$6.4 million to support next generation of researchers

New grants to support and develop health and medical researchers at the beginning of their careers were announced today.

The NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships were awarded to 69 outstanding health and medical graduates to support them to complete a PhD or Masters Degree.

NHMRC CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said Postgraduate Scholarships were crucial to ensuring Australia had the capacity to conduct high quality health and medical research in the future.

“The recipients of these grants have their entire careers ahead of them and these scholarships support them as they hone and shape their research ideas and methodologies,” Professor Anderson said.

“Importantly, these students come to research with fresh ideas and creative ways of thinking, so it is important that we support them at these early stages,” he said.

“There are still many unanswered questions in health and medical research and diseases like dementia, cancer and diabetes need new, innovative ways of thinking and sustained research efforts across generations.”

“Finding solutions for these conditions, and many others, will require years and years of high quality research to make real progress so we need to ensure Australia has the capacity to continue our high quality research performance in the future.”

The grants support students to conduct research across a wide range of conditions including breast cancer, cystic fibrosis, Crohn’s disease, ALS, antibiotic resistance and dementia.

They are part of a $123.5 million grant announcement made by the Minister for Health Sussan Ley today, which also included support for the commercialisation of research, large scale team grants and international collaborations.

Grant highlights

Brittany Campbell, University of Melbourne ($83,429)
Emerging evidence indicates that asthma and allergies may be caused by parental factors before conception. Miss Campbell’s research will focus on factors such as parental exposure to pets, various chemicals and reproductive risk factors to identify which factors increase the risk of allergies and asthma in order to find new ways to prevent and manage asthma and allergies in the community.

**Dr Sean Lal, University of Sydney ($107,319)**

In collaboration with researchers at Harvard University, Dr Lal hopes to show that the human heart can regenerate, challenging the long-held dogma that it cannot regrow. The research hopes to revolutionise the future direction of heart failure treatment and aims to improve the life and survival of patients with heart failure.

**Dr Peter Savas, University of Melbourne ($80,614)**

By sequencing the DNA of an individual patient’s cancer, researchers can obtain a wealth of information about their disease, because every tumour has its own unique genetic changes. By using the latest DNA sequencing technologies, Dr Savas will compare genetic changes in patients with incurable breast cancer over time. This could enable some patients to receive therapies better targeted to their tumour and may help prevent cancer from reaching such an advanced stages in future.

**Further information**

More information about the grants announced today can be found on the NHMRC website under [Outcomes of funding rounds](#).

**CONTACT:**  **NHMRC Media Team**

M: 0422 008 512

E: media@nhmrc.gov.au