Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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MND funding boost will investigate drug treatment

Almost $1 million in funding for research into a potential drug therapy for motor neurone disease (MND) will flow to the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

The funding is part of a $7.8 million allocation for research from FightMND announced recently by the Foundation's co-founder and patron and former AFL footballer, Neale Daniher, who is living with MND.

The $936,575 for Menzies will go into research conducted by the Institute’s Deputy Director and leader of neurodegenerative disease research, Associate Professor Tracey Dickson.

“This funding will allow us to take the knowledge we have gained in our last 10 years of laboratory research into MND at Menzies and put that into the development of a drug for treatment and/or prevention of MND,” Associate Professor Dickson said.

“We will be investigating the possibility of repurposing an existing drug that has been approved for clinical trials for other conditions, to see whether this drug is suitable for a clinical trial to treat people with MND.”

Until now Associate Professor Dickson’s research group at Menzies has been researching the mechanism in the central nervous system that underlies MND. “We are now poised to transition our research efforts from determining the cause of MND to using this knowledge to develop a treatment and hopefully ultimately a cure,” she said.

Philanthropic support from the Tasmanian community has been a key driver of Associate Professor Dickson’s research. “Our MND research has received vital support from foundations, community groups, families and individuals from throughout Tasmania. These donations have sown the seeds that have enabled our research to grow to the point where we are now nationally competitive in seeking large grants that have the potential to change the course of the disease.”

The FightMND grant will cover a three-year program of MND research led by Associate Professor Dickson.

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