

## Vale Dr David Leslie

VIDRL Staff mourn the loss of Dr David Leslie, Medical Microbiologist, who passed away on 4 July after a long illness. David will be remembered for his keen intellect, his commitment, and his passion for his microbiology discipline, with specific expertise in Mycobacteria and Syphilis where he was a leading authority within Australia. He was greatly respected and valued as a source of advice by colleagues around Melbourne, and further afield. David's leadership was always welcoming and encouraging to the many scientists and clinicians that were fortunate enough to work with him.

David's relationship with VIDRL has been a long one. In 1986 he trained as a registrar in the Microbiology Department, Fairfield Hospital, which has gone on to become part of VIDRL. He was then appointed as Medical Microbiologist and Head of the Department of Clinical Pathology in 1993, and Deputy Director of VIDRL in 1995. He was instrumental in the computerisation of the Clinical Pathology Department; and greatly facilitated the unification of Clinical Pathology and Virology in 1993 under Stephen Locarnini's leadership to form VIDRL. David had a strong belief in the concept and importance of a public health reference laboratory during a challenging climate of economic rationalism.

David was active in committee work, serving lengthy periods on Victorian advisory committees for Tuberculosis, Syphilis, and Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Blood-Borne Viruses. He was an expert reviewer for many peer-reviewed journals including the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*, and *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. He was a long-standing examiner for the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA); and reviewed serology quality assurance programs for RCPA in Syphilis, Legionella and Hydatids.

David was also closely involved in registrar training. There are a great many clinical microbiologists and infectious diseases physicians, around Melbourne, and Australia who have spent time as registrars at VIDRL, and have been supervised by David. That generation of expertise is part of David's legacy.

After some years in New South Wales, David returned to VIDRL in 2002 as Medical Microbiologist and Head of the Division of Microbiology and Laboratory Services. He resumed his leadership of the Victorian Mycobacterium Reference Laboratory at VIDRL, and his representation on the Victorian Tuberculosis Advisory Committee and more recently the Victorian Syphilis Advisory Committee. Syphilis having long been a rare disease, had undergone resurgence by this time, and David's expert advice has been in high demand. David foresaw the need for improved Syphilis diagnostics, and was instrumental in the introduction of Syphilis nucleic acid testing at VIDRL, and championing syphilis research. Between 2010 and 2014 as part of VIDRL's leadership David contributed to design of new facilities at the Doherty Institute, and the successful move of his group. David has since remained on staff through a long battle with illness up until his recent passing.

In his personal life David was an avid bird watcher and lover of nature; in later years spending much time on his property on French Island. He also loved cars and enjoyed live music. David was generally a private man but happy to express an opinion on topics he was passionate about, like microbiology, politics and the environment.

He will be greatly missed as a colleague and a friend.