



## **The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**

Minister for Health

Minister for Sport

## **The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM, MP**

Minister for Aged Care

Minister for Indigenous Health

Member for Hasluck

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

31 July 2017

### **\$40 million for dementia research projects**

The Turnbull Government is allocating more than \$40 million to medical research projects which will improve the lives of Australians fighting dementia.

Dementia is one of the leading causes of death in Australia and we must do everything we can to investigate and the causes and effects of this terrible disease.

People with dementia and their carers helped set the priorities for these research projects and contributed to the expert review which picked the successful grants.

The 45 projects receiving funding are critical to addressing this growing health issue and in accelerating our fight to prevent, diagnose, treat and manage dementia, including its most common form, Alzheimer's disease.

In 2017, there are estimated to be 413,106 Australians living with dementia and by 2025 this number is expected to increase to 536,000.<sup>2</sup>

This is not just an Australian issue, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognises dementia as a global public health priority.

Dementia is more likely to occur amongst Aboriginal people and over 8 per cent of the proposed funding has a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

One of the projects led by Dr Jamie Bryant at the University of Newcastle, and will look at improving timely diagnosis and provision of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with dementia.

Over \$1.2 million will go into support, identification and improved services for indigenous people living with dementia, led by Dr Bryant's team, in close collaboration with Aboriginal Health Services.

Investigating ways in which dementia and diabetes are linked as well as considering prevention of both will be a key part of Dr Ryusuke Takech's project based at Curtin University.

Finding ways to improve sleep as a way of reducing dementia will be a project led by Dr Craig Phillips from the University of Sydney.

They will explore the pathophysiological mechanisms that link disturbed sleep and circadian rhythm with cognitive impairment and dementia.

This research will investigate how circadian disruption in patients with obstructive sleep apnoea and mild cognitive impairment can affect the body and brain vascular function.

These projects will be administered by the Commonwealth's peak research body, the National Health and Medical Research Council.

A full list of grant recipients is available on the NHMRC website: [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au).

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) *Causes of Death, Australia, 2015* (cat. no. 3303.0)

<sup>2</sup> The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling NATSEM (2016) *Economic Cost of Dementia in Australia 2016-2056*

(ENDS)

## **Highlighted grants**

### **Professor Christopher Etherton-Beer—University of Western Australia | \$586,840.40**

*Team Approach to Polypharmacy Evaluation and Reduction for General Practice patients with dementia: the Australian TAPERdem study*

Dementia frequently coexists with other chronic conditions, posing a challenge to optimise medication use. Suboptimal pharmacological management of multiple chronic conditions exacerbates the rate of functional decline of people with dementia. The present study will determine to what extent improved medication management produces better health and functional outcomes for people with dementia.

### **Professor Robert Sanson-Fisher—University of Newcastle | \$ 1,312,455.40**

*A multi-component web-based intervention to improve the wellbeing of people with dementia and their carers: a randomised controlled trial*

People with dementia in rural and regional communities and their informal caregivers experience a multitude of unmet needs, which can lead to lower quality of life and higher health care utilisation costs. An international Community of Practice will adapt a web-based program developed by European researchers to the Australian context. The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the program in improving quality of life of people with dementia and their caregivers in rural areas will be examined.

### **Doctor Kate Laver—Flinders University of South Australia | \$770,517.80**

*'Agents of Change': Improving post diagnosis care for people with dementia and their carers through the establishment of a National Quality Collaborative to implement guideline recommendations*

This project aims to improve outcomes for people with dementia and their carers by focussing on three areas of post diagnostic care: exercise, multicomponent occupational therapy to promote independence and carer support programs. The project will establish networks with health professionals at a variety of organisations across Australia and work with these health professionals to improve care practices within their organisation.

### **Associate Professor Dina LoGiudice—University of Melbourne | \$2,172,421.95**

*Improving Detection and management of dementia in older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders attending Primary Care (IDEA-PC)*

This project will co-design, implement and evaluate a nationwide culturally responsive model of care for primary care professionals to optimise the detection and management of dementia and cognitive impairment in older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Rates of dementia are triple those of other communities and this research aims to optimise the well-being of older people with dementia, their families and communities throughout their journey of care.

### **Doctor Theresa Scott—University of Queensland | \$1,868,907.00**

*Supporting older adults with dementia with driving cessation and mobility: An innovative telehealth approach*

The project addresses dementia and driving cessation, a significant life event for people with dementia and challenge in primary care. Researchers will translate an evidence-based driving cessation intervention into a telehealth model and implement it in a national cluster randomised controlled trial. Expectations are that drivers with dementia will make independent decisions about stopping driving; however interventions are urgently needed to support people with dementia, their families and GPs to manage the challenges.