

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Professor Alison Venn appointed as new Director at Menzies

The University of Tasmania has announced that Professor Alison Venn, an internationally renowned population health expert with broad experience in chronic disease, will be the new Director of the Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

Professor Venn is well known to many Tasmanians through the partnerships and collaborations she has forged with Government, clinicians and the community, as well as through her national and international standing as an epidemiologist.

The Chair of the Menzies Board, Mr Bruce Neill, said Professor Venn was ideally suited to lead the next phase of the Institute's medical research with its Tasmanian, national and international contexts.

"This appointment of Professor Venn, who was a Deputy Director of Menzies, recognises the depth of our talent and the capacity of the scientists within our ranks," Mr Neill said.

"Professor Venn has made an enormous contribution to Institute's growth across all areas and is ideally suited to leading Menzies in the exciting years ahead."

University Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the Institute would be well served by the combination of Professor Venn's research excellence and her intimate understanding of the institution.

"Professor Venn brings a unique appreciation of the way research at Menzies has developed from its base in population health research to its expansion more recently into world-class laboratory and clinical research," Professor Rathjen said.

"Her expertise is highly impressive across a range of research areas as well as in developing partnerships that help to ensure that research is translated into clinical and policy outcomes with direct relevance to the community."

Professor Venn said she was delighted to be offered the opportunity to build on the solid foundations that have been carefully put down at Menzies during the past 27 years.

“I look forward to continuing to build important partnerships for the Institute across the research sector, with Government and with the community. I will be actively encouraging the translation of research into evidence-based healthcare and policy,” she said.

“I am also looking forward to continuing to mentor the incredible talent pool that we see in our young scientists here.

“At Menzies we place great value in our place within the University and in our relationship with the Tasmanian community. To have the opportunity to oversee the continuation and growth of those relationships is very exciting.”

Over her career Professor Venn has been awarded more than \$30 million in research funding and has had more than 140 peer-reviewed journal articles published, including in *The Lancet*, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *British Medical Journal* and the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Professor Venn is a leading epidemiologist but began her career as a biomedical scientist specialising in immunology and biochemistry. As well as being a Deputy Director of Menzies she has been Acting Director on two previous occasions.

She currently holds an NHMRC Senior Research Fellowship, leads the Childhood Determinants of Adult Health Study, is the Director of the Tasmanian Cancer Registry and the Tasmanian Data Linkage Unit, leads two NHRMC-funded partnerships with the Tasmanian Government and is co-investigator of a major NHMRC-funded trial into whether Vitamin D supplementation reduces mortality and the incidence of cancer. As Menzies Director she will also be part of the University’s Senior Management Team.

Professor Venn will take up her appointment in the New Year.