

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Bridging the gender gap: finalists named in Centenary's Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Early Career Award**

Two of the Centenary Institute's rising female star scientists have been named as finalists in the Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Early Career Award, which aims to bridge the gender gap and build more opportunities for women in the field of medical research.

Centenary established its Gender Equity Program three years ago, with a key focus on retaining female scientists and supporting their career progression, while offering the flexibility needed to balance life at home and in the laboratory.

A key achievement of the Program has been the creation of the Gender Equity Early Career Award, which provides a female scientist at Centenary with up to \$35,000 in funding, proudly supported by our major partner the Bank of Queensland.

The two finalists for this year's Award are Dr Jessamy Tiffen and Dr Shweta Tikoo.

Dr Tiffen is part of Centenary's Melanoma Oncology and Immunology Program. Her work is focused on better understanding the resistance of certain melanoma treatment options currently available to patients, and in turn, work towards developing improved therapies. Dr Tikoo is a researcher in Centenary's Immune Imaging Program. She is currently investigating the role of the immune system in combating breast cancer - exploring a particular 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 spread of the disease.

"BOQ is incredibly proud to sponsor this Award. Diversity and gender equity is so important and we need to ensure it is a focus in the scientific field. Early Career Awards such as these are essential to ensure we keep the brightest and the best minds here in Australia," says BOQ CEO, Jon Sutton.

The winner of the 2017 Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Early Career Award was Dr Jodie Ingles, Head of the Clinical Cardiac Genetics Group within the Molecular Cardiology Program at Centenary.

"The grant has allowed me to commence studies that otherwise, would not have been possible. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity and hope that results from my work will lead to better management of families with inherited heart diseases," says Dr Ingles.

The winner of the 2018 Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Early Career Award will be announced at the Centenary Institute Foundation Fundraising Dinner on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September at the Art Gallery of NSW.

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