University dementia and Alzheimer’s research receives $2.6 million in national funding

University of Tasmania research into dementia and Alzheimer’s disease has received a boost of just over $2.6 million in the latest National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grants round.

The University secured three NHMRC Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowships, providing support to each researcher over four years.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Brigid Heywood said the projects would build on the University’s considerable body of work in the area of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease research and on the University’s reputation for excellence in research.

“Dementia is now the second major cause of death in Australia, and is increasing in prevalence worldwide,” Professor Heywood said.

“She University’s research in this significant area has already had a proven, positive impact on the community and this new funding will help us continue our efforts.”

**Fellowships were awarded to:**

- Dr Brad Sutherland, Faculty of Health - School of Medicine (717,707.95), *Pericyte dysfunction limiting energy supply in Alzheimer’s disease*. The project looks at how changes in blood flow in the brain lead to the development of Alzheimer’s disease and at novel therapies for the disease targeting a specific cell called pericytes, to improve blood flow in the brain.

- Dr Michele Callisaya, Menzies Institute for Medical Research (533,119.60), *Improving the health of older Australians at risk of dementia - The role of physical function and exercise.*
• Associate Professor Anna King, Faculty of Health - Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre ($720,144.00), *Detecting Biomarkers of Brain Health in Dementia*. The project aims to determine whether a blood test can be developed to show changes inside the brain that may indicate that nerve cells are degenerating.

The grants bring with them additional block funding, which takes the total value to the University and the State to just over $2.6 million.

The NHMRC is Australia's largest health and medical research funding body. The Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Scheme (Fellowship) aims to support the best emerging dementia researchers and attract scientists into dementia research from other fields.

For interviews with recipients contact the University media office on 6226 2124.

**Information released by:**
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