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Heart Foundation fellowships for Menzies researchers

Two researchers at the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research have been awarded prestigious Heart Foundation of Australia Fellowships.

Associate Professor Verity Cleland has received a Future Leader Fellowship of \$560,000 over four years to continue her work looking at ways to improve heart health through walking and cycling for transport.

"We know that regular physical activity reduces the risk of heart attack and helps control other risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity. Unfortunately, since the 1980s, less than half of Australian adults have been active enough to prevent disease.

"If all adults met physical activity recommendations, this would prevent at least 11% of Australian and 6% of global heart disease, saving more than \$805 million each year in Australia and preventing more than three million deaths each year worldwide."

The project will explore how walking, cycling and using public transport contributes to cardiovascular health. It will also look at how to promote and incentivise people to incorporate more physical activity in their day to day life through incidental exercise, and working to understand better how to create environments that support more walking and cycling.

Dr Dean Picone has been awarded a Heart Foundation 2020 Postdoctoral Fellowship of \$150,000 over two years, with an additional \$20,000 Paul Korner Innovation Award, as he submitted one of the top innovative projects in the round.

Dr Picone's Postdoctoral Fellowship will enable him to continue his work on refining the measurement of blood pressure.

"Ultimately, we hope this will lead to better diagnosis and medical care of people with high blood pressure, to reduce global death and illness from cardiovascular disease." Dr Picone said.

The Director of the Menzies Institute, Distinguished Professor Alison Venn, congratulated the researchers on their fellowships.

“Verity and Dean’s work is indicative of the globally significant research being undertaken at Menzies. If we can improve prevention, diagnosis and how we treat cardiovascular conditions, we will be making a significant impact on one of the world’s major health problems.”

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