## PRESENTERS FOR SYMPOSIUM 5:
## Drug discovery: a collaborative effort

**Dr Jennifer McKimm-Breschkin** BScHons, PhD, CSIRO Materials Science and Engineering

Dr McKimm-Breschkin joined CSIRO in 1987. She trained as a virologist and was part of the team involved in the development of the world's first influenza specific drug, Relenza, including carrying out preclinical studies on drug resistance. She continues to work in the evolving field of drug resistance and has worked with both national and international pharmaceutical companies on development of first and second generation influenza antivirals. . She is a member of the Australian and American Societies for Microbiology, and is on the Antiviral Group committee of the International Society for Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses.

**Christopher Burns,** Laboratory Head and Head of Medicinal Chemistry, Chemical Biology Division, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Dr Burns received a PhD in Organic Chemistry from the University of Melbourne in 1989 and undertook postdoctoral research at Penn State University, USA. In 1991, he joined Pfizer Central Research in the UK and after five years returned to Australia to take up a position as Research Fellow in the School of Chemistry at the University of Sydney. After two years he joined biotech company Ambri Pty Ltd and in 2001 moved to Melbourne-based biotech Cytopia to establish and lead the Medicinal Chemistry team. In 2006 he was appointed Director of Research. In 2010 Dr Burns joined the Chemical Biology division at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research as a Laboratory Head and Head of Medicinal Chemistry. Dr Burns is a co-author on over 40 scientific publications, a co-inventor on over 20 patents, and was the lead medicinal chemist in two programs that have resulted in the discovery of drugs entering clinical trials. In particular, the dual JAK1/JAK2 inhibitor CYT387, now known as momelitinib, has completed Phase II trials for treatment of myelofibrosis. The compound and related IP was acquired by Gilead Sciences Inc in 2012 for US$510million and Phase III trials are due to start in the near future. Dr Burns' research interests include the design of biologically active compounds for use as chemical probes and drugs, and the design of prodrugs and antedrugs for more effective targeted therapies.

**Alistair Draffan**, Director, Drug Discovery, Biota

Alistair is a medicinal chemist with substantial experience in the discovery and development of novel molecules for infectious and inflammatory diseases. Alistair has held leadership roles in multidisciplinary teams that have advanced projects from early discovery to the clinic. He has been a senior member of collaborative projects including Biota's research efforts with AstraZeneca (respiratory syncytial virus) and Boehringer Ingelheim (hepatitis C). Alistair is currently Director, Drug Discovery at Biota and his previous positions include Associate Director, Medicinal Chemistry (Biota) and Senior Medicinal Chemist (Celltech R&D, UK).

**Prof William A. Denny,** Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Bill Denny is Co-Director of the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre and a Principal Investigator in the Maurice Wilkins Centre, University of Auckland. Trained as a chemist at Auckland and Oxford Universities, he is a past-President of the NZ Institute of Chemistry and the NZ Society for Oncology. Awards include the Rutherford Medal of the Royal Society of NZ (1995), the Adrien Albert Medal of the UK Royal Society of Chemistry (2005), the Albert Lectureship of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (2006), the NZBio Biotechnologist of the Year (2007), the University of Auckland Commercialisation Medal (2012) and the 2014 Medicinal Chemistry award of the American Chemical Society. He has been closely involved in the design and development of 12 drugs brought to or approaching clinical trials for cancer and infectious diseases, and is a scientific co-founder of the companies Proacta Inc (hypoxia-activated prodrugs) and Pathway Therapeutics (kinase inhibitors).