

24 January 2012

Trust provides more medical equipment

The Harold and Cora Brennen Benevolent Trust will distribute \$96,500 in its first of two rounds of grants in 2012, to medical institutions in Victoria to purchase equipment to assist in their research.

The Trust was established in 1996 by Mr Harold Brennen. He specified that the funds be used to “support the purchase of equipment and instruments for the purposes of medical research into all aspects of medicine or surgery, but specifically excluding research into creating human life”.

The recipients of the 2012 distributions are:

- Alfred Health’s work into development new treatments and preventative strategies for squamous cell carcinoma, a form of skin cancer (\$62,500)
- Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, which is researching a condition known as ‘insulin resistance’, where the body doesn’t respond normally to insulin (\$30,000)
- Royal Women’s Hospital Foundation and its work into the cause and treatment of pre-eclampsia in pregnant women, a serious condition that can lead to very premature births (\$4,000).

In each instance, the funds will be used to purchase new equipment needed to allow the work to continue.

Ms Tabitha Lovett, head of philanthropy at Equity Trustees which administers the Trust, said that it is an excellent example of the ongoing and long-term support and assistance that charitable foundations can provide.

“Since its inception, the trust has distributed over \$1.5 million through 65 grants to hospitals and research institutes to purchase much-needed equipment for medical research projects.”

Dr Charbel Darido from the Alfred said that the funding will allow researchers to purchase a Fluorchem M Multifluor System that will allow the examination of proteins in cancer cells.

“Squamous cell cancer is most commonly seen as a form of skin cancer caused by exposure to the sun, but our researchers are focussed on the form of squamous cell cancer that affects the lungs, tongue and throat, and which is particularly virulent and has high mortality rates.

“Our laboratory has recently made a significant breakthrough by identifying a critical gene that, when lost, leads to the development of the cancer. This work has received international recognition and we hope to ultimately define strategies to prevent squamous cell cancer,” he said.

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