

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Minister for Women



Sunday, 1 February 2026

## SUPPORTING THE NEXT GEN OF VICTORIAN CANCER RESEARCHERS

The Allan Labor Government is supporting the next generation of cancer research leaders as part of a new four-year cancer research fellowship program – continuing the fight for a cancer-free Victoria.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the inaugural cohort of recipients as part of the new \$41.2 million *Cancer Research Fellowships Victoria* (CFRV).

The CFRV is delivered in collaboration with Cancer Council Victoria to strengthen Victoria's cancer research landscape and accelerate the development of innovative treatments, diagnostic tools and therapies.

Importantly, the CFRV will also support Victorian-based researchers to access philanthropic funding and increase the competitiveness of fellows to secure national funding.

The investment over four years will see fellowships awarded to up to 24 early career cancer researchers (six per year) and 40 mid-career postdoctoral researchers (10 per year) – with funding of up to \$450,000 over three years, and up to \$700,000 over four years, respectively.

This year's 18 inaugural fellowships include support for eight early-career and 10 mid-career researchers working on new discoveries.

Among these recipients is Dr Bonnita Werner from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and University of Melbourne who has been awarded a \$450,000 three-year early-career fellowship to support her research into new immunotherapy approaches for ovarian cancer.

Her project will make major contributions to the world's first study of antibodies produced by long term survivors of any cancer type, potentially leading to the development of new and improved immunotherapies for people living with high-grade serous carcinoma.

Other recipients include Dr Raymond Yip from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute who has received a four-year mid-career fellowship to advance research aimed at improving how multiple myeloma is detected, monitored and treated.

While Dr Andrew Guirguis, a mid-career fellowship recipient from the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute, is working to stop early "pre-leukaemia" blood disorders from progressing into aggressive leukaemia.

CFRV is just one part of the Labor Government's *Victorian Cancer Plan 2024–2028* – helping focus on rapidly translating research into treatments and approaches that enhance clinical practice and patient care.

It is the third plan to be legislated in Victoria and aims to improve the cancer survival rate by boosting access to care, treatment and support for all Victorians, having achieved the remarkable goal of saving 10,000 lives by 2025.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

*"Victorian researchers are global leaders in fighting cancer – that's why we are continuing to invest in the people and projects that drive better public cancer care and work towards our ultimate goal of a cancer-free state."*

*"These fellowships are about backing the next generation of researchers, giving them the support they need to take the next step in their careers and deliver the breakthroughs that matter to Victorians and people around the world."*

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