

RHHRF MEDIA RELEASE



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Tasmanian Medical Research Campaign to focus on Vascular Disease

During the month of December the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation will be reaching out to the Tasmanian community to seek help in enabling funding for a vital state-wide Project Grant.

This research project is important to many people in every corner of Tasmania, with the study looking into the risk factors that may be modified to help manage, and ideally prevent, vascular disease.

The study is titled *“A comprehensive examination of potentially modifiable vascular disease risk factors and their consequences in Tasmania”* and it’s looking into diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease and stroke, as well as exploring blood pressure and Tasmania’s particularly elevated rate of high cholesterol.

RHHRF CEO Heather Francis said this clinical research project will have lasting impact for generations of Tasmanians to come.

“There is so much to be done to improve the health status of Tasmanians. The research programs to be supported in 2020, through your assistance, will help us work toward this goal, but funding for this 2020 study is particularly vital.

“This critical phase of investigation needs funding under our Project Grants scheme and needs further support of \$25k to be gained before the end of December so that it can move ahead in 2020,” she said.

The seven-member team behind this ground-breaking local research is comprised of leading and emerging clinical researchers from across Tasmania, involving general practice, pathology, nephrology, endocrinology and public health.

“We’re delighted to know that this team features some of the nation’s leading clinicians, but also those at an earlier phase of their career – including a physician trainee and also an intern within the Royal Hobart Hospital,” Ms Francis said.

Professor Matthew Jose will lead the team that will focus on this Tasmanian-wide medical research study.

“Essentially as a Kidney specialist, I see a lot of my patients who unfortunately die of vascular disease. Whilst we keep them alive on a kidney machine (dialysis), they suffer heart attacks, strokes and leg amputations due to wide-spread vascular disease.

“In this study we wanted to look at the individual building blocks that leads to vascular disease, things like early kidney disease, high cholesterol or diabetes. We have already linked seven sets of health data together and have been able to create a map of communities with high rates of kidney disease. We now plan to do this for these individual factors (cholesterol & diabetes), so we can better understand these health issues and ultimately prevent them.

“Our data can look at micro-areas of around 3000 people, so can give quite good information about local communities that may be at moderate to high risk of vascular disease. By identifying these communities at risk, we can then look to develop longer-term programs that may lower this risk,” Prof Jose said.

The RHHRF will also be jumping onboard with global movement, GivingTuesday. GivingTuesday takes place on 3 December 2019 and is a global day of giving that harnesses the collective power of individuals, communities and organisations to encourage giving and to celebrate generosity world-wide.

“Founded in 2012, GivingTuesday has inspired millions of people to give back by supporting the causes they believe in. We hope that people across our community will donate to support *local* medical research, now and into the future,” said Ms Francis.

With around 3,000 Tasmanians dying from the complications of vascular disease each year, she stated it was fitting that the launch of this important campaign was timed to coincide with a global movement, but with an emphasis on the local community.

“We hope that the many members of our community who know someone living with the complications of vascular disease will make a gift for vital local research that we know will save lives” Ms Francis said.

For those in the community wanting to donate, they can do so by heading to rhreaserachfoundation.org.au and following the links or heading into the Hobart office.

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