

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Medical Research



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MEDICAL RESEARCHERS DRIVING INNOVATION AND SAVING LIVES

The Allan Labor Government is helping more local researchers pursue innovative medical research projects, with new grants backing world-leading research projects that save lives here in Victoria and around the world.

Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll visited Sunshine Hospital earlier this week to announce the latest recipients of the Labor Government's Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund (VMRAF).

The Government's investment of \$2.9 million through the VMRAF supports early-stage research and fast-tracks research projects to real-world impact – improving the health outcomes of people locally and globally.

Grants of up to \$100,000 support early-stage innovative research projects that have the potential for practical application at a later stage, and grants of up to \$500,000 will assist researchers in translating their products and practices into clinical or healthcare settings.

Grants have been awarded to 10 projects across eight institutions, including Western Health's maternal care research team who will run a clinical trial to test an antibiotic for treating Amniotic Fluid Sludge (AFS) – a major contributor to preterm births.

Every year in Australia, 28,000 infants are born preterm which can be an incredibly stressful time for new parents. Thanks to the VMRAF grant, Western Health's research could help more babies reach full term for a safe and healthy start to their lives.

Since 2017, the VMRAF has invested more than \$22 million to advance Victoria's medical research sector, supporting 123 research projects and fast-tracking results so more patients can receive life-changing treatment.

The Labor Government's investment of more than \$1 billion in medical research since 2015 has cemented Victoria as a world leader in medical research, with a workforce of more than 30,000 driving incredible breakthroughs in treatment and patient care.

In a further boost to the state's sector, Victoria recently secured more than 40 per cent of the Commonwealth's medical research funding for the ninth year in a row – more than any other state.

More information on the fund and a list of recipients can be viewed at djsir.vic.gov.au/vmraf.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll

"We're backing local researchers like the maternal care team at Western Health, who are working hard to ensure our littlest Victorians are born safe and healthy."

"Life-changing research doesn't just happen overnight – it is the hard work of medical research teams who strive each day to deliver better health outcomes. Their dedication is why Victoria is a global leader in medical research."

Quote attributable to Western Health Head of Maternal Fetal Medicine Professor Joanne Said

"Through our pilot trial, we hope to establish the effectiveness of an antibiotic in reducing the risk of preterm births, saving costs to the Australian health system as well as improving health outcomes for mothers and their babies."

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