



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Sport

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**\$125 million to help our scientists make the next great medical discovery**

The Turnbull Government is backing Australia's world-leading medical researchers and scientists with \$125.3 million to support their work in making the next major medical breakthrough.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding includes almost \$39 million to fight multiple types of cancer facing children and adults, marking a significant investment on World Cancer Day.

The research that's being done today by our scientists is helping to make a better tomorrow for all of us.

Among the institutions receiving new funding, the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne has been awarded \$13.2 million to continue its world-leading research into cancer immunology and immunotherapy.

I am delighted to announce the \$125 million funding grants at Peter Mac today.

Researchers at Peter Mac are looking at ways to boost the human body's own ability to destroy cancer cells. The work they do is truly incredible.

In Queensland, the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute will receive almost \$20 million to develop the tools needed to eliminate tropical diseases – an issue that's still of particular importance and relevance in the sunshine state.

And with almost \$43 million in new grants, medical research in New South Wales is receiving a major boost – with a particularly strong focus on cancer treatments and neuroscience.

Professor Paul Keall from the University of Sydney is one of those in NSW, and his team will receive \$7 million to transform the way radiotherapy is delivered, increasing cancer control and decreasing side effects – a move that could help one in every two Australians who require this type of cancer treatment.

The grants will also support more than 230,000 Australians who live with chronic Hepatitis C Virus, with \$7 million awarded to Professor Margaret Hellard from the Burnet Institute, to further her Direct Acting Antivirals work which has a cure rate of more than 90 per cent.

At the University of Adelaide, researchers will study how best to care for premature babies at home.

A New South Wales University team will investigate ways of limiting unexpected cardiac arrests in hospitals.

A team at the University of Tasmania will investigate if post-traumatic stress disorder is genetic.

And a Monash University group, in partnership with the AFL, will conduct a detailed study of detection and management of sports concussion with real-time detection of head impact in male and female footballers.

This are just a small, but very impressive, snapshot of the 110 projects and 232 researchers that will share in \$125.3 million.

Mental health is a very strong personal passion of mine, so I think it's fantastic that almost \$10 million will be invested in this area.

The five-year grants will enable highly experience researchers to work together to tackle difficult problems in health and medicine.

As Health Minister, I am committed to building the world's best health system right here in Australia.

The Turnbull Government is providing significant support for medical research and we have a rock solid commitment to Medicare.

For more information on the NHMRC grants, visit: [www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants-funding/outcomes-funding-rounds](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants-funding/outcomes-funding-rounds)

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## **Grant highlights**

### **Professor Joseph Trapani – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre**

*Immunobiology and immunotherapy of cancer*

*Program Grant – \$13,202,440*

The Peter Mac centre is changing how cancer is treated. For 60 years, there have been three effective cancer treatments: surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, often used in combination. For the last five years there has been a powerful fourth treatment – the patient's own immune system. The Peter Mac Centre has developed advances in immune-based therapies and poised to develop several further immunotherapies and is on track to test them in patients during the term of this grant.

### **Professor James McCarthy – QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute**

*Tropical diseases: Translating discoveries into better health*

*Program Grant—\$19,803,660*

While major progress is being made in the control of many infectious diseases occurring in tropical areas, including malaria worms and the bacteria that cause strep throat, current tools will not permit their full control or elimination. Professor McCarthy and his team aim to improve understanding of these diseases and to develop the much-needed tools that will be required for their elimination.

### **Professor Ashley Bush—Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health**

*Biomarkers to aid clinical trials for neurodegenerative disease*

*Program Grant— \$13,179,875*

Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease continue to affect more Australians every year, due to an ageing population and the lack of effective drugs currently available. While these diseases present with different symptoms, Professor Bush's team discovered that they share a common underlying feature—the inability to clear certain metals and proteins from the brain. AThe program aims to explore these clearance pathways in the brain and identify new targets to help better diagnose and treat these diseases.

**Professor Paul Keall—University of Sydney**

*The Australian MRI-Linac Program: Transforming the science and clinical practice of cancer radiotherapy*

*Program Grant—\$7,001,475*

Approximately 48 per cent of cancer patients require radiotherapy. The Australian MRI-Linac Program will change the science and clinical practice of radiotherapy by explicitly targeting the dynamic anatomy and physiology of cancer, increasing cancer control and decreasing treatment side effects. Successful completion of Professor Keall's program will have a direct impact on the treatment and lives of Australian cancer patients in the near future.

**Professor Margaret Hellard—Burnet Institute**

*The elimination of Hepatitis C as a global public health threat*

*Program Grant—\$7,001,475*

More than 230,000 Australians live with chronic Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) infection, with an estimated annual health care cost of \$6.5 billion if left untreated. New highly effective HCV medications—direct acting antivirals (DAAs)—have a cure rate of more than 90 per cent. DAAs will revolutionise HCV care and can now stop HCV-related deaths and transmission making HCV elimination possible. Professor Hellard and her team's program will directly contribute to the global response to HCV elimination and Australia achieving elimination by 2030.

**Professor David Atkinson—University of Western Australia**

*Improving mental health screening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pregnant women and mothers of young children*

*Partnership Project—\$1,369,612*

Mental health during and after pregnancy is important for the well-being of both mother and infant. Unfortunately, Aboriginal women in remote Australia have high levels of anxiety and depression, which can have significant short and long-term impacts on both mother and child. Currently these issues are often not identified and, if identified, services may not feel equipped to address them. This study aims to improve screening for, and contribute to addressing, perinatal mental health issues.

**Courtney Ryder—The George Institute for Global Health**

*Quality of life, associated psychological and economic family impacts, and trajectory of recovery in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander paediatric burns patients*

*Postgraduate Scholarship—\$86,117*

Over a third of burns injuries in Australia are paediatric, with over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Burns are a major injury, having devastating long-term consequences, connected to psychological distress, trauma, cost and disability. Ms Ryder's research will focus on quality of life measures, economic impacts and psychological distress, and investigate enabling and inhibitory factors to burns recovery in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their family.

**Dr Karenn Khaw—University of Adelaide**

*Fragility fractures and outcomes in older people*

*Postgraduate Scholarship—\$86,733*

Falls and broken bones are costly health problems among the elderly, even more so when there is a growing older population aged over 65 years. In Australia, about one million older people have at least one fall each year and about 40–60 per cent will sustain major injuries including broken bones. Dr Khaw's research will identify effective ways to reduce falls and improve outcomes of those who break a bone, especially of the hip.