



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

16 October 2008

NR08/

NHMRC DIRECTS \$6M TO ACT MEDICAL RESEARCH

ACT health and medical researchers have received more than \$6 million in funding from the latest round of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) project grants.

I am pleased to announce these 12 grants which are part of \$357 million funded nationally.

I commend the researchers who have been awarded grants. The high calibre of medical research in this country means that successful applicants are of an outstanding level, carrying out research that will benefit the health of Australians in both the long and short term.

The ACT is at the cutting edge of research, with the potential to prevent illness as well as improve the treatment of conditions as diverse as cancer, epilepsy and anxiety.

Grants awarded to the Australian National University John Curtin School of Medical Research are:

- **Understanding nerve impulses:** Prof Greg Stuart receives \$304,500 to study the way nerve impulses start and are propagated, to see what goes wrong in neurological disorders such as multiple sclerosis and epilepsy.
- **A potential new treatment for cancer:** Prof Phillip Board receives \$416,625 to determine whether a compound that regulates many intracellular processes in cancer cells can be used for diagnosing cancer and be targeted in chemotherapy.
- **Unstable chromosomes and cancer:** Prof David Tremethick receives \$501,250 for fundamental research that will provide important new information on how chromosomes become unstable in cancer.
- **Antiviral immunity for protection against HIV/AIDS:** Dr Charani Ranasinghe has been awarded \$531,500 to develop substances to counteract the hormone-like molecules that reduce protective immunity against HIV.

Other ACT grants include:

- **Treatment of drug resistant tumours:** Prof Robert Saint, ANU Research School of Biological Science, receives \$538,000 to assess whether a new therapeutic approach can kill drug-resistant cancer cells.
- **Web-based support to prevent anxiety:** Prof Helen Christensen, ANU Centre for Mental Health Research, receives \$605,000 to evaluate the effectiveness of a web-based program designed to reduce the risk of anxiety disorder and promote self-help.

More than 23 per cent of applications from ACT researchers were funded, which is on par with the national average.

Media contacts: Sean Kelly, Minister's office, 0417 108 362
Carolyn Norrie, NHMRC, 0422 008 512