

# Media Release

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## **RHH RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2019 GRANT FUNDING SIGNIFICANT TO THE HEALTH OF TASMANIANS YOUNG AND OLD**

The Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation has today announced exciting details of its grant funding for 2019, providing new incubator grants, annual project grants, together with a further significant three-year major project grant, all supporting vital local medical research in Tasmania.

RHH Hospital Research Foundation CEO Heather Francis said the core purpose of these grants is to assist emerging and highly-skilled clinical researchers to collaborate with each other for the benefit of the local Tasmanian community.

“Each grant category is designed to nurture further expertise and research capacity while also delivering improved health and a significant difference to the wellbeing of us all.

“The Foundation is thrilled to be in a position to invest over \$670,000 into local research in 2019 which will mark 21 years of delivering these important grants and striving towards a healthier community,” Ms Francis said.

After another intensely competitive selection process undertaken over the final months of 2018, the range of projects chosen for funding in 2019 offers a broad scope of intended benefit for the wellbeing of many Tasmanians of all ages.

While several of the studies will explore facets of cancer research, others will look into cardiovascular conditions associated with blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Two of the confirmed studies are set to take very different approaches to looking into kidney impairment, while management of multiple sclerosis remains a significant theme of research. The independent Research Foundation is particularly excited to announce a major new three-year investigation aimed to better support mothers and babies during pre-conception, pregnancy and post-birth.

In announcing the grants today, Ms Francis highlighted that research grants offered by the Foundation in 2019 would offer capacity to focus on issues at almost every life stage, noting the significant burden of ill-health experienced by many across our community.

Dr Emma Lea and her team will research the importance of nutrition amongst older members of the community and how malnutrition can impact upon their overall recovery from illness and injury, including surgical procedures.

“The team and I are absolutely thrilled to have the funding made available for what we believe is an incredibly important research study for many Tasmanians as we continue to identify the scale of this health problem locally,” Dr Lea said.

CEO 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 National Health & Medical Research Council (NH&MRC).

“We are continually overwhelmed with applications from a community of eager researchers based within and around the RHH which demonstrates a need for continuing and increased support from across our general and business communities for this vital work.

“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 various fundraising initiatives and also through the generosity of benefactors,” she said.

For the fourth successive year, anonymous and known benefactors have generously chosen to become involved with the Foundation by directly funding Incubator Grants as well as generous support by local businesses, including Blundstone Australia which has directly enabled a young researcher, Dr Dino Premilovac, and his team to do further research into stroke throughout 2019.

As an 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, and various areas of the University of Tasmania’s College of Health and Medicine, including the Menzies Research Institute.

**For more information:**

Chief Executive Officer Heather Francis - 0407 201 113

Communications and Development Coordinator Eve Curley - 0408 385 374

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