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New centres foster better health through research translation

Four Australian health centres have been recognised as being amongst the world’s best for using medical research to improve patient care.

The Minister for Health, Sussan Ley today announced all four as the first ever National Health and Medical Research Council Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres, following assessment by an international panel of experts.

The Centres include hospitals, universities and medical research institutes collaborating together to foster research translation.

“Research translation involves taking the findings of the thousands of experiments, reviews and articles published every day, and applying that knowledge to improve patient treatment as quickly as possible,” NHMRC CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said.

“If we want to get the most out of the research we fund, we need to make sure Australian health practitioners and decision makers have access to the latest evidence, and that they know how to apply it to help their patients,” he said.

“It’s no easy task, and in some cases research can take years, even decades before it benefits patients. Not only does research translation improve treatment, it can also restrain health care costs by ensuring patients get the most effective and cost effective treatment as soon as possible.”

Each one of the Centres was judged to be on par with the world’s best research and translation centres by a panel of international experts.

“These centres are producing first class research, and they are succeeding in turning those research outcomes into improved patient care,” Professor Anderson said.

“Being recognised as an NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre acknowledges that their work is up there with the very best in the world,” he said.

The announcement follows NHMRC’s call for applications last year. The innovative program was well received by leaders in the health system, and NHMRC received 12 submissions.
The four successful centres, recognised as NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres are:

- Alfred Health and Monash Health and Partners Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre
- Melbourne Health Care Partners Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre
- South Australian Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre
- Sydney Health Partners Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre

Three others are acknowledged as moving quickly towards becoming a NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre:

- Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre
- Sydney Alliance for Health Research and Training Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre
- Western Australian Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre

NHMRC CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said the work of these three centres so far was incredibly impressive.

“Although in some cases, collaboration between the centres is still developing, it’s clear that these have the potential to join the others in the future,” Professor Anderson said.

An eighth centre, the Hunter Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre, was a particularly strong regional model and impressed the panel by demonstrating research-based models of care that reflected the needs of the communities it serves.

“Though there was a smaller critical mass of research excellence compared to the larger Centres, the Hunter Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre is a creative, cohesive and collaborative model that already provides an excellent model for impactful regional approaches,” Professor Anderson said.

Further information on NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres and the international panel’s report is available on the NHMRC website.

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