

Thinking of committing suicide? Or worried about someone close to you who might be? Worried about your children being absorbed into the drug culture? Worried about breast cancer? Or perhaps the next time you forget a name, is this a symptom of the onset of the dreaded Alzheimer's Disease.

These are complex matters affecting today's society, but readers can rest assured that things are being done and being done at local level, with Parramatta City Rotary Club funding research in these areas.

On May 4th, Parramatta City Rotary Club will be hearing progress reports from four post-graduate students who have been granted a total of \$348,000 by Parramatta City Rotary, Parramatta-based Australian Rotary Health and research establishments. The reports will be heard at a special Rotary function at Oatlands Golf Club.



Dr Tonelle Handley (above) is a postdoctoral research fellow at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales. She completed a Bachelor of Social Science with a major in psychology, and a Graduate Diploma in Psychology, at the University of Newcastle.

In 2013 she completed her PhD thesis, which was supported by a Funding Partners scholarship from Australian Rotary Health and the Rotary Club of Parramatta City. This thesis explored risk factors for thoughts of suicide in high-risk groups. Her current research continues in this area, with a focus on suicide prevention among young Australians.

Peter Choi completed a Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours) degree in 2011 at the University of Sydney. He is now undertaking a PhD degree with the ANZAC research institute, Concord Hospital, University of Sydney. His PhD research is a three year project which began in 2012. This project will focus on the role of androgen hormones in neoplastic transformation, including the development of cancer, of the breast and uterus.

Blagojce (Billy) Jovcevski completed his Bachelor of Science (Biological Sciences) (Honours) degree in 2011 at the University of Wollongong. He is now undertaking a PhD with the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute with the University of

Wollongong. His research is part of a three-year project focusing on the biological processes involved in Alzheimer's Disease at molecular level.



Louise Birrell (above) completed a bachelor of Social Science in 2007 and an honours degree in psychology at Macquarie University in 2012, at Macquarie University. She is now undertaking her PhD at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales.

Ms Birrell's research is part of a three year research project funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, which aims to evaluate an online school-based prevention program for substance use, depression and anxiety in adolescents. She is has been a volunteer Lifeline crisis telephone counsellor for three years and is presently a project coordinator.

Ann Badger is undertaking her PhD studies as part of a project being conducted in School of Psychology, University of Wollongong. The title of her project is "Developing science-based guidelines to overcome barriers which impede university students' help-seeking, and engagement in existing initiatives, for low intensity depression symptoms".

Parramatta City Rotary Club president Ron Edgar said that since 2008, the club had supported nine PhD students with Australian Rotary Health Funding Partner Scholarships. Four students had already completed their studies. The fields covered included breast cancer, prostate cancer, depression, mental health and suicide prevention, and Alzheimer's Disease.

Each scholarship gave the student \$29,000 a year for three years. The \$29,000 was made up of \$7,000 from Australian Rotary Health, \$11,000 from the research establishment involved in the study, and \$11,000 from Parramatta City Rotary Club.

Mr Edgar said Parramatta City Rotary worked closely with Australian Rotary Health, which was established in 1981 initially to fund research on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and had since grown to become Australia's largest non-government funding body on mental illness, as well as funding research in other health-related areas.