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## MAJOR DONORS 2007

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**Support for research:** The University of Melbourne's Professor Glenn Bowes with the manager of the Picchi Brothers Foundation, Mr Joseph Lukaitis.

## Vote of thanks for quiet achievers

Brothers, Vittorio, Antonio, Pietro and Arduino Picchi migrated to Australia in the 1920s and 1930s from the village of Lucignana, near Lucca in Tuscany. They brought with them to Australia a gracious artisan culture and, like so many of our Italian migrants, worked hard and became successful, establishing a family business, Mei and Picchi, in Collingwood, which still operates to this day, in Fitzroy.

In their later years, the brothers set up the Picchi Brothers Foundation Inc, with the aim of funding cancer and asthma research. The foundation, which operates very quietly and effectively, is making a difference to research in Victoria.

The foundation is managed by Mr Joseph Lukaitis, of the law firm Lukaitis Partners, and trustees include Mr Adrian Trubiani, Professor Richard Fox, Mr James Pierini and Mr Simon Osborne, as well as Professor Terry Nolan, Head of the School of Population Health at the University.

In 2006 the foundation made a financial grant of \$187,500 to Dr Stephen Turner and Professor Dale Godfrey in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, towards the purchase of a Fluorescent Activated

Cell Sorter (FACSARIA). This sophisticated instrument has greatly assisted their research on immunity to infections like influenza.

At an overall cost of \$2.4 million, the FACSARIA is a unique machine, able to sort cells quickly and with a high level of accuracy. It has two lasers and can detect up to eight different measurements. This means researchers can design experiments with a high level of complexity and precision, using the FACSARIA to isolate various cells such as stem cells, immune cells and cancer cells.

The addition of the FACSARIA to the Department of Microbiology and Immunology enables cutting-edge scientific research of the highest quality to be carried out.

The machine is also used by other University departments, as well as some external research organisations, all of whom reap the benefits of this amazing machine: a great example of how University resources can benefit the whole community.

In December last year, the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences held a function to thank the foundation for their generous grant to the University and we look forward to a long and productive association with them.