

National boost for new Indigenous and tropical health research

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The Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) has been awarded more than \$12 million in federal funding for 12 competitive grants and fellowships to help improve outcomes for disadvantaged populations in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Australia's peak body for supporting health and medical research, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), made the announcement on Friday as part of their latest round of funding.

One major success for Menzies was the announcement that both of its submissions for Centers of Research Excellence (CRE) were successful. The CREs in Indigenous ear and hearing health and improving Indigenous primary health care, were each awarded funding of \$2.5 million over five years.

Menzies Director, Professor Alan Cass said the funding recognises the well-established national leadership of our ear health group, led by Professors Amanda Leach and Peter Morris, and primary care research group, led by Professor Ross Baillie.

"These new funding streams will allow Menzies to bring together key researchers, practitioners, health and community organisations from across Australia, and actively promote the translation of research knowledge into health policy and practice," Prof Cass said.

"Getting formal recognition as a Centre for Research Excellence in these two areas is wonderful news for these teams working at the frontline of healthcare delivery to improve the health of Indigenous communities. Most importantly it will allow us to train a new generation of researchers."

In addition to the CREs, NHMRC announced funding for project grants, partnership projects, early career and career development fellowships.

"There is no quick fix in Indigenous health, but through high-quality research that addresses clear health priorities, we are gaining ground. Our work is having a meaningful and measureable impact and improving the lives of Indigenous people across Australia," Prof Cass said.

"The projects funded include research to understand and improve outcomes of diabetes in pregnancy for mothers and their babies, and optimising treatment therapies for golden staph.

"Securing funding for two partnership projects into improving developmental outcomes for children in the Northern Territory and improving the quality and access to dialysis treatments for Indigenous Australians, will be critical for building our capacity, developing strong and lasting research collaborations, and making a real difference to people's lives."

Prof Cass said NHMRC fellowships are only awarded to researchers who are highly productive and well placed to grow their research programs. Such funding gives certainty to researchers to continue their career in science and medical research and helps Menzies retain highly skilled staff in the Northern Territory.

The fellowships awarded to Menzies include:

Michael Binks - Reducing the community burden of respiratory infections in Indigenous children (Early Career Fellowship)

Bridget Barber - Comparative pathophysiology and clinical epidemiology of *knowlesi* malaria (Early Career Fellowship)

Dr Jaqui Hughes - Improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with chronic kidney disease (Early Career Fellowship)

Associate Professor Patricia Valery - Reducing the burden of disease and inequity related to Indigenous Australians with cancer (Career Development Fellowship)

Associate Professor Louise Maple-Brown - Improving outcomes of diabetes and related conditions for Indigenous Australians: causes, intervention, system change (Career Development Fellowship)

Dr Josh Davis - Addressing important evidence gaps in the management of severe infectious diseases (Career Development Fellowship)

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Menzies Background

Menzies School of Health Research is Australia's leading Medical Research Institute dedicated to improving Indigenous health and wellbeing. We have a 30-year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, partnering with over 60 Indigenous communities across Northern and Central Australia. We collaborate to create resources, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.