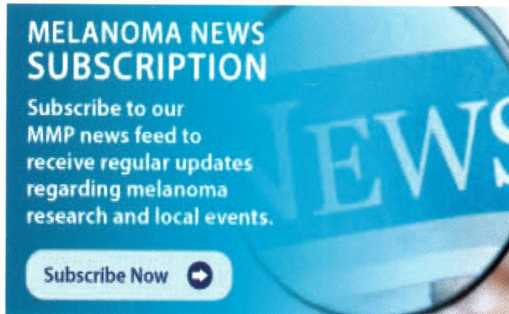


Melbourne Melanoma Project (MMP)

Welcome to our 5th newsletter where we hope to provide you with a snap shot of some of the exciting things happening in the MMP research and consumer space.

All photos courtesy of MMP.



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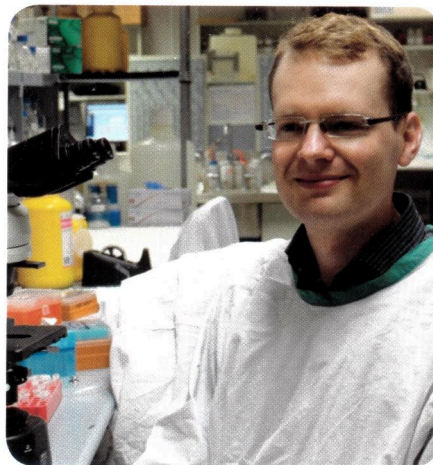
[Melbourne Melanoma Project](#)

Our MMP social media sites aim to keep you up to date with all melanoma research and some local community activities. Please note that most articles are obtained via Google Alerts and do not necessarily reflect the views of MMP.

MMP Researcher: Dr Andrew Colebatch

Dr Andrew Colebatch (pictured) is a clinician/pathologist* currently doing his PhD in Professor McArthur's laboratory at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. Andrew has utilised many MMP melanoma samples in his project titled '*The role of noncoding mutations in melanoma*'. Andrew's project examines a very common but poorly studied aspect of melanoma biology. Most of the previous work on melanoma has looked at mutations which lead to changes in proteins, so-called coding mutations. Andrew's project looks at the far more frequent noncoding mutations in melanoma to investigate the causes and consequences of these for melanoma patients.

"My project has let me use some very new tools in molecular biology which allow me to look at all the mutations present in a patient's melanoma. Although still mainly in the laboratory, the day is fast approaching when clinicians will use these tools to diagnose and treat melanoma patients



on a regular basis. I have had a great opportunity to use these instruments before most doctors in my position, and I hope to use them in my future clinical practice as a Pathologist to improve the accuracy of diagnosis and amount of information gleaned from a patient's melanoma."

*PATHOLOGIST: a specialist in pathology; specifically: one who interprets and diagnoses the changes caused by disease in tissues and body fluids

Consumer Corner

Over recent months the MMP Consumer Reference Group (CRG) has contributed to several submissions to the Government regarding: The Senate Inquiry into the availability of new, innovative and specialist cancer drugs in Australia; public comment to the PBAC re Nivolumab (Opdivo), public comment to the PBAC re Pembrolizumab (Keytruda); and the Senate Inquiry regarding the proposed Medical Research Futures Fund.

The MMP CRG is currently looking to conduct some research of its own. Over the next year it hopes to ask the melanoma community what they think about: 1. High cost melanoma drugs; and 2. Personal genetic results. If you would like to be part of the consumer research team that develops the necessary survey tools and analyses the ensuing data please contact Sonia Mailer via the MMP email address:

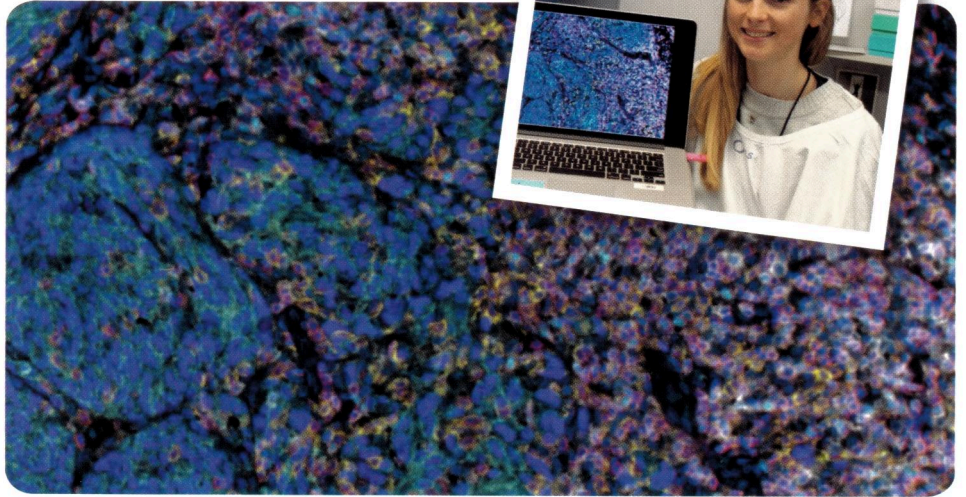
info@melbournemelanomaproject.com.

Your assistance could be practice changing!

Understanding Immunology

MMP is using immunohistochemistry (IHC) to understand immune cell activity in melanoma tissues. The colorful image shown here is a very thin piece of a melanoma that has been stained using IHC dyes that highlight different immunology features.

Every person has an in-built immune system which protects them from diseases including bacteria, viruses, and cancer. The immune cells work together to seek out and destroy cancer cells. In the stained image, we can see T helper cells (pink), which 'activate' the T killer cells (yellow) which are known to kill cancer cells (melanoma cells -purple). The regulatory T cells (pink cells with light blue centres) are known to 'switch off' the activation of T helper and T killer cells at the site of immune attack. These are cells of interest because they may hamper a patient's immune system's ability to conquer the cancer. In addition, some melanoma cells may express



PDL1 (in the stained image shown as the turquoise fibres around the purple cells). PDL1 is known to also 'switch off' activated T killer cells. It is important to know which patients have melanomas expressing this molecule on their surface because an effective therapy that works

via this molecule is available in the clinic. Heloise Halse (pictured) is one of the MMP researchers developing IHC staining techniques that will enable melanoma research projects to learn even more from the generously donated MMP tissue specimens.

MMP/MPA Invitation

You are all invited to attend our Melanoma Breakfast Forum. Come and enjoy a delicious breakfast in the company of researchers and clinicians and learn more about treatments, research and survivorship from guest speakers Professor Grant McArthur, Dr Victoria Mar and Dianne Legge.

This function is being held in conjunction with Melanoma Patients Australia and is generously supported by Novartis Oncology, Merck Sharp & Dohme and Bristol-Myers Squibb.



- When:** 8-10am Saturday 10th October 2015
- Where:** RACV Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne
- Price:** \$18.50
- RSVP:** <http://www.ivvy.com/event/QDK4SS/>
or 1300 88 44 50

The Melbourne Melanoma Project is supported by the Victorian Government through a Victorian Cancer Agency Translational Research Project grant. The Victorian Cancer Agency has a responsibility for building cancer research capacity and capability across Victoria. One of its main functions is to align and support clinical, academic and research organisations involved in cancer research to maximise patient outcomes.