

Monday 17 October

## NT Institute has highest success rate for health research grants in Australia, winning \$17.6 million of new funding

Hot on the heels of Friday's Research and Innovation Awards success after Dr Tsin Yeo won both the Tropical Knowledge Research Award and Chief Minister's Award, Menzies School of Health Research today announced it has received more than \$17.6 million of funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Director of Menzies, Professor Jonathan Carapetis, said the funding is the result of the highest success rate Menzies has ever had with application grants from the NHMRC.

"More than 71 per cent of the Menzies grant applications were selected for funding through a highly competitive national process, nearly tripling the Australian average success rate of 24 per cent," Professor Carapetis said.

"Many of the grants awarded will benefit young scientists working to improve the recognition and understanding in Indigenous and tropical health research in Australia and overseas.

"The funding ensures Menzies continues as an institute of scientific excellence and as one of Australia's leading medical research institutes with many of its research projects based in the Northern Territory.

"The funding includes the awarding of four fellowships, which Menzies has previously had difficulty attracting, this allows researchers to continue a career in science and helps keep highly skilled staff in the Northern Territory.

"The money will go towards research projects which will help reduce the incidence of chronic diseases found predominantly in Indigenous communities in the Top End.

"Examples include a study to determine whether influenza vaccination given to pregnant women can prevent infection in babies up to six months of age, and a study to improve food and nutrition in community stores.

The funding is divided into 17 grants which are awarded to different research areas within Menzies including:

- improving the management of acute exacerbations of bronchiectasis in children
- influenza vaccination in pregnancy and the benefit to infants
- severe malaria disease in children and adults
- rheumatic heart disease in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- bacteria and viruses causing lung infections
- Stores Healthy Options Project in Remote Indigenous Communities.

More than \$673.7 million was awarded to 1,140 research projects and research institutions across the country.

The National Health and Medical Research Centre provide funding for all areas of research relevant to human health and medicine.

**Media opportunity:**

Professor Carapetis will be available for telephone interview from 5pm today and tomorrow morning.

**For media enquiries please contact Jenna Hoare on 0407 181 894.**