

Media Release

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



Friday, 2 August 2024

HELPING VICTORIA'S EMERGING RESEARCHERS MAKE THEIR MARK

The Allan Labor Government is backing Victoria's talented medical researchers to pursue projects that save lives.

Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll today announced that applications are now open for the Labor Government's *Fostering Achievement in Research (FAIR)* Fellowships, with early to mid-career researchers who narrowly missed out on national funding opportunities set to share in up to \$1 million in funding.

The Fellowship program is open to researchers across Victoria who were unsuccessful in the Federal Government's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding and will use existing grant review processes and co-funding from organisations to help researchers continue their work and apply for future national grants.

Under the current Australian funding landscape, early and mid-career researchers face a competitive grant pool with only a 10 to 15 per cent success rate.

The Fellowships acknowledge this challenge and supports researchers in continuing their valuable work – retaining talented people in the workforce and continuing professional development.

It will also strengthen diversity and inclusion in Victoria's medical research sector by supporting outstanding emerging and future leaders who face challenges to success including women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

A pilot of the program launched in 2022 and backed 11 recipients to advance their research through the program, with 6 of the 11 recipients reapplying for national funding and securing NHMRC grants for their research.

Among the recipients was Associate Professor Eliza Hawkes from Monash University who faced career disruptions due to personal circumstances. Through the pilot program, Eliza was able to progress her lymphoma clinical trials and build research proposals to successfully secure a national grant.

Since 2015, the Labor Government has invested more than \$1 billion in medical research to support our world-leading scientists and researchers in their pursuit of improved health outcomes for Victorians today.

This year, Victoria's medical researchers received over 40 per cent of the NHMRC funding, which is the highest national share.

For more information and to apply for the *FAIR* Fellowships visit veski.org.au/fair-fellowships/.

Quote attributable to Minister for Medical Research Ben Carroll

"The FAIR Fellowships help level the playing field for Victoria's talented early and mid-career researchers to continue their crucial work. It is a vote of confidence in their work, despite narrowly missing out on federal funding."

Quote attributable to Chair of the Victorian Chapter of the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes Professor Ricky Johnstone

"Programs like this achieve measurable progress in addressing equity, diversity and inclusion in our medical research workforce, and the positive impact on our cohort of early to mid-career researchers facing systemic barriers and uncertainty in their careers, can be life changing."

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