



Media Release

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Cancer Council NSW announces over \$10 million of funding into ground-breaking cancer research

Winning grants revealed at 2018 Research Awards

Cancer Council NSW has awarded over \$10.6 million to 17 outstanding cancer research projects. The grants help fund future breakthroughs in cancer research – the awarded research teams are leading the charge towards a cancer free future by investigating new ways to treat the disease.

The 2018 grants were announced and awarded at Cancer Council NSW's annual Research Awards, this year held in the evening of 27 March at Westpac's Barangaroo Towers in Sydney.

"We are excited to announce a round of extraordinary projects – all 17 recipients are extraordinary scientists who do essential and highly innovative work," said Dr Jane Hobson, Research Grants Manager at Cancer Council NSW.

The majority of the 17 projects announced last night – awarded to the Centenary Institute, Children's Cancer Institute, Garvan Institute of Medical Research, UNSW Sydney, University of Sydney and UTS – are three-year Project Grants. One Infrastructure Grant is going to Children's Medical Research Institute.

Two projects received a *Pathways to a cancer free future* grant. The recipients of those grants are Professor John Rasko at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (grant for \$2m) and Professor Jennifer Martin at the University of Newcastle (grant for \$1.96m).

Professor Rasko and team will be trialling a potential new treatment for pancreatic cancer known as CAR T-cell immunotherapy. The treatment involves taking a patient's white blood cells, growing them in the laboratory, genetically modifying specific cells to attack only cancer cells, and then returning them to the patient. The grant provides much-needed hope for patients who receive the devastating diagnosis of pancreatic cancer (which has one of the lowest survival rates).

Professor Martin and her team will test and validate how new technologies could be used to monitor the concentration of chemotherapy in a patient's blood in fast-tracked timeframes to provide optimal treatment dosing. It is hoped that this research will lead to direct and significant benefits in patient dosing, across wide population groups and in rural and remote areas, to improve quality of life, reduce side effects and increase chance of survival.

"The broad range of projects that we fund – across many types of cancers and stages of the cancer journey – shows Cancer Council NSW's commitment to work across every area of every cancer," Dr Hobson said.

"Projects like Professor Rasko's and Professor Martin's wouldn't be possible without our supporters – as an organisation that is over 95% community funded, these grants have been made possible by the community," Dr Hobson concluded.



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Media Interviews

- Dr Jane Hobson, Research Grants Manager at Cancer Council NSW
- Grant recipients on request

About Cancer Council NSW's Research Awards

Cancer Council NSW is proud to be one of the largest non-government funders of cancer research in Australia. We believe cancer survivors, carers and members of the general public should be at the heart of cancer research, and the community plays a vital role in supporting our work – not only by raising money for research, but also in selecting which projects we fund. That's why Cancer Council NSW ensures that we award funding on the basis of both scientific merit and value to the community we represent.

Cancer Council NSW's annual Cancer Research Awards were held at 6pm on Tuesday, 27 March at Westpac's Barangaroo Tower in Sydney. At the Awards, we recognise the researchers who were successful in the latest round of funding grant applications with an award to signify the start of their research.

The event is also an important opportunity to celebrate the research achievements of Cancer Council NSW over the last year, and to thank staff and donors for their ongoing support of cancer research.

Cancer Council NSW 2018 *Pathways to a Cancer Free Future* Grant recipients:

- Professor John Rasko, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital: Can a revolutionary new immunotherapy fight pancreatic cancer?
- Professor Jennifer Martin, The University of Newcastle: Improving patient outcomes through personalised chemotherapy dosing

Cancer Council NSW 2018 Infrastructure Grant recipient:

- Professor Roger Reddel, Children's Medical Research Institute: Building research infrastructure to enable clinicians to choose the right treatment for the right patient

Cancer Council NSW 2018 Project Grant recipients:

- Professor Peter Hersey, Centenary Institute: Exploring the role of T cells when immunotherapy for melanoma fails.
- A/Professor Jeffery Holst, Centenary Institute: A targeted approach to triple-negative breast cancer
- Dr Umaimainthan Palendira, Centenary Institute: Improving immunotherapy for melanoma
- Dr Jessamy Tiffen, Centenary Institute, Centenary Institute: Improving drug treatment for melanoma
- A/Professor Tao Liu, Children's Cancer Institute: Investigating a new therapy for a problematic childhood cancer
- Dr David Gallego Ortega, Garvan Institute of Medical Research: A 'molecular microscope' approach to develop immune therapy for breast cancer



- Dr Ruth Pidsley, Garvan Institute of Medical Research: Improving prostate cancer treatment to minimise side effects
- Professor Susan Ramus, UNSW Sydney: Moving towards personalised treatments for ovarian cancer
- Professor Barbara Fazekas de St Groth, University of Sydney: Predicting responses to cancer immunotherapy
- Professor Jacob George, University of Sydney: A new approach to fighting drug resistance in liver cancer
- Professor David Gottlieb, University of Sydney: The Susan and John Freeman Research Grant: A new approach to boosting resistance to fungal infection in cancer patients
- Professor Elizabeth Sullivan, UTS: Cancer and Outcomes in Pregnancy – A NSW Evaluation (COPE)

Recipients of a Cancer Australia PdCCRS project grant, co-funded by Cancer Council NSW:

- Dr Marina Pajic, Garvan Institute of Medical Research: Improving pancreatic cancer treatment through a 'personalised medicine' approach
- A/Professor Iona Juraskova, University of Sydney: Enhancing carer involvement in a patient's cancer care