

9 January 2013

MEDIA RELEASE

RHH Research Foundation announces grant recipients for Tasmanian health research in 2013

The Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation today announced details of its first round of annual grant funding for 2013, providing three new starter grants and five new clinical grants for local medical research to be undertaken in Tasmania over the course of the year.

The Research Foundation's Chair, Mr David Catchpole, explained "the purpose of these grants is to assist emerging and highly skilled clinical researchers to collaborate with each other for the benefit of the local community".

"Over its fifteen years of grant funding, the Foundation has focused strongly upon supporting research into medical conditions and approaches to healthcare that are of particular relevance to the Tasmanian community, investing over \$6m to support projects undertaken by local clinicians," Mr Catchpole said.

After an intensely competitive selection process, the range of projects chosen for funding offers a broad scope of intended benefit for the wellbeing of many Tasmanians, with potential that is even more far-reaching. For example, the Foundation will support a research team guided by Mr Troy Wanandy, allowing investigation into the shelf-life of a number of commonly used antibiotics. Following from earlier investigations funded by the Foundation which received international acclaim, this project ultimately aims to improve the quality of care for patients who are experiencing infection and in need of ongoing antibiotic medication.

"It is anticipated that our findings will assist with the development of local, national and international guidelines for shelf-life and storage of several essential antibiotics, while also improving patient care through reduced need to revisit hospital for resupply."

"Availability of stable and ready-to-use antibiotics will ensure more accurate and safe dosing for patients, while also reducing workload for healthcare providers given a reduced frequency of preparation," Mr Wanandy said.

The Foundation has also supported the work of Prof Matthew Jose, through a grant for a project exploring the toxic environment surrounding kidney failure.

"With 2000 Tasmanians experiencing severe, chronic kidney disease, this project will provide considerable value by investigating better treatment of associated effects of kidney disease.

"Through collaboration between the Renal Unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital and the Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science (ACROSS) at the School of Chemistry UTas, the research team will seek to identify those molecules that lead to kidney disease and then premature cardiovascular disease," Professor Jose explained. "Ultimately the aim is to provide optimal treatment via removal of these molecules through dialysis and/or transplant".

Chief Executive Officer Heather Francis emphasised that research supported by the RHH Research Foundation is selected via a rigorous assessment process undertaken by the Foundation's scientific research advisory panel, which is endorsed by the NH&MRC.

"Facing a highly competitive field of applications from interested clinicians, only projects and researchers of excellence can be selected to pursue their investigations. Even then, in every funding round we are overwhelmed with applications from a community of eager researchers based within the RHH. This demonstrates a need for continuing and increased support from across our general and business communities for this vital work," she said.

"On this occasion, the Research Foundation has been oversubscribed by researchers' applications that amounted to more than three times above the funds available. There were many excellent projects submitted which, had funding been available, would have been considered further. There's great scope for additional investment in high quality local health and medical research and this is something the RHH Research Foundation aims to achieve with the community's support through our fundraising initiatives," she said.

As a completely independent entity, the RHH Research Foundation provides an important role in supporting specialist doctors, nurses and allied health professionals with research interests through its annual grants program. With a strong emphasis on collaboration, this latest round of funding includes researchers from the RHH, UTas' Faculty of Health Science and also the Menzies Research Institute.

In addition to today's announcement, a further six longer-term grants have already been committed, supporting a range of research programs across the state, with some projects also undertaken at a national level.

"In total, the Foundation has budgeted almost \$600,000 to support local health and medical research through grant funding in 2013," highlighted Ms Francis. "It is anticipated that a further call for grant applications will be undertaken in coming months following completion of a strategic review of research directions," she said.

-Ends-

- For more info:** CEO Heather Francis 0407 201 113
- Interview available:** CEO RHH Research Foundation Heather Francis and Mr Troy Wanandy
10.15am, 10 January 2013
Mawson Place, Hobart
- Future Media Event:** RHH Research Foundation's Research Excellence Dinner on 14 August 2013.

Starter grants for 2013

Neuroprotective function of novel short chain-quinones. *A/Prof Paul McCartney.*

Management of post-operative pain and the progression to persistent post-operative pain.
Dr Chris Orlikowski.

The physical and chemical stability of amoxicillin, daptomycin and quinupristin/dalfopristin in Dianeal, Extraneal or Fresenius peritoneal dialysis solution under three different storage conditions. *Mr Troy Wanandy.*

Clinical grants for 2013

The role of epigenetic changes in the progression of clinical disease in Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia Type 1 (MEN1). *Prof John Burgess.*

Effect of vitamin D supplementation of the currently used dosage regime of 400 IU/d on vitamin D levels in infants. *Prof Graeme Jones.*

Towards a better understanding of uraemic molecules. *Prof Matthew Jose.*

Spirolactone in myocardial dysfunction with reduced exercise capacity (STRUCTURE). *Prof Thomas Marwick.*

Examining the role of blood lipids and apolipoproteins on the progression of MS in a prospective clinical cohort. *Prof Bruce Taylor.*

Current ongoing research grants

Tasmanian Familial Haematological Malignancy study. *Dr Elizabeth Tegg, RHHRF Research Fellow.*

Environmental and genetic factors that influence the onset and progression of multiple Sclerosis. *A/Prof Bruce Taylor, RHHRF Research Fellow.*

Establishment of the NW Practice Development Unit. *Dr Judi Parson, RHHRF Research Fellow.*

Grant to assist in 2011-13 with the employment of a post-doctoral Research Fellow. *Prof Matthew Jose.*

Grant to assist in 2011-13 with the completion of further post-doctoral studies. *Dr. Victoria Trubody.*

Establishment of national IPF database. *Australian Lung Foundation IPF Registry.*