors for such events we have recently joined Every Day Hero ([www.everydayhero.com.au/spinalcure](http://www.everydayhero.com.au/spinalcure)). This website allows supporters to create their own fundraising page and accept electronic donations in support of SpinalCure. Visit the site to find an event near you, or create a page for your own fundraiser.**

The Bridge to Brisbane running event this year saw two enthusiastic SpinalCure supporters pounding the pavement along with 40,000 entrants. For Catherine Masotti the inspiration came from her brother David who was injured in a motorcycle accident in 1997. A work colleague suffering a spinal cord injury prompted Candice Heiser to sign up for the run.

## 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF DAY

The MacArthur Lions have a special place in our hearts. Every year they rally the pride and host a day of golf with lunch, raffles and an auction in support of spinal cord injury research. This was the fourteenth Golf Day since the inaugural event was inspired by Robert McCann and his daughter Kelly. Kelly became ventilator dependent after a spinal cord injury left her with quadriplegia when she was just three years old. 27 years later Kelly is still inspiring people and now has her own daughter!

This year we were joined at the Camden Lakeside Country Club by Prof Vaughan Macefield from the University of Western Sydney who gave a brief talk on the current spinal cord injury research and the exciting prospects for the future.

We are extremely grateful to all those who take part year after year, to the generous local businesses who donate prizes, and of course to the unstinting members of the MacArthur Lions.



A pride of MacArthur Lions



Prof Vaughan Macefield