

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Centenary scientist fighting the scourge of breast cancer wins Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Award**

A Centenary Institute scientist who is examining the role of the immune system in combating breast cancer, has won the 2018 Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Early Career Award.

Dr Shweta Tikoo, a researcher in Centenary's Immune Imaging Program, is currently focusing on exploring a subset of macrophages (a type of white blood cell) in breast cancer progression and metastasis, with the aim of developing more effective treatment strategies to combat the disease.



Accepting the award at the Centenary Institute Foundation Fundraising Dinner at the Art Gallery of NSW last night, Dr Tikoo said she's incredibly grateful to receive such a prestigious prize.

"During the course of my scientific career, I have interacted with several brave women who have fought the scourge of breast cancer. Yet all of these women live in constant fear that the cancer might come back. It's a fear no person should have to live with," Dr Tikoo said.

"The support provided by the Bank of Queensland will be used to develop a deeper understanding of how the body's defence mechanism fails to prevent cancer spread and resurgence, and how a new system can be modulated to prevent this. I'll do everything in my capacity to ensure this award is put to excellent use in ultimately leading us a step closer to curing cancer."

The Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Early Career Award forms part of the Centenary Institute's Gender Equity Program, which was established three years ago. The award is designed to retain female scientists and support their critical research, while recognising the need to offer the flexibility required to balance life at home and in the laboratory.

Proudly supported by the Centenary Institute's major partner the Bank of Queensland, the winner of the award is provided with up to \$35,000 in funding.

"Congratulations to Dr Shweta Tikoo on her award win. It was great to celebrate the best and brightest scientific minds in Australia and I wish Shweta every success with her future research to develop a more effective treatment in combating breast cancer," BOQ CEO Jon Sutton said.

Special mention to the runner-up Dr Jessamy Tiffen from Centenary's Melanoma Oncology and Immunology Program. Dr Tiffen's research is focused on better understanding the resistance of certain melanoma treatment options currently available to patients, and in turn, working towards developing improved therapies. Both Dr Tikoo's and Dr Tiffen's work demonstrates the excellent calibre of research and selfless dedication of scientists at the Centenary Institute.

**To arrange an interview with Dr Shweta Tikoo, please contact:** Centenary Institute Media and Communications Manager, Laura Parr, l.parr@centenary.org.au, 0435 530 537

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