

SPECIAL SEMINAR

WEDNESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2012 AT 1.00PM
WESTPAC AUDITORIUM, BANCROFT CENTRE, QIMR

The identification of therapeutic targets in melanoma



Ken Dutton-Regester
Oncogenomics Laboratory
QIMR

Ken Dutton-Regester, a Queensland Smart Futures Scholar and Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering Young Science Ambassador, is currently completing his PhD in the Oncogenomics Laboratory and through the Queensland University of Technology. He has also been a laboratory technician in the sequencing and SNP genotyping nodes at the Australian Genome Research Facility since 2006.

Disseminated or late stage melanoma has historically been difficult to treat, with patients typically exhibiting a median survival of six months on standard chemotherapeutic regimens. However in 2011, two new drugs, which have shown significant clinical responses, were approved for the treatment of melanoma, a first in over 40 years.

One of these drugs, a BRAF inhibitor known as Vemurafenib (PLX4032), has become a poster-child for personalised medicine, demonstrating dramatic responses in patients with BRAF V600E mutations. Notably, the success of these molecularly based targeted drugs have stemmed from earlier reports identifying those mutations responsible for the development and progression of melanoma.

This seminar will describe the application of high throughput technologies, including next generation sequencing, in the identification of frequently somatically mutated genes contributing to the aetiology of metastatic melanoma. These findings will be discussed in context to the clinical relevance of existing and emerging therapeutic strategies in the treatment of this disease.