

Ross Maclean Senior Research Fellowship

Motor neurone disease remains one of the most devastating neurological conditions, gradually robbing people of movement, speech and independence while treatment options remain limited.

The Ross Maclean Senior Research Fellowship at Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) has helped strengthen Queensland's contribution to the global effort to understand and treat MND. Over more than two decades, it has supported researchers whose work has advanced knowledge of disease genes, protein pathways, neuronal degeneration and potential therapeutic targets.



Ross Maclean's vision

Ross Maclean was a proud Brisbane businessman, family man and long-time supporter of the local community. Through the Index Group of Companies, Ross helped build a successful Queensland family business. He was also widely known for his long association with Souths Rugby Union Club, where he was a member since 1976 and served as president and became a life member, leaving a lasting mark through his support and involvement.

In 2000, Ross was diagnosed with MND. Together with his family and QBI founding Director, Professor Perry Bartlett, Ross helped establish the Ross Maclean Senior Research Fellowship to support research into MND.

Ross passed away in 2005, aged 80.

Today, with the continued support of the Index Group and the Maclean family, led by his son, Jeff Maclean, the fellowship stands as a lasting tribute to Ross's courage, generosity and belief in research.

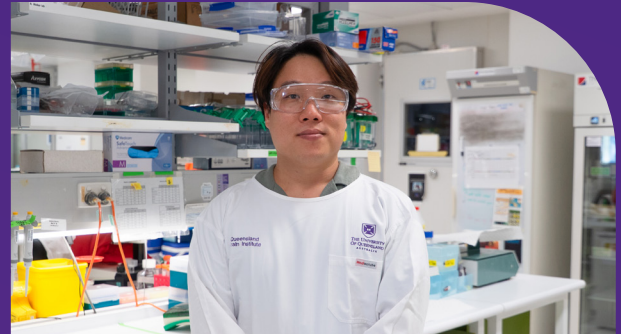


A fellowship that shapes careers

The fellowship has supported talented scientists at pivotal points in their careers. Inaugural Fellow Dr Robyn Wallace helped establish MND research at QBI, focusing on genetics, TDP-43 and disease genes using model systems such as *C. elegans*. Dr Marie Mangelsdorf continued this momentum through her work in genomics and hereditary motor neurone disorders. Associate Professor Adam Walker has advanced understanding of the biological mechanisms that drive MND, including pathways linked to neuronal damage and disease progression. Together, these researchers demonstrate how the fellowship has not only strengthened MND research at QBI, but also supported scientists to build, expand and sustain influential research careers.



The next chapter: Dr John Lee



The appointment of Dr John Lee as the current Ross Maclean Senior Research Fellow marks a powerful full-circle moment. Dr Lee began shaping his research career at QBI alongside early MND researchers, including Dr Wallace. More than 15 years later, he returns as a Group Leader, investigating how immune responses contribute to neuronal loss and developing therapeutic approaches that could slow disease progression and improve quality of life.

Securing the future of MND research

QBI is now launching the Ross Maclean Endowment Fund to ensure the fellowship can continue in perpetuity. An endowment is a permanent fund where the original gift is invested and the income generated provides ongoing support, creating a lasting source of funding for the fellowship. By building a permanent endowment, donors can help provide enduring support for MND research and give exceptional researchers the stability to pursue long-term, high-impact work.

Ross Maclean's legacy began with one act of generosity. Through the Ross Maclean Endowment Fund, that legacy can continue to support discovery, accelerate progress and improve the lives of families affected by MND.



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