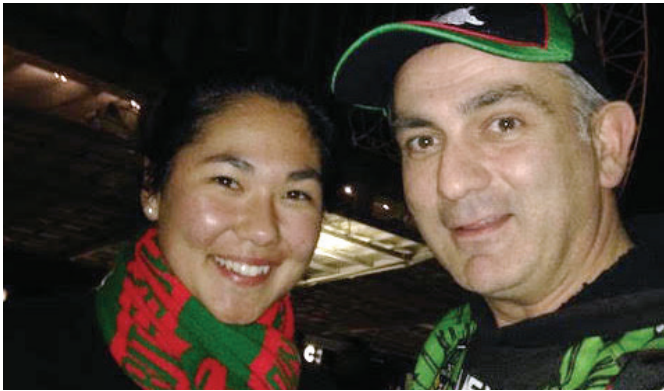


## Understanding DISEASE... Finding a CURE

### PROFESSOR CHRIS SEMSARIAN AM



No one likes a good underdog story more than Professor Chris Semsarian AM. And he believes there's no better rags-to-riches tale than that of the South Sydney Rabbitohs.

"The reason I love the Rabbitohs is because they're a team with heart, and they come from basic beginnings. They got kicked out of the NRL in the late 1990s, but they fought back and re-entered the competition in the early 2000s. They came last for the first few years but they never gave up, and won the premiership in 2014."

You could call Chris a bit of an underdog himself. He's open about growing up in a housing commission for the first 16 years of his life. But he believes it's made him a better person.

Now, Chris is an internationally-renowned cardiologist who splits his time working between the Centenary Institute, Royal Prince

Alfred Hospital and Sydney University. At Centenary, Chris leads the Molecular Cardiology Program, which he established in 2001.

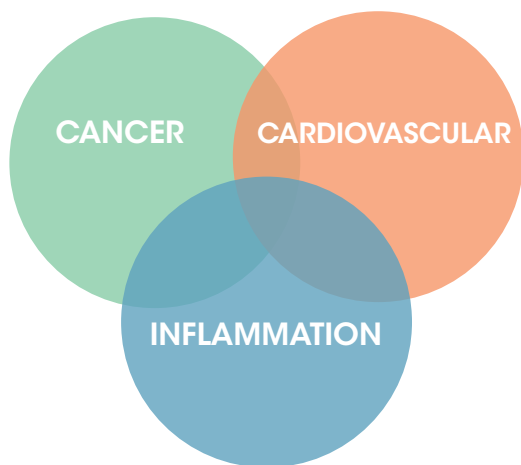
Chris' research is focused on genetic heart disease in young people, and how those findings can be translated into improving the care of his patients.

During his time as a cardiologist, Chris has seen hundreds of patients and their families. A particular case that sticks in his mind involved a healthy woman in her early 20s who had been experiencing heart palpitations while playing netball. After determining the genetic cause behind her heart problems, they also learned her brother had died suddenly playing rugby in the UK about 15 years earlier, and the family had never found out why.

"We contacted the UK and there was one piece of tissue left from his post-mortem. It was shipped to us, and after extracting the DNA, we discovered he carried the same genetic change as his sister and had died from a cardiomyopathy. The family was so grateful to have some degree of closure. That gene result has also been used by his affected sister to have preimplantation genetic diagnosis, so she's since had two children guaranteed not to carry the gene mutation."

As his obsession with the South Sydney Rabbitohs would suggest, Chris loves sport – not just as a spectator, but as a cardiologist for the Australian Cricket Team. He also enjoys spending any free time he has with his wife and three children, but he admits he's partial to some 'me-time' on the weekend, which involves just him and a coffee at the local cafe!

### WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?



#### CANCER

Cancer is a disease of the cells, which are the body's basic building blocks.

1 in 3 women and 1 in 2 men will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85.

#### INFLAMMATION

Inflammation is the body's natural response to protect itself against harm. There are two types: acute and chronic.

1 in 9 Australians have asthma, around 2.5 million people.

#### CARDIOVASCULAR

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is a collective term for diseases of the heart and blood vessels.

Almost 1 in 3 deaths in Australia in 2015 were due to cardiovascular disease.

*Together we are the solution...together we can save lives.*