The National Health and Medical Research Council has today announced the first steps in its delivery of the Australian Government’s $200 million ‘Boosting Dementia Research’ budget measure.

It includes the announcement of a new Dementia Research Team Grants scheme which opened today to support research into the causes of dementia, improved methods of prevention, new treatment options and improved patient care.

The scheme is modelled on NHMRC’s Centres of Research Excellence and is expected to fund five teams for up to $6.5 million each over five years. The grants are worth a total of $32.5 million and are just one part of the $200 million package which also includes:

• A further $62.5 million to support large scale research projects
• $9 million to support the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research
• $46 million for capacity building grants to attract researchers from other fields into dementia research, including $26 million from the Australian Research Council
• $50 million to target, coordinate and translate dementia research through the new NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research

CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said plans for the Institute were well underway.

‘This new virtual institute will draw together Australia’s outstanding researchers in dementia research, to bring a broad, collaborative approach to the highest priority research and translation question in dementia,’ Professor Anderson said.

‘This will ensure the work being conducted here at home is relevant to Australia and complements that being done elsewhere around the world,’ he said.

Since 2009, NHMRC has provided around $25 million each year for funding into dementia research.

‘$200 million is a significant boost for into dementia research, and it reflects the enormity of the challenge ahead,’ Professor Anderson said.

‘Although the common form of dementia, Alzheimer’s Disease, was first described in 1906, our understanding of dementia and our diagnostic tools are still in their infancy,’ he said.

‘In a recent forum with key stakeholders, we made a commitment to the Australian people to ensure that this significant research investment would make a lasting difference in the prevention, treatment and management of dementia. I believe that this work plan will achieve that.’

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