



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: Friday 13 August 2021

TASMANIAN MEDICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE CELEBRATED WITH A FOCUS ON THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ALL TASMANIANS

The Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation (RHHRF) will celebrate Tasmanian health and medical research this Friday evening, 13 August 2021, at its eighth annual Celebration of Research Excellence, proudly hosted in partnership with St.LukesHealth at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart from 5.30pm.

This year's event will see the RHHRF showcase current researchers, acknowledge 2021 grant recipients and thank supporters, corporate partners and generous benefactors for their ongoing generosity to local medical research.

RHHRF CEO Heather Francis said the important celebration is a highlight of the Foundation's calendar that really emphasises the importance of funding local medical research now and into the future, for the health and wellbeing for Tasmanians throughout the state.

"This annual event is a special occasion that will be attended by key donors and supporters, together with leading clinicians, researchers and health executives from across our Tasmanian community.

"The evening will feature presentations by the current cohort of researchers who received grants in 2021, both emerging and highly-skilled, who will showcase how their vital work contributes to the wellbeing of our community state-wide," she said.

Professor Graeme Zosky will be presenting on his RHHRF 2021 Project Grant study, generously funded by Blundstone, titled "Why are dusts from stone benches killing young workers in the building industry?". He said he is driven every day by the opportunity to conduct high quality research that is so important to Tasmanians.

"This research is important as it aims to identify the types of engineered stones that pose the greatest risk to worker health and identify potential treatments in the future.

"While we lack data specific to Tasmania, studies from the mainland suggest that 20-30% of workers involved in dry cutting engineered stone have signs of silicosis. This is a disease which currently has no cure. The burden of preventable lung disease in our community is

unacceptably high and people with chronic lung disease have a poor quality of life and shorter life expectancy,” Prof Graeme Zosky said.

The evening will also feature a special presentation from the Chief Investigator for the Foundation’s most recent Major Project Grant 2019-21, Dr Dean Picone, who will outline the importance of his team’s three-year study seeking to develop and validate more accurate measurement of Blood Pressure using machine learning technology. This investigation has been generously funded at \$450,000 through the support of the local community and recognises that Tasmania experiences one of the highest rates of preventable cardiovascular disease nationally.

Guests will also hear from 2021 Incubator Grant Recipient Dr Jessica Roydhouse, who is researching real-world outcomes (including toxicities) for lung cancer patients receiving immunotherapy. Significantly, this study explores the difference between what is encountered by those patients involved in global clinical trials for new modes of immunotherapy when compared to the Tasmanian experience in everyday life.

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