



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
MEDIA RELEASE

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BEACON OF HOPE FOR CANCER SUFFERERS

The fight against Cancer moved up a gear with a Government scheme providing almost \$10 million in funding for Australia's world class researchers to continue their search for new ways to prevent and treat the disease.

"The hopes of many Australian patients and families rest on the incredible work that our dedicated researchers do to try and find a cure for cancer," Ms Roxon said.

"Many of the winners are conducting groundbreaking research - whether it's into improving the lives of young cancer survivors through the use of online tools or developing new treatments for brain or lung cancer – all of them offer a beacon of hope to the community.

"Labor has dramatically stepped up investments to help reduce and identify cancer early.

"We are focused on better prevention, treatment and cure which is why we have invested over \$2.5 billion in infrastructure, medicines, screening and research that combine to form a world class cancer care system.

"In particular, the shocking survival rates for people living with cancer in rural and regional areas are driving our Government to fight cancer in a way that no other government has before.

"It's not ok that survival rates are dictated by postcodes so we have created a network of 24 regional cancer centres that will provide world class care for a catchment area of well over 7 million Australians.

"Whether it be in practical prevention measures – like our comprehensive and world leading response to tobacco related disease, putting over \$1 billion of innovative new drugs used in the treatment of cancer patients onto the PBS or the 51 per cent increase in cancer-related research, we are making changes that will benefit the lives of Australians for years to come.

"Today's announcement will support important research to improve the effectiveness of cancer treatment and care for the benefit of all Australians."

The 30 new cancer research projects include innovative joint ventures between Cancer Australia and *beyondblue*, Cure Cancer Australia Foundation, Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, National Breast Cancer Foundation, Leukaemia Foundation, Cancer Council Australia and Cancer Council NSW.

"The scheme fosters collaboration between cancer researchers to build Australia's cancer research capacity, impact on practice and policy, and improve outcomes for people affected by cancer," Dr Helen Zorbas, CEO of Cancer Australia said.

Media Inquiries: Minister Roxon's Office - 0409945476 or Cancer Australia - 0438 209 833

Grants being funded include:

Dr Jason Waithman (Ludwig Institute of Cancer Research) and co-funded by Cancer Australia and Cure Cancer Australia Foundation

The initiation of the cellular immune response to cutaneous melanoma

Tumour cells are sometimes mistaken for normal healthy cells, which stops killer T cells of the immune system from eliminating them. This study aims to address how dendritic cells (another white blood cell which controls T cell activities) distinguish tumour cells from infectious agents and how they disperse this information to killer T cells.

Professor Andrew Zannettino (University of Adelaide) and co-funded by Cancer Australia and Leukaemia Foundation

Is elevated N-cadherin expression a poor prognostic indicator in multiple myeloma patients?

N-cadherin is present at high concentrations in the blood of myeloma patients who exhibit both a poor response to therapy and aggressive disease. This study will determine if measuring serum N-cadherin levels is a viable prognostic test for this group of myeloma patients.

Professor Phyllis Butow (University of Sydney) and co-funded by Cancer Australia, *beyondblue* and National Breast Cancer Foundation

Evaluation of a psychological and educational intervention for fear of cancer recurrence; a cluster randomised controlled trial

Many cancer survivors fear that their cancer will return and this can impact on their quality-of-life. This project will test if a new psychological treatment developed for cancer survivors (an intervention based on Meta-cognitive Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and the Common Sense Model) can help cancer survivors better manage this fear and so improve their quality of life.

Professor Robert Newton (Edith Cowan University) and co-funded by Cancer Australia, *beyondblue* and Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

Can exercise ameliorate treatment toxicity during the initial phase of testosterone suppression in prostate cancer patients? Is this more effective than delayed rehabilitation and what is the time course and persistence of benefits?

Pharmaceutical suppression of testosterone is increasingly being used for treatment of prostate cancer; however, side effects include bone loss, increased body fat, loss of muscle, depression, distress and reduced quality of life. This project will determine if initiating exercise therapy at the same time as hormone therapy can reduce, if not prevent, these toxicities, ultimately resulting in reduced morbidity and mortality for men with prostate cancer.

Professor Anna Novak (University of Western Australia) and co-funded by Cancer Australia and Cancer Council Australia:

Phase III trial of Concurrent and Adjuvant Temozolomide chemotherapy in non-1p/19q non

deleted anaplastic glioma. The CATNON Intergroup Trial

Addition of concurrent and adjuvant temozolomide chemotherapy to radiotherapy is now standard care for Grade IV anaplastic glioma. This project will trial if this approach can also improve outcomes for patients with grade III anaplastic glioma who have a poor prognosis.

Dr Kerrie McDonald (University of New South Wales) and funded by Cancer Council New South Wales

Mechanisms underpinning how brain cancer cells respond to drugs

There are no biomarkers predictive of treatment response for use in brain cancer. This project aims to identify the genes which control how a cancer responds to a treatment, and which may serve as biological markers for treatment selection or provide new targets for drug development.

Dr Margot Lehman (Princess Alexandra Hospital) and funded by Cancer Australia

A randomised phase III trial of High Dose Palliative Radiotherapy (HDPRT) versus Concurrent Chemotherapy and HDPRT (C-HDPRT) in patients with good performance status, locally advanced/small volume metastatic Non-small Cell Lung Cancer not suitable for radical chemo-radiotherapy

This study involves patients with Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer who, because of their disease extent or the presence of other medical illnesses, cannot be treated with standard therapy (chemotherapy and high dose radiotherapy). The project aims to determine if adding chemotherapy to lower dose radiotherapy is better than lower dose radiotherapy alone, in terms of relieving symptoms and improving quality of life in this patient group.

Dr Claire Wakefield (University of New South Wales) and co-funded by Cancer Australia and *beyondblue*

'ReCaPTureLiFe': A phase II randomised trial of a psychological intervention to support adolescent and young adult cancer survivors

Many young cancer survivors live with ongoing negative psychological effects of their illness, including anxiety and depression. This randomised trial will assess the efficacy of a newly developed online intervention called 'Resilience and Coping skills for young People To Live well Following cancer (ReCaPTureLiFe), in improving quality of life in 90 young survivors (aged 15-25 years).

Dr Christopher Scarlett (Garvan Institute of Medical Research) and co-funded by Cancer Australia and Cure Cancer Australia Foundation

The therapeutic potential of targeting S100A2 calcium-binding protein in pancreatic cancer

Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer death and nothing, apart from surgery in a small proportion of individuals, gives any hope of cure. This study will examine the potential of the S100A2 calcium-binding protein to be a biomarker associated with metastasis and investigate its potential as a therapeutic target.

The PdCCRS is an annual national research grants scheme conducted by Cancer Australia in partnership with The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

A full list of successful grant applications can be found on the Cancer Australia website – www.canceraustralia.gov.au