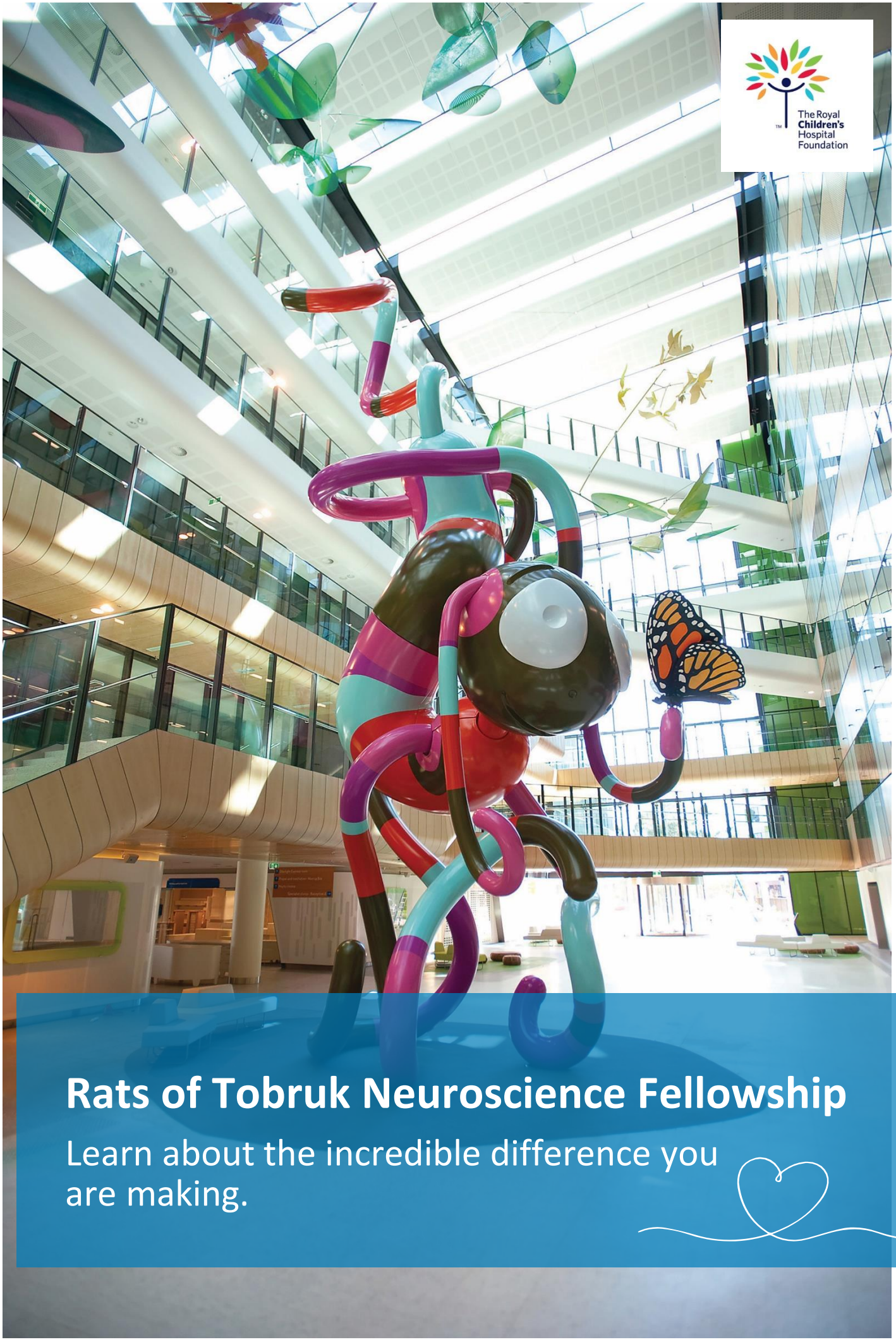


Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship

Learn about the incredible difference you are making.

Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship Fund

2025 Financial Year Fund Report

The Rats of Tobruk Association's (ROTA) commitment to the care of future generations of Australian children, through the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Neuroscience Fellowship, enables vitally important research and care for paediatric neurology patients and their families.

In 2010, The Rats of Tobruk presented a cheque for $1.5 million to the RCH Foundation, generously donated from the sale of Rats of Tobruk House in 2007. With this gift began the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship Fund, providing specialised training for up and coming neurologists and changing children's health both in Australia and around the world. To further honour the Rats' legacy of wanting to make a positive difference to the lives of sick children all over the world, the Cockatoo Ward, which provides comprehensive care to patients with neurological conditions, is affectionately also named the 'Rats of Tobruk Ward'. Now in its sixteenth year, the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship has an inspirational track record of success and achievement, and is incredibly valued among the RCH community.

The following report provides an update on the financial status of the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship Fund in 2025.

Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship - Fund status

ROTA's support is instrumental in ensuring our exceptional medical professionals in the Neurology Department have the resources necessary to provide unparalleled care to children in need.

One hundred percent of the inaugural $1.5M gift made in 2010 is retained by the RCH Foundation as a perpetual endowment. The funds held in the endowment are invested and managed so that interest can be directed both to funding appointment of the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellow each year, and reinvested to maintain the endowment's value.

In FY24 there was a capital injection of funds to ensure the Endowment can fully support the Fellowship. This took the opening balance of the Endowment for FY25 to $2,547,720. I am pleased to inform you that for FY2025 The Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship Fund will receive a total interest rate of 7.40% for the year to 30 June 2025 (3.0% Capital / 4.40% Operating). Capital Interest for FY25 is estimated to be $72,310 and operating interest is estimated to be $109,236. This impact will be instrumental to the Fellowship and for this we are most grateful.

The Fund will continue to be protected and applied exclusively for the RCH Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship, a unique program of research and care. ROTA's recent generous contribution and careful planning with the hospital have secured the Fellowship over the near term. The long term future of the Fellowship may be strengthened through bequest commitments.

The RCH and RCH Foundation are deeply grateful for ROTA members' generosity as this service makes a vital difference for so many neurology patients and families around Australia, and befittingly honours the Rats' values and intent to positively impact the future.

Dr Jamie Leong, 2024 Fellow,

at Rats of Tobruk Ward

Financial Year Ended 30 June

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (estimated)
Fund Opening balance	1,688,221	1,691,325	1,691,825	1,691,955	2,547,720
Revenue					
Donations	3,200	700	100	2,948	-
Interest - capital*	-	-	-	774,895	72,310
Interest - operating	59,371	59,469	59,478	157,924	109,236
Total revenue	62,571	60,169	59,578	935,766	181,545
Distributions**					
ROTA Fund contribution					
Feb 20 - Jan 21	59,467				
Feb 21 - Jan 22		59,669			
Feb 22 - Jan 23			59,448		
Feb 23 - Jan 24				80,000	
Feb 24 - Jan 25***					100,552
Fund Closing Balance	**1,691,325**	**1,691,825**	**1,691,955**	**2,547,720**	**2,628,713**
RCH Foundation contribution					
Feb 20 - Jan 21	20,533				
Feb 21 - Jan 22		20,331			
Feb 22 - Jan 23			20,552		
Feb 23 - Jan 24				-	
Feb 24 - Jan 25***					(20,552)
TOTAL Distributions	**80,000**	**80,000**	**80,000**	**80,000**	**80,000**
Fund - Capital balance					2,482,629
Fund - Operating balance					146,085
Fund Closing Balance					**2,628,713**

* Interest - capital in 2024 includes capital uplift of $704,777 and interest of $70,118

** Fellow appointments commence in February.

*** Annual distributions of $80,000 fully funded by ROTA since 2023.
2025 number includes 2023 adjustment of RCHF contribution now funded by ROTA.

Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship - Impact

Each year in Australia, over 250,000 people are diagnosed with epilepsy. Yet, for around half of those, including around 35 per cent of children, the cause of the epilepsy is unknown. Epilepsy can have a devastating effect on children and their families, and parents say they often live in constant fear that their child may die from a seizure.

The Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship provides a future paediatric neurologist with specialized training in the management of childhood epilepsy, with a strong focus on the use of Electroencephalogram (EEG), brain imaging, genetic testing and drug, dietary and surgical treatments. The Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship is one of three paediatric epilepsy fellowships available in Australia, and is highly sought after amongst child neurologists in training, based on the quality of training and the reputation of the RCH as the national centre for excellence in the treatment of paediatric epilepsy.

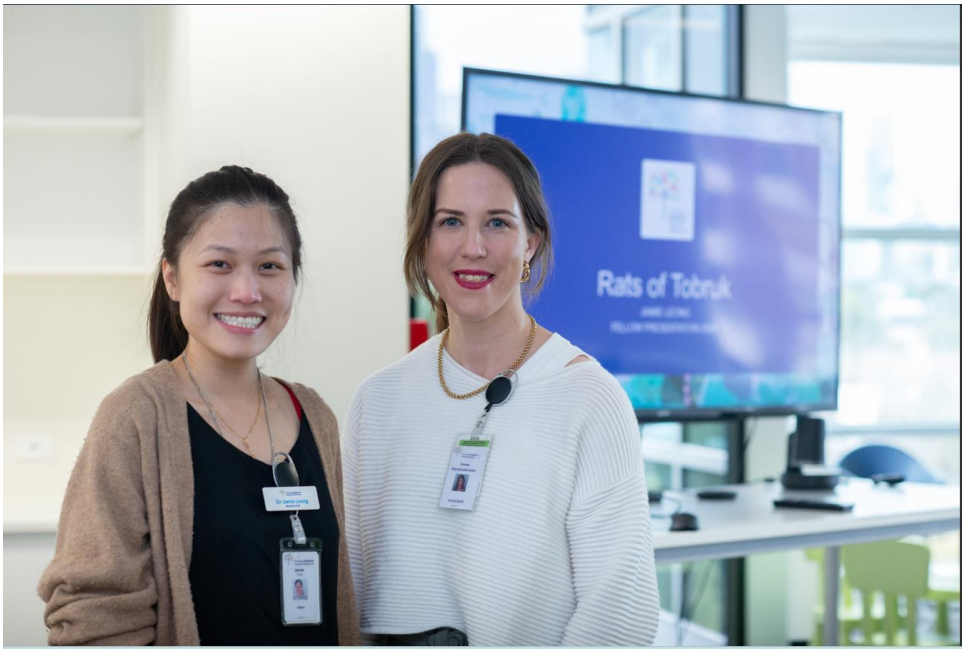
Through 2024, the Rats of Tobruk Fellow, Dr Jamie Leong, developed core competencies in the clinical management of complex epilepsy patients, interpretation of video EEG and routine EEG reporting, and identification of normal anatomy and abnormalities on brain imaging. She has been a key team member for epilepsy patients and their families' journey through hospital; and has been responsible for managing each step from admission and medication management, through to the operative plan and recovery.

In June 2024, the RCH Foundation welcomed Rats of Tobruk Association members to a morning tea and tour of the Rats of Tobruk Ward and EEG monitoring room. We were joined by Associate Professor Mark Mackay, Director of Neurology; Dr Jamie Leong, 2024 Rats of Tobruk Fellow; and Dr Emma MacDonald-Laurs, 2019 Rats of Tobruk Fellow. Jamie spoke about her journey from Christchurch, New Zealand to RCH; and the complex patients she has met with very difficult epilepsies. Emma spoke about her journey after the Fellowship, and the passion she developed for diagnosing and treating children with surgically remediable epilepsies.

We were also lucky enough to welcome Kate and Nick with their daughter Frankie. At age 15 months, Frankie had two very long seizures requiring admission to hospital. She recovered from the seizures, but started having different, but frequent, small seizures. An MRI scan showed that Frankie had sustained an injury to her temporal lobe from the big seizures she had experienced as a baby, which was causing the smaller seizures.

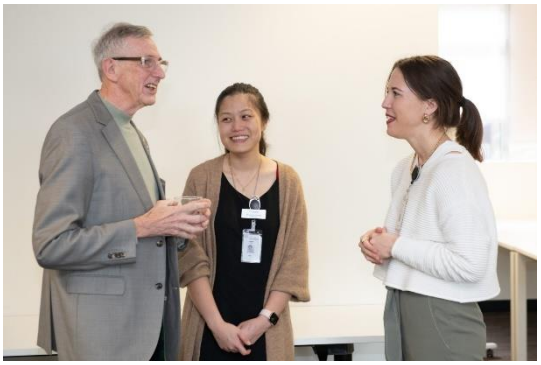
Frankie's seizures were resistant to medications so early in 2024 she underwent epilepsy surgery and is now seizure free.

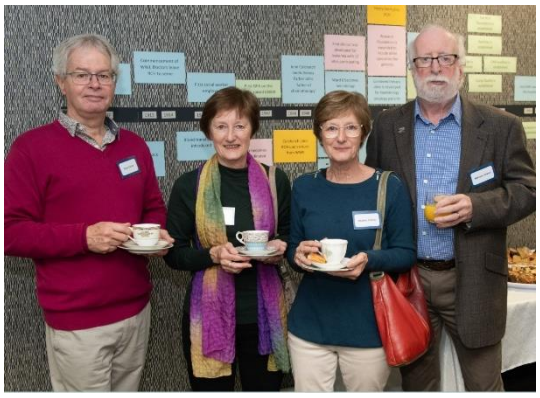
It is because of the generous funding from the Rats of Tobruk Association, that patients like Frankie can get the best specialized care and treatment.

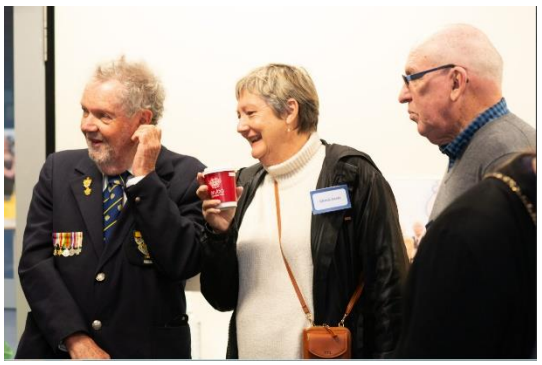


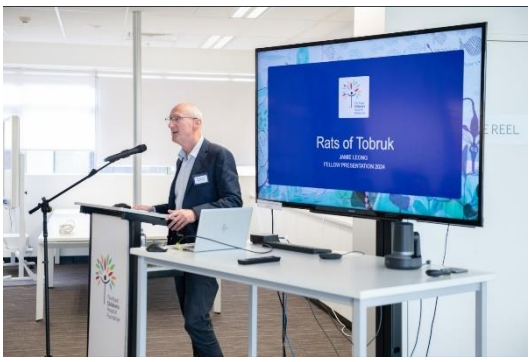
Dr Emma MacDonald-Laurs and Dr Jamie Leong, at the 2024 Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Morning Tea.

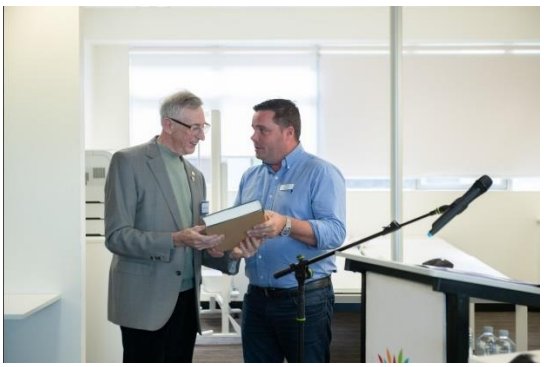
Celebrating the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship in 2024

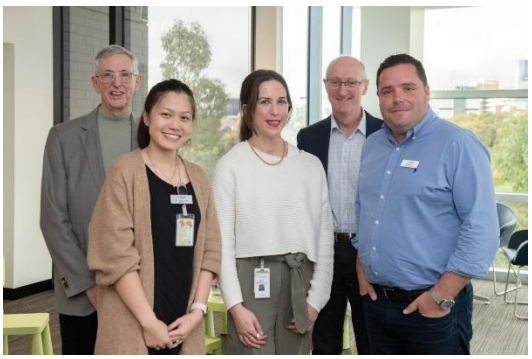


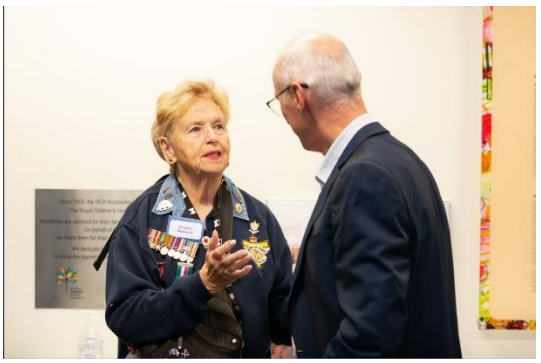












Where are they now?

Dr Jamie Leong, 2024 Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellow

Originally from Christchurch, New Zealand, Dr Jamie Leong started her journey in Pediatric Neurology at Christchurch Hospital and fell in love with the specialty, not just because of the content, but because of her two mentors at Christchurch Hospital. Jamie spent a year training in South Australia before making her way to RCH to start as the 2024 Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellow. In 2025 Jamie is continuing her training at RCH and will return to New Zealand at the end of the year.

Dear ROTA Members,

Thank you for having me as your fellow last year. I have done 6 months of epilepsy and 6 months of the general neurology training. I am spending 6 more months at the RCH as the Neuromuscular Fellow prior to going back to New Zealand to work as a Neurologist.

In the last year, I have started a project looking at the efficacy of cannabidiol in difficult to treat epilepsies which will hopefully be published in an Australian medical journal and will contribute to the current knowledge and literature about this. I have also presented a different project looking at cavernomas and epilepsy surgery at an Australia/New Zealand Neurology Conference. I am also contributing to writing a guideline on Dravet syndrome (a severe epilepsy which presents in the infant age group) which will help in delivering best care possible for this patient population.

I have been incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to do all of this, and it has definitely helped me grow as a neurology trainee, and set me up for delivering the best care possible for children with neurological conditions in New Zealand. Thank you once again, and I look forward to seeing everyone again soon.

Dr Jamie Leong, 2024 Fellow

Dr Emma MacDonald-Laurs, 2019 Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellow

Dr Emma Macdonald-Laurs is a paediatric epileptologist and neurologist at The Royal Children's Hospital, and a Clinician-Scientist Fellow at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Dr Macdonald-Laurs is an early career clinician-scientist whose interests include epilepsy surgery, advanced neuroimaging and EEG analysis, and automated intelligence. She was conferred her PhD in April 2024 which examined bottom-of-sulcus dysplasia, a tiny brain lesion which causes a surgically-remediable epilepsy in children. Dr Macdonald-Laurs' research is already directly translating into precision diagnosis, with early detection of MRI-negative lesions through the use of automated (AI) detection methods, followed by precision epilepsy surgery. Over the next few years Dr Macdonald-Laurs will continue to develop and implement tools to detect subtle epileptogenic lesions while also seeking to better understand the brain network and cognitive changes associated with uncontrolled seizures.

I came to the RCH after completing training in New Zealand and Sydney to get further training in epilepsy and exposure to epilepsy surgery here at the RCH. In 2019 I was lucky enough to be the Rats of Tobruk Epilepsy fellowship followed by another year of epilepsy fellowship and epilepsy research in 2020. From 2021 to 2023 I did a PhD and started working as a junior consultant completing my PhD at the end of last year. This year I am working full time equivalent a paediatric epileptologist here at RCH and clinician scientist through MCRI.

Dr Emma MacDonald-Laurs, 2019 Fellow

Thank you.

Thank you to all the ROTA members for your ongoing support of the Neurology Department. To those who have generously left a Gift in your Will to continue the incredible legacy of the Rats of Tobruk, thank you.

If you have any questions, or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact:

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