

# MEDIA RELEASE

## **Applications are NOW OPEN for the 2017 Centenary Institute's Medical Innovation Award – open to all institutes and universities in Australia**

The Centenary Institute's Medical Innovation Award, considered to be one of the most prestigious prizes for young early-career researchers, recognises bold young researchers who are taking the risks to ask the big questions of today – those questions that have most people saying “but that’s impossible”.

The \$25,000 Prize focuses on creativity – the essential ingredient in all human endeavours, whether in science, art or marketing. It will be presented to the biomedical research scientist based in Australia who demonstrates the greatest creativity in their scientific approach during a given year and two runners up will each receive \$5,000. Over 100,000 people were engaged and inspired by the Prize entries in 2016, with tens of thousands voting in the People’s Choice Award - making this one of the most prestigious national research prizes for Australia’s most talented young biomedical researchers in Australia.

Each year we see outstanding quality applications. The prize’s adjudicators are some of the most esteemed scientists (such as Professor Ian Frazer AC), considered to be in the top 0.1% globally. Having such a high-profile judging panel maintains quality and excellence of each year’s winners and encourages only outstanding and highly original applications every year from Australia’s young leading scientists.

At the Centenary Institute, we believe in encouraging innovation, with 80% of the biggest scientific discoveries for humanity, originating from researchers younger than 45 years of age.

Supporting young scientists has become even more important in the current, challenging climate. Since 1983, the proportion of government science funding to younger researchers has more than halved (55% down to 24%). There are only 20,000 early to mid-career researchers in Australia and only a handful receive funding to test their own creative ideas. The vast majority have to leave research altogether.

“Exceptional young scientists can be hard to keep in Australia and we hope this award will not only celebrate their achievements but also encourage a domestic culture of brilliance in medical research,” Centenary Institute Executive Director, Professor Mathew Vadas AO.

The Centenary Institute Medical Innovation Award is not only about supporting Australia's next Nobel Laureates – it is about ensuring the nation's overall health and prosperity. These aspirational young scientists are rewarded for their ability to apply their creative ideas to tackling and overcoming some of the most chronic conditions affecting our community (such as cancer, inflammation and cardiovascular disease) in order to save thousands of lives, in Australia and globally.

Our 2016 overall winner, Dr Anne Rios was awarded a prize of \$25 000, and received invaluable public awareness for her outstanding work. Dr Rios, from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI) in Melbourne hopes her life's passion for imaging and filming will help to answer key questions about how breast cancer starts and spreads.

Dr Rios is using state-of-the art imaging equipment to visualise the activity of cells in both normal and cancerous environments. Raised in Marseille, France, Dr Rios came to Australia in 2006, bringing her rare skills to WEHI. Dr Rios is the only researcher in Australia – and one of the few in the world – to film in 3D, the activity of cells in breast tissue. This technique, which shows how cells move and interact in real time, provides insights into how breast cancer cells can invade nearby tissues and spread throughout the body.

**For more information about Centenary Institute and to submit an application for the Medical Innovation Award, please visit our website:**

[www.centenary.org.au](http://www.centenary.org.au)

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