

## **Cell Researchers Gain Healthy Funds Injection**

**22 July 2009**

**Melbourne:** Seven promising human health research programs across Australia received grants totalling nearly \$500,000 from the country's cell therapies funding agency.

Dr Stewart Hay, Chief Executive Officer of Research Infrastructure Support Services (RISS) Ltd, said today's announcement reflected the rapid growth of emerging cellular-based technologies taking place in Australia and overseas.

"Since RISS Ltd's establishment in 2007, we've seen a significant increase in the number and quality of projects occurring around the country. It's an extremely exciting time to be in the field of manufacture of human cell and cellular-based products for transplantation," Dr Hay said.

Two of the recipients include Calimmune – a promising alternative approach to the treatment of HIV/AIDS and a team at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR), investigating the use of dendritic cells in the treatment of glioblastoma.

"The research being undertaken by Calimmune and by QIMR reflect the high calibre of work in this promising field and we look forward to working with these groups and many others to help ensure that the projects continue to move towards clinical trials and then onto the healthcare market," Dr Hay said.

The grants totalled \$459,000 and were distributed among the following research teams:

### **RISS Ltd Grant Recipients**

- ***Griffith University, National Centre for Adult Stem Cell Research – Olfactory Ensheathing Cells to Treat Spinal Cord Injury.***
- ***Calimmune Australia – Gene Therapy for Treatment of HIV/AIDS.***
- ***Royal Perth Hospital – Mesenchymal Stromal Cells to Treat Steroid Refractory Graft versus Host Disease.***
- ***Cell Therapies Pty Ltd – Novel MRI Cell Tracking Project.***
- ***Queensland Institute of Medical Research – Dendritic Cell Immunotherapy to Treat Glioblastoma.***
- ***Royal Perth Hospital – Allogenic Fibroblast Cell Therapy to Treat Recessive Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa.***
- ***Cell Therapies Pty Ltd & Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre – Transduced Autologous Peripheral Blood T Lymphocytes for Treatment of Patients with Multiple Myeloma, Acute Myeloid Leukaemia or High-Risk Myelodysplastic Syndrome.***

**(Note: More information on these projects is available by contacting Dr Hay at RISS Ltd. See below for contact details).**

With today's announcement, RISS Ltd now has allocated \$2.4 million in funding to 15 research groups and five cell therapy centres across Australia since its establishment less than two years ago.

Dr Hay encouraged researchers and facility owners working in the field to apply for the next round of grants, to be awarded in November. Details are available on the RISS Ltd website.

RISS Ltd is a non-for-profit company established in 2007 and funded under the Commonwealth Government's National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS).



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