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DEMENTIA COSTS SET TO SOAR WARNS VISITING EXPERT

If better treatments are not found to prevent dementia the cost to Australia's healthcare budget as well as the number of people with the disease will soar in the next few decades, according to Professor Craig Ritchie.

Ritchie, from the Psychiatry of Ageing at the University of Edinburgh, will be in Melbourne to deliver the Wicking Trust Public Lecture on October 14.

He says that scientists are closer to a dementia breakthrough than ever before.

But he warns that we need to make our brains healthier in mid-life to reduce the probability of getting dementia.

Currently there are over 340,000 Australians with dementia and this will rise to around 900,000 by 2050. Direct health and aged care system dementia expenditure is over \$5b and is expected to rise to over \$80b (2006-07 dollars) by the 2060's*.

Worldwide the costs of dementia were \$604bn in 2010. If dementia were a country, it would be the world's 18th largest economy.

Prof Ritchie is leading the A\$100m *European Prevention of Alzheimer's Dementia* (EPAD) Project in Europe. The goal of EPAD is to prevent dementia in people with evidence of the disease but who still may have little or no complaints or clinical symptoms.

Prof Ritchie said: "Brain failure is no different in some ways to other health conditions like cardiac failure. Both are often processes taking place over decades before symptoms develop. In cardiac disease we try to reduce the build up of waxy plaque in coronary arteries decades before you might get your heart attack through improved diet, not smoking and weight control. Some people may need drugs or surgery – but all in an attempt to reduce the risk of for example a heart attack".

* Further statistics can be found at: <https://fightdementia.org.au/national/statistics>

The JO & JR Wicking Trust, managed by Equity Trustees, is proud to present the Wicking Public Lecture, which focus on exploring the impacts and research into Alzheimer's disease and the Wicking Symposium (by invitation only).

For further information and to arrange an interview with Prof Ritchie, please contact:

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Equity Trustees Media Release



The J.O. & J.R. Wicking Trust (The Wicking Trust) was established under the terms of the Will of the late John Oswald Wicking, following his death on 11 June 2002. It is now one of Australia's most significant charitable trusts distributing around \$4 million annually.

Through its major grants program the Trust aims to achieve systemic change in the areas of ageing and Alzheimer's disease. The Wicking Trust is proud to also enjoy well-established partnerships with Vision Australia and the O'Brien Foundation (formerly the Microsurgery Foundation).

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