



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Sport

MEDIA RELEASE

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Providing \$9.46 million for innovative new diabetes research project

Today on World Diabetes Day, the Turnbull Government is delighted to announce that we will invest \$9.46 million to support new research into type 1 diabetes (T1D) – a disease for which there is no known cure.

The project will be run by St Vincent’s Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne and will bring together four of Australia’s top research teams.

Type 1 diabetes represents around 10 per cent of all cases of diabetes and is one of the most common chronic childhood conditions. It affects approximately 150,000 Australians.

Although the onset of T1D occurs most frequently in people under 30 years, new research suggests almost half of all people who develop the condition are diagnosed over the age of 30.

The project to be headed by Professor Thomas Kay will focus on three intersecting themes.

Firstly, focusing on early life and understanding why T1D develops.

Secondly, looking at prevention and seeking to identify new drugs to stop the disease from occurring.

Thirdly, looking at treatment and aiming to improve therapies to replace the cells that are destroyed during the disease process.

This research will be critical to developing integrated approaches to assist those with the disease and to find ways to stop it occurring in the first instance.

Professor Thomas Kay from St Vincent’s Institute said the emotional, physical and financial impacts of T1D are far-reaching for those who are diagnosed with the disease, as well as their families and friends.

“It is our intention to make discoveries that positively impact on those living with the disease, and hopefully, prevent others from developing it in the future,” Professor King said.

“On behalf of myself and my co-chief investigators (Professor Andrew Lew and Professor Len Harrison, both from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Research; and Professor Philip O’Connell from the Westmead Institute of Research and Westmead Clinical School (NSW)) – we are honoured to accept this substantial grant to undertake research into T1D, and grateful to the Australian Government for making this important, and potentially for some, life-changing announcement.

“This grant represents the support and endorsement of a collaborative approach by our Government, amongst Australia’s four top type 1 diabetes research teams, and we are delighted to be working together.

“Collectively, we have spent many years of our professional lives investigating T1D, so we are both keen, and committed, to do our best to make discoveries that will prevent or minimise, its impacts,” Professor Kay said.

This funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council’s grants program, continues the Turnbull Government’s support for Australia’s talented researchers and innovators to find solutions to health challenges.

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