



## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010

### **MAJOR CANCER RESEARCH BOOST – Australian Cancer Research Foundation awards \$6million to 3 world-class cancer research initiatives**

Australia's best scientists have been given a major boost in their fight against cancer, with the announcement today of \$6million worth of grants from the Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF) to the nation's finest research institutions.

The Foundation awarded a total of three grants - **\$2million to The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (Melbourne), \$2.4million to Western Australian Institute for Medical Research and \$1.6million to Monash Institute of Medical Research (Melbourne).**

Today's announcement is in addition to the 'top-up' grant of \$2.5 million the ACRF pledged earlier this week to The Kinghorn Cancer Centre, a joint facility of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research and St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.

The ACRF grants are directed at **creating the infrastructure**, notably **new laboratories and equipment**, to fast-track key research and increase the knowledge of ways to prevent cancer and develop more effective treatments.

"With these grants, ACRF continues our critical contribution to world-class, breakthrough projects," said ACRF Chairman Mr. Tom Dery.

"Essentially, we are **accelerating innovative cancer research across this country** by providing our best scientists with the infrastructure and equipment to do their jobs more effectively and quickly."

Walter and Eliza Hall Institute Director, Professor Doug Hilton believes the ACRF support

Australian Cancer Research Foundation  
ABN 27 076 461 360 ACN 002 774 727 CFN 13585

GPO Box 9989, Sydney NSW 2001  
Suite 409, The Strand Arcade, 412 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
Telephone: 61 2 9223 7833 Facsimile: 61 2 9223 1800 Email: [info@acrf.com.au](mailto:info@acrf.com.au) Web: [www.acrf.com.au](http://www.acrf.com.au)

**Founding Chairman** The Late Sir Peter Abeles AC. **Founding Trustee** The Late Lady (Sonia) McMahon. **Board of Trustees** Mr T S Dery (Chairman), Mr A J Boettcher OAM, Mr G J Camm, Mr T Crommelin, Mr C Gantner AO, Mr S Gerlach AM, Mr P A Jones, Mr J M Millar, Mr S J Perrott, Mr S R Rix, Sir Ian Turbott AO CMG CVO HonDLitt, Dr J Yu AC. **Chief Executive** Mr D Brettell. **Medical Research Advisory Committee** Prof I Frazer (Chairman), Prof J Adams, Prof G Chenevix-Trench, Prof D Hilton, Prof P Hogg, Prof P Klinken, A/Prof G J Lindeman, Prof T J Martin AO, Prof C R Parish, Prof J Stow, Prof J A Trapani, Prof G P Young, Prof M A Vadas.



means cancer research that might have taken 5-10 years will now be able to be completed next year.

“Advances in cancer treatment requires research breakthroughs and research breakthroughs require teams,” said Professor Hilton. “This grant will allow us to build on our breakthroughs in breast cancer and extend this to lung and ovarian cancer. The funding will also provide facilities that will maximise our chances of using chemistry to generate **new cancer medicines**.

“The ACRF labs make our dream of creating a new division of Stem Cells and Cancer and a new division of Chemical Biology a reality.”

Deputy Director of the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research, Professor Peter Leedman said the research grant will **profoundly change the landscape for cancer research in Western Australia**.

“For the first time ever in WA we will be able to subject our pre-clinical models of cancer to more intensive scrutiny and imaging which will **speed up progressions of new therapeutic advances with cancer**,” said Professor Leedman.

Monash Institute of Medical Research’s Director Professor Bryan Williams said the ACRF fills a vital niche by funding expensive, crucial infrastructure, particularly in the area of new technology development.

“This is critical to enable cancer researchers not only to advance the discovery process to access new technologies but also to fast-track research and provide new outcomes to cancer patients,” said Professor Williams.

Mr Dery added that this year’s review process was extremely tough due to the high number



of quality applications. The ACRF received 13 applications from Australia's leading scientists.

"While we were able to fund the very best projects, many missed out, some of which have the breakthrough potential to save the lives of the one in three Australians who will be diagnosed with cancer," said Mr. Dery.

"The challenge to overcome cancer continues, but one day we aim to fund every project which meets our high standard of world-class research," continued Mr Dery. "We are all relying on our scientists to find the cures. They rely on us to keep their work going."

The ACRF has now provided **41 grants totalling \$70.5 million** to Australian cancer research institutes since 1987 (\$48.5 million of which has been awarded in just the last six years).

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## 2010 ACRF GRANT RECIPIENTS

**The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI), Melbourne - \$2million grant** to assist funding the Institute's two new cancer divisions (Stem Cells & Cancer / Chemical Biology). This will significantly increase their capacity for independent biomedical research, enhance their outstanding track record in cancer stem cell investigation, and cancer cell biology programs (especially breast and lung).

**Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) – ACRF Cancer Imaging Facility - \$2.4million grant** to fund a highly expensive scanner for imaging tumour development, confocal equipment, microscopic equipment for envisaging tumour growth, and ultrasound equipment for locating tumours. This will maximise Western Australia's capacity to promote innovation in cancer research, and ensure a high quality imaging hub to facilitate world-class cancer discoveries with direct relevance to clinical outcomes.

**Monash Institute of Medical Research Melbourne – ACRF Centre for Cancer Genomics Medicine - \$1.6million grant** to purchase state-of-the-art genomic technologies to facilitate

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Telephone: 61 2 9223 7833 Facsimile: 61 2 9223 1800 Email: [info@acrif.com.au](mailto:info@acrif.com.au) Web: [www.acrif.com.au](http://www.acrif.com.au)

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cancer genomic research, including microRNA expression profiles and DNA methylation analysis critical for cancer epigenetic research. Their scientists have a strong track record in molecular genetics research and this new equipment will help maintain their high quality research and world-class competitiveness in the field.

**For more information contact:**

Tom Dery – ACRF Chairman – (02) 9270 2752 or

David Brettell – ACRF Chief Executive – 0414 521 879

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