

# Media Release

**The Hon Martin Foley MP**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Ambulance Services  
Minister for Equality



Wednesday, 16 March 2022

## BACKING CANCER RESEARCH TO SAVE LIVES

Research into new methods of fighting lung cancer, predicting the spread of breast cancer, creating a new cheap genetic test to identify at risk people and a new screening tool for cervical cancer are among the research projects the Andrews Labor Government are backing to improve survival rates and outcomes for people with cancer.

Minister for Health Martin Foley announced today that 20 researchers will share in more than \$10 million in grants to help develop breakthroughs in cancer prevention, screening, treatment and care.

This includes Dr Christina Nedeva, from La Trobe University, who will receive more than \$300,000 to investigate a new approach to treating cancer cachexia.

Cancer cachexia is a condition that reduces mobility, quality of life and the effectiveness of cancer treatments. It impacts 65 per cent of all cancer patients and results in 35 per cent of cancer-related deaths.

Treating cancer cachexia remains as one of the biggest clinical challenges, and this project aims to find or develop new therapies and ultimately save lives.

Another recipient, Dr Javiera Martinez Gutierrez, is helping GPs identify people who are most at-risk of undiagnosed cancer, whilst Dr Claire Nightingale is developing a mobile intervention to increase participation in cervical screening.

This latest funding takes the total investment by the Victorian Cancer Agency to more than \$300 million since being established in 2006.

These grants can also be a stepping-stone to further funding. A \$300,000 grant in 2019 to Dr Jennifer McIntosh to test if SMS messages sent by a patient's GP could increase participation in bowel cancer screening led to a \$1.5 million award from the National Health and Medical Research Council to expand the study to people outside Victoria.

This latest research will be undertaken across five world leading research institutions in Melbourne and supports the Government's *Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024*.

Cancer is a common disease and a major health problem in Australia. Today the five most common cancers are prostate, breast, bowel and lung cancer, and melanoma.

Prevention is your best chance to minimise your risk of cancer and other chronic diseases. Participating in cancer screening and finding cancer early, as soon as symptoms develop gives the best chance of survival.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

*"Victoria is home to world leading cancer treatment, care and research and we are backing those clinicians, scientists and researchers to make ground-breaking discoveries that improve cancer survival rates."*

*"We're supporting work that can change lives, improve outcomes for people with cancer and save families from the heartache of losing a loved one."*

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