

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Monday, 31 October 2022

FUNDING BOOST SUPPORTING CANCER RESEARCH LEADERS

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting future leaders in cancer research with \$8.5 million in funding to explore new ways to detect and treat a range of cancers.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced 17 fellowships would be awarded to nine early-career and eight mid-career cancer researchers through the Victorian Cancer Agency, which provides essential workforce funding to cancer researchers.

The projects will be undertaken across five world-leading research institutions in Melbourne and will support the state's *Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024* which aims to improve cancer survival rates and achieve equitable outcomes in Victoria.

The funds will also support four new fellowships in partnership with philanthropic cancer organisations to further promote and build capacity in research in low-survival cancers.

Associate Professor Naiyang Fu at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research has been awarded the Victorian Cancer Agency – LiverWELL Mid-Career Research Fellowship. He will use the funding to investigate the potential of a gene as a biomarker and therapeutic target for liver cancer patients.

This fellowship was awarded in partnership with LiverWELL, which incorporates Hepatitis Victoria and champions those affected by or at risk of viral hepatitis and liver disease.

Another fellowship has been awarded to Dr Clare Slaney from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, who aims to use mRNA vaccine technology to enable effective cancer immunotherapies, potentially providing increased treatment options for pancreatic cancer.

Dr Slaney's fellowship was awarded in partnership with the Pancare Foundation, which works to raise awareness about and support those with upper gastrointestinal cancers, advocating for increased research funding for these cancers with very poor outcomes.

Fellowships were also awarded in partnership with Lung Foundation Australia and Ovarian Cancer Australia to Dr Mara Zeissig and Dr Dale Garsed respectively. These fellowships will help to raise the awareness of research and support for low-survival cancers, such as liver, pancreatic, lung and ovarian cancer.

One-off grants totalling \$1.9 million have also been provided to health services, universities and medical research institutes to support the cancer research workforce through the COVID-19 pandemic.

This latest funding takes the total investment by the Victorian Cancer Agency to more than \$330 million since 2006. To view this year's grant recipients, visit victoriancanceragency.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"These fellowships are supporting Victoria's best and brightest researchers find new ways to save and improve the lives of those living with cancer."

"Cancer survival is at an all-time high but too many people are still dying from the disease. That's why we have an ambitious plan to save more lives and invest in more research to find a cure."

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