

4 November 2021

## **\$2m NHMRC success for Centenary Institute researchers**

Centenary Institute researchers have secured more than \$2m in collective funding from the Federal Government in the latest round of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Ideas Grants.

The grants will support critical medical research into acute myeloid leukaemia, a deadly form of blood cancer, as well as lung disease related to COVID-19 and the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

### Successful Centenary Institute scientists and their research:

**Dr Justin Wong.** *Head, Epigenetics and RNA Biology Program. Awarded \$1,111,376. Grant title: Alternative splicing: A novel target to improve outcomes in acute myeloid leukaemia.*

Dr Wong will use the funding to determine the unexplored role of introns, non-coding sections of RNA (previously considered 'junk DNA') in better managing and potentially predicting treatment outcomes of a deadly blood cancer called acute myeloid leukaemia.

**Professor Warwick Britton AO.** *Head, Tuberculosis Research Program. Awarded \$896,784. Grant title: Defining the impact of chronic lung disease on COVID-19 and developing effective therapies.*

Professor Britton will use the funding to determine how COVID-19 impacts patients with chronic inflammatory lung diseases such as tuberculosis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). He will also identify effective drugs that suppress COVID-induced inflammatory damage to the lung. COVID-19 and tuberculosis are the two commonest causes of death from infectious agents.

Professor Mathew Vadas AO, the Centenary Institute's Executive Director, congratulated the two successful grant recipients.

"I commend both Dr Wong and Professor Britton who have been awarded this important funding. These grants will allow two of Centenary's successful and highly regarded researchers to explore exciting new directions in their research. I look forward to the outcomes of both projects which are focused on highly relevant areas for all Australians, namely RNA biology and COVID-19."

The NHMRC Ideas Grants support innovative and creative research in the health and medical fields from discovery to implementation.

[ENDS]

### **Images:**

Dr Justin Wong

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dT-v7yhh6zYUqZlqT54S\\_aKsDmZhIk8F/](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dT-v7yhh6zYUqZlqT54S_aKsDmZhIk8F/)

Professor Warwick Britton

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZapxJp-UNFRj5bWJso9bk95\\_D1TP9rCd/](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZapxJp-UNFRj5bWJso9bk95_D1TP9rCd/)

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**About the Centenary Institute**

The Centenary Institute is a world-leading independent medical research institute, closely affiliated to the University of Sydney and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Our research focuses on three key areas: cancer, inflammation and cardiovascular disease. Our strength lies in uncovering disease mechanisms and applying this knowledge to improve diagnostics and treatments for patients.

**For more information about the Centenary Institute, visit [centenary.org.au](http://centenary.org.au)**