NHMRC ENABLING GRANTS SPECIAL FACILITIES FUNDING SCHEME 2004.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Chief Investigator –Professor Lyle Palmer
Institute – The University of Western Australia
Title of Project – A National Population-based Genetic Epidemiology, Biospecimen and Bioinformatic Resource
Funding - $1,900,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – This proposal is to build a new national resource for medical research. The project will integrate human medical research resources (including DNA) in WA with the core WA Data Linkage System, with complementary initiatives in bioinformatics and biostatistics. The resulting unique facility will comprise one of the largest and best-characterised population-based enabling facilities for epidemiological and genetic epidemiological research in the world, and will considerably enhance the national research capacity.

ACT

Chief Investigator –Professor Christopher Goodnow
Institute – Australian National University
Title of Project – Australian Phenome Bank
Funding - $1,500,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – The Australian Phenome Bank will establish a frozen sperm bank, database, and training program to enable access by the research community to new strains of genetically modified mice. Efficient access to diverse strains, provided by the Phenome Bank, will be critical for translating the human genome sequence into an understanding of specific mechanisms regulating all the body organ systems in health and disease, and for developing new disease prevention and treatment approaches.

VICTORIA

Chief Investigator – Professor John Hopper
Institute – University of Melbourne
Title of Project – Australian Twin Registry
Funding - $1,750,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – The Australian Twin Registry (ATR) is a volunteer registry of over 30,000 twin pairs willing to consider participation in health research. This national resource was established in the 1980s with NHMRC support because twin studies play a unique, powerful role in research on the impact of genetic and environmental factors on health. Over 400 studies have benefited. The ATR seeks on-going funding to remain internationally competitive and meet increasing demand due to advances in genetic research.

Chief Investigator – Associate Professor Catriona McLean
Institute – Mental Health Research Institute (Victoria)
Title of Project – National Network of Brain Banks
Funding - $2,000,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – Brain disorders are a major public health and economic problem. Study of brain tissues from deceased patients using current technologies has great potential to unlock our understanding of how these diseases occur and may lead to improvements in diagnosis, treatment or the development of preventative strategies. The furthering of this knowledge as new technologies come on-line justifies the need to develop a National Network devoted to storage and provision of carefully characterised brain tissue to neuroscientists.

Chief Investigator – Ms Lisa Devereux
Institute – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Victoria)
Title of Project – Australasian Biospecimen Network-Oncology
Funding - $1,750,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – Availability of ethically consented, clinically annotated human cancer tissue is a key determinant of the international competitiveness of Australian biomedical researchers. This project will provide a structured national network to collect, process and disseminate tumour tissue; strategically target specific tumour types such as mesothelioma and rare paediatric tumours that can only be collected in substantial numbers through the formation of such a network and provide infrastructure that can be contracted by clinical and translational researchers. The project builds on a wealth of experience in tissue banking, large-scale molecular genetic and genomic studies in breast, ovarian, colorectal cancers and mesothelioma, and on an established consortium – the Australasian Biospecimen Network.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Chief Investigator – Dr Roger Reddel
Institute – Children's Medical Research Institute (New South Wales)
Title of Project – Cell Bank Australia
Funding - $1,250,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – The proposal is to set-up a high-standard cell culture facility that will enable the establishment of a national repository of quality-controlled vertebrate cell lines derived from various tissues and species. This will facilitate high quality studies in a wide range of areas of basic health and medical research and in biotechnology.

Chief Investigator – Associate Professor Christine Clarke
Institute – The University of Sydney
Title of Project – Breast Cancer Biospecimen Resource
Funding - $2,000,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – The Breast Cancer Biospecimen Resource will consist of stored samples of the majority of newly diagnosed breast cancers in NSW and through the Australian and New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group together with accurate, prospectively tracked clinical data on each specimen. This facility will serve as a model for extension of similar procedures to other common Australian cancers including cancers of the lung, bowel, prostate and melanoma. Research that is facilitated by this Resource holds real promise for improving patient selection for treatment. This will return a significant humanitarian and cost saving benefit. In addition this advance would also maximise the benefit of population mammographic screening.

QUEENSLAND

Chief Investigator –Professor Judith Clements
Institute – Queensland University of Technology
Title of Project – Australian Prostate Cancer Collaboration (APCC) Bio-Resource
Funding - $2,100,000 over 5 years
Description of Project – The Australian Prostate Cancer Collaboration (APCC), supported by the Commonwealth Bank, Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia and Andrology Australia, has been developing an Australia-wide network of prostate tissue banks and associated clinical databases for the past 3 years. The concept of this innovative project is to establish "nodes" or branches of the tissue bank in each State where tissues are collected and to coordinate the use of this material from a central committee or "head office".

A website has been established (www.apccbioresource.org.au) that is the national face of this 'virtual' national tissue bank and 7 State-based tissue bank consortiums are participating in this venture. The

goal of this ‘virtual bank’ or network is to further enhance the national research effort by facilitating greater collaboration nationally and providing better access to, and optimal utilisation of, the clinical material available to facilitate improvements in prostate cancer management. Operational support for the nodes is critical for the success of a national Bio-Resource.