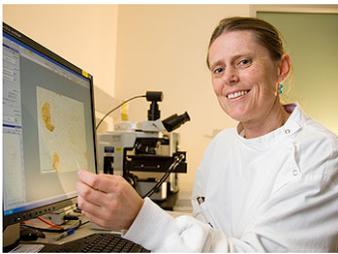


Celebrating  
**60**  
YEARS | Because of my  
**EISENHOWER**  
FELLOWSHIP...



### **DR. MELISSA LITTLE, 2006 AUSTRALIA**

Principal Research Fellow, Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland

When Dr. Melissa Little began her Eisenhower Fellowship in 2006, she was already a recognized leader in the life sciences whose influence extended throughout Australia and beyond. Her positions at the time included Principal Research Fellow of the National Health and Medical Research Council and Founder and Chair of the Renal Regeneration Consortium, a national collaborative effort to develop alternative treatments for chronic kidney disease.



Her fellowship took her to 15 cities across the country, where she met with politicians and policy-makers on the federal and state levels to get insights into the political realities and public sentiment with respect to embryonic stem cell research. One of the most influential outcomes of these meetings was a greater appreciation of how important it is for members of the scientific community to engage with the public.

Melissa also met with CEOs and others at various biotech and pharmaceutical industries. One of her most noteworthy experiences was her visit to the Pima- Maricopa Indian Community in Scottsdale, AZ, a community that suffers from an extremely high rate of renal disease. In reflecting on this experience, Melissa commented, “What impressed me the most was the empowerment of this community to deal with and care for its own” and went on to say, “This was a community taking charge of its problems, and it was an inspiration to watch.”

After her return to Australia, Melissa’s career trajectory soared. Within a year she had accepted a position as the Chief Scientific Officer of the Australian Stem Cell Centre. During this time, Melissa established and opened a research laboratory in Queensland called the IMB Kidney Research Laboratory. The research center focuses on molecular genetics of kidney development and the causes of renal disease with the aim of developing stem cell technology for use in kidney regeneration.

Shortly after adding these roles to her resume, Melissa also returned to her position as a Professor at the University of Queensland. She has pioneered stem cell biology in the area of kidney disease, becoming a world leader on this topic. This has included bringing together several international consortia to work on the problem of renal disease and regenerative medicine. She is also involved in several national leadership roles in health and medical research in Australia, including the current McKeon review of Health and Medical Research.

When asked to reflect upon her career and impact since her fellowship experience, Melissa writes, “I feel like leadership was something that was thrust upon me and not the other way around. I have had a career characterized by reaching positions of responsibility way too early, or was I blessed with opportunities for independence that many don’t have until much later in their careers? The other women in the Multi-Nation group I was a part of not only provided their friendship, but simply existed and thereby gave me the evidence that I could be a scientist, a professional, a leader and a mother. What this group showed me was that each person on the globe shares the same fears and aspirations for the ones that they love.”

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