

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Medical Research



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SUPPORT FOR VICTORIAN MEDICAL RESEARCH POWERS ON

The Allan Labor Government is backing Victoria’s homegrown medical research sector, with applications for the seventh round of the Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund (VMRAF) now open – improving health outcomes for people across the state.

Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll today announced the latest round of the grants program to help deliver grants to support early-stage research and fast-track innovative projects from research to real-world impact.

Grants of up to \$100,000 will support early-stage innovative research projects that demonstrate potential for practical application at a later stage, while grants of up to \$500,000 will assist researchers in translating their products and practices into clinical or health care settings.

A VMRAF success story, Avipep was awarded \$100,000 in 2021 to accelerate its work on novel engineered antibodies and attached cytotoxic drugs to treat fast-growing cancer, multiple myeloma.

The funding assisted the company to develop new antibodies, labelled “Avibody drug conjugates” or ADCs – which are smaller than regular antibodies and better able to penetrate tumours to kill the myeloma cells.

A testament to the world-class medical research being undertaken in Victoria, Avipep has now successfully tested their ADCs in killing human tumour cells at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, paving the way for future work, and eventually, human clinical trials.

These trials could transform the lives of countless people battling the disease – currently, more than 1,000 Australians tragically losing their lives to the disease every year.

Since 2017, the VMRAF has invested more than \$20.4 million to advance Victoria’s medical research sector, supporting 113 research projects including nanotechnology to improve female pelvic reconstructive surgery, the development of new compounds to treat severe lung infections and the incorporation AI in mammogram readings.

Applications for the seventh round of the VMRAF will close on 1 December. For more information or to apply, visit health.vic.gov.au/victorian-medical-research-acceleration-fund.

Quote attributable to Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll

“Since 2017, the fund has supported a number of significant projects, helping Victorian medical researchers push the boundaries of what can be achieved – cementing our state’s reputation as a global leader in the industry.”

Quote attributable to Avipep Chief Scientist Dr Peter Hudson

“Avipep was delighted to be awarded a VMRAF grant, and this has greatly accelerated both our design and manufacturing methods and also the pre-clinical testing of this new and important antibody-drug therapy at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.”

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