



Friday 6 February 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA WINS \$12.8 MILLION IN TOP MEDICAL RESEARCH GRANTS

Two leading health and medical research teams in South Australia will share \$12.8 million in some of the Australian Government's most highly sought-after research grants.

The South Australian funds are part of more than \$108 million in National Health and Medical Research Council 2010 Program Grants awarded to research teams across the country.

The five-year grants are sought after because they enable research teams to pursue the best research options in their field, knowing they have the time, funds and flexibility to respond to unexpected findings and opportunities.

Echoing NHMRC's slogan, 'working to build a healthy Australia', the grants reinforce the Australian Government's election health commitments of *Keeping People Well – Focus on Prevention, Closing the Gap on Indigenous Health, Fighting Cancer – Australia's Biggest Killer* and *Ageing – Meeting Challenges of the 21st Century*.

The South Australian 2010 Program Grant recipients are:

- Professor Angel Lopez at the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science, who will receive \$3.7m. His team will investigate a group of protein hormones and their receptors that are implicated in blood cell cancers and inflammatory diseases.
- Professor James Paton at the University of Adelaide, who will receive \$9.1m. His team will seek to understand the dynamic interactions between major disease-carrying bacteria and their human hosts, urgently needed to combat bacterial infectious diseases in the 21st century.

The NHMRC funding is an essential part of the Australian Government's plans to bolster health and medical research to improve the wellbeing of all Australians.

The importance of the grants was emphasised by the Prime Minister's advance naming of Professor Angel Lopez's project as part of a major announcement on cancer research in January 2009.

All the grants were awarded through an open competitive process carried out according to the NHMRC Act, subjected to rigorous peer review and approved by NHMRC's Research Committee and Council.

WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA

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More information on the grants can be found at NHMRC's website, www.nhmrc.gov.au.

Details of the successful South Australian projects are attached.

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NHMRC 2010 Program Grant recipients in South Australia

Professor Angel Lopez, Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science, \$3.71m

Structural Biology of Cytokine Receptor Signalling

This Program will be focused on a group of protein hormones and their receptors implicated in blood cell cancers and inflammatory diseases and for which current treatments are inadequate. We will determine the mechanism of receptor activation and in particular will seek to link different forms of receptor assembly to different functions. This information will help us develop new drugs with more specificity for certain hormone functions and thus less side-effects.

Professor James Paton, University of Adelaide, \$9.07m

Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention of Bacterial Infectious Diseases

Bacterial infectious diseases remain a serious threat to human health, accounting for over 10 million deaths each year. This is a broad-based collaborative proposal, building on our previous achievements. Its aim is to better understand the dynamic interactions between major disease-causing bacteria and their human hosts, and to directly apply this new knowledge to the development of improved vaccines and novel treatment strategies. These are urgently needed to combat bacterial infectious diseases in the 21st century.

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