

MEDIA RELEASE

11 July, 2017

Mentoring women to rise to leadership in health and science

Centenary Institute, along with another twelve top medical research organisations in Sydney, have signed up to participate in an innovative mentoring program aimed at supporting up-and-coming female scientists aspiring to further their scientific careers and elevate to leadership positions in the sector.

Many of Australia's most established female scientists have navigated their careers as the only woman in the laboratory. This is something the inaugural *Franklin Women's Mentoring Program*, in collaboration with *Serendis*, is determined to change by supporting women to succeed in an already challenging industry, and reach their full potential in science and research careers. Whilst the proportion of girls and young women in science is generally greater than men at the early stages on their careers, most women do not go on to more senior roles (such as running an independent research program/department), at the same rate as their male colleagues.

The *Franklin Women Mentoring Program* will provide essential support towards the professional development of females who already have a significant investment in their career and are looking to advance into leadership roles in health and medical research.

The program is unique in the health and medical research sector, connecting cross-organisational mentees with mentors, optimally paired for expertise, personal and career goals. From the twelve institutions taking part in the program, 26 accomplished male and female scientist mentors have been partnered with 26 female scientist mentees, aspiring for a long-term career in science.

"I am excited to be part of this innovative program, organised by Franklin Women. Mentoring is a partnership and I am looking forward to learning from my mentee, in addition to imparting some of my 30 plus years' experience in conducting and managing medical research," says Centenary Institute's Dr Nick Pearce who joins Professor Jenny Gamble as a mentor. Centenary's Dr Kim Beaumont and Emma Zhang will participate as mentees and our very own Dr Devanshi Seth has been instrumental in establishing the structure of the program as a Franklin Women Peer

Advisor, defining how it can best support Australia's best and brightest female scientists.

“Our mentoring program is the first of its kind in the sector, connecting female researchers with male and female leaders from diverse organisations who will embark on an important mentoring relationship,” Franklin Women founder, Dr Melina Georgousakis said. “The fact that so many health research organisations have come on board for the inaugural year of our mentoring program demonstrates their commitment to addressing the gender imbalance in the sector and the expected impact the program will have.”

The program launched in June and will run for six months. The 52 participants will attend several events, including a series of one-on-one sessions, mid-point reviews, workshops facilitated by experienced *Serendis* consultants and a grand cocktail finale to wrap-up and share the participant's experiences and successes. These activities will provide unique experience in leadership training, mentoring as well as education about the drivers of gender equality.

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For more information about Centenary Institute, visit www.centenary.org.au