

Award-winning scientist to speak at Allergy New Zealand's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 15 August 2012

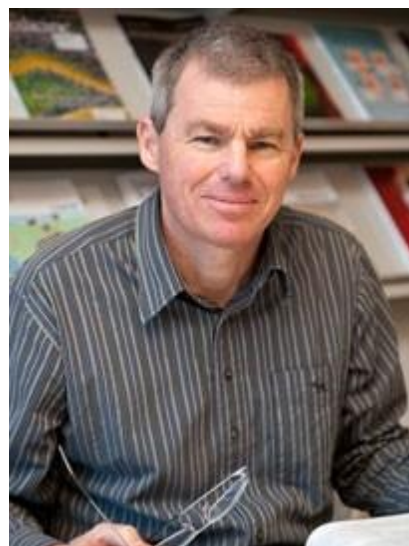
Professor Graham Le Gros, BSc(Massey), DIP Immunol(Otago), MPHIL(Auckland), PhD(Auckland), FRSNZ, **Director and Asthma and Allergic Diseases Research Group Leader of the Malaghan Institute** will be the guest speaker at the Allergy New Zealand 2012 Annual General Meeting.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 15 August starting at 7pm at the Fickling Centre, 546 Mt Albert Road, Three Kings, Auckland.

The Malaghan Institute is New Zealand's leading medical research institute focused on finding cures for cancer, asthma and allergy, arthritis, multiple sclerosis and infectious disease. The Institute is an independent registered charity and is based in Wellington.

Prof Le Gros held positions at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Washington DC and Ciba-Geigy in Basel, Switzerland before joining the Malaghan Institute as Director in 1994. He has been a recipient of an International Senior Wellcome Trust Fellowship, James Cook Fellowship and in 2005 was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in recognition of his research contributions to the fields of immunology and asthma. Prof Le Gros' previous research interests have focused on basic mechanisms of allergic disease, the preclinical development of Omalizumab and what environmental factors could contribute to the worldwide increase in allergic disease.

Prof Le Gros is currently working on developing an immunotherapy or vaccine that specifically shuts down the allergic immune response and the relationship to immunity to parasitic diseases. Allergic diseases such as asthma, food allergy, eczema and hay fever are caused by an overreaction of the Th2 component of the immune system to harmless environmental triggers that we breathe in, touch or eat. The Th2 immune response normally functions to protect individuals from parasitic worm infections.



"We don't know why the immune systems of individuals with asthma or food allergy respond to house dust mites and food proteins as though they were parasites," says Prof Le Gros. "But what we do know from our research is that if we shut down the Th2 immune response before it gets going, we can prevent the development of asthma and allergy symptoms."

Allergy New Zealand's Chair, Tim Tenbensen PhD, will present the Annual Report and oversee the election of the Board and appointments to the Medical Panel. Nomination and voting forms as well as the Agenda, will be sent to all members and are available on request.

All members are warmly invited to attend, and the meeting will also be open to the public for a gold coin donation to Allergy New Zealand's education programme. Those wishing to attend are kindly asked to RSVP to:

membership@allergy.org.nz or phone 09 623 3912 ext 2 and indicate:

- i) Name and contact details
- ii) Member or non-member
- iii) Attendance at (or apologies for) the AGM