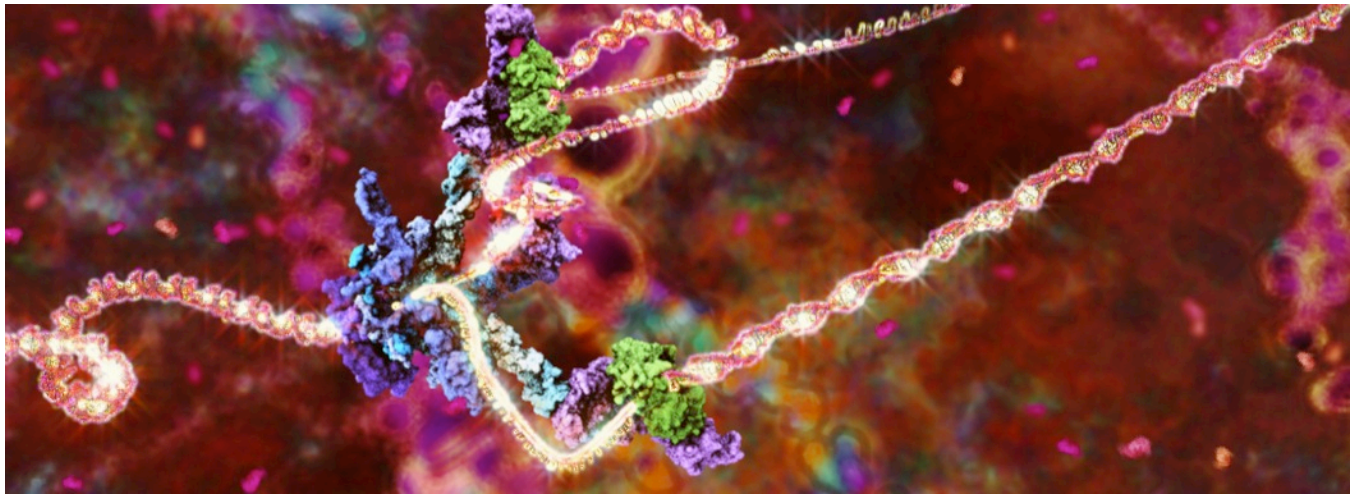
Making Donations and Bequests to Health & Medical Research

Research Australia





Supporting health and medical research with a donation or bequest is relatively easy. Most Australian health and medical research is conducted in our public universities and medical research institutes (and some public hospitals), and these entities are generally eligible to receive tax deductible donations, as are the foundations and trust that raise money specifically for health and medical research. (Check with the organisation before making a donation.)

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Donations and bequests

A donation is an amount that you give away to a charitable cause while you are alive. A bequest is an amount that you nominate in your will to be given to a charitable cause after you die. Medical research undertaken by a not for profit organisation such as a hospital, university or medical research institute is a charitable cause.

Determining which specific health and medical research projects should receive your support can be challenging. You might want to support research that improves our understanding of the brain, seeks a cure for a particular disease or condition, or supports the work of a particular person or organisation. All these are possible. The following are some suggestions.

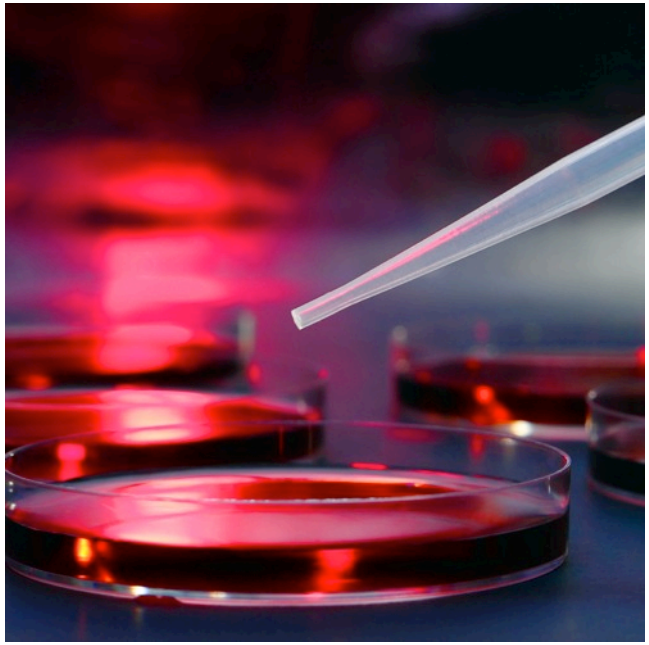
Funding research into a specific disease or condition

You may wish to support research into a specific disease or condition. This may be research into the search for a cure, improved diagnosis or better ways to support individuals with the condition (and their families). Many organisations have a research focus on a particular condition or disease.

Photo: Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, Research Australia's Great Australian Philanthropy Award recipient 2003.







Funding research by a specific organisation

You may have had previous experience with a particular organisation, for example a hospital, and want to contribute to that hospital or a research institute connected to that hospital. Or you might choose to support a university where you studied, or an organisation undertaking research in your local community.

Supporting students

Health and medical researchers typically undertake an undergraduate degree followed by either a Masters Degree or a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD). This involves anywhere from 7 to 10 or more years of study, during which time the individual has to support themselves without being able to work more than part time at most.

Funding projects

Some people prefer to donate to clearly-defined projects. Projects can address a wide range of research questions across various health conditions and disciplines. Examples are:

- a laboratory-based research project to investigate the action of a particular protein;
- a hospital based clinical trial to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular therapy; or
- research to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular community health program in promoting healthy behaviours.



Supporting career development

Forging a career in health and medical research requires dedication and commitment, and the financial rewards can be small. Researchers undertake many years of study and constantly have to develop their techniques, knowledge and networks.

Following completion of their studies, early to mid-career researchers need to be able to fund their research. Without a track record of previous research and publications, it can be difficult to attract government funding.

Even if they have secured a paid research position, researchers often need financial support to attend or present at conferences and scientific meetings in Australia and overseas, and to fund the costs of materials for experiments.

Support can be provided in the form of Fellowships (an income for a fixed period) or as a contribution to specific costs and expenses.

Universities and medical research institutes provide a range of opportunities to support the work of their early to mid career researchers.

Opportunity to develop research expertise

Dr Traini is an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney, based at the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research. Her research investigates how to formulate drugs so that they can be administered by inhalation.

Receiving support from the Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Foundations early in her career offered her the perfect opportunity to build her own niche area of research, boost her independent studies, become competitive for government grants and increase her international reputation.

Learn more about the Ramaciotti Foundations at www.perpetual.com.au/ramaciotti



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Funding equipment, infrastructure & capital works

In order to generate successful outcomes, health and medical research is reliant on appropriate workspaces and equipment. A single significant item of equipment will rarely be used by one researcher alone, with different researchers sharing equipment and technology.

Research laboratories often require total or partial refits to meet updated workplace safety regulations and to provide safe working environments for researchers. In recent years, we have seen a growing need for construction of new, dedicated research facilities. Funding equipment, infrastructure and capital works is a way to make a tangible lasting contribution to health and medical research.

Supporting innovation

Innovative and ‘niche’ research projects often have difficulty in attracting support from established government programs or commercial investors. Governments tend to want to fund ‘safe’ research and corporations usually want some certainty that they will get a return on their investment. Really revolutionary ideas are at first often seen as too high risk or unconventional to attract funding. As a consequence, some of the greatest scientific breakthroughs have occurred as a result of research conducted with support from donations and bequests. Many universities and research institutes have projects of this sort for which they are seeking philanthropic funding.

Australian innovation



The Australian Bionic Ear

The Australian Bionic Ear is the result of pioneering research commenced by Professor Graeme Clark in the late 1960s at the University of Melbourne's Department of Otolaryngology.

At the time, scientists said that a successful bionic ear or cochlear implant was not possible in the foreseeable future. This made it difficult to get funding, and Professor Clark and his staff had to seek donations from the general public to establish the work.

In 1978, the prototype multiple-electrode Bionic Ear was implanted in the first adult at The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital by Graeme Clark and his colleagues. The team discovered how to analyse the complex speech signal and present it as electrical stimulation to the hearing nerve so that speech could be understood. In addition, they were successful in engineering a speech processor small enough for the patient to wear.

As a result of this ground-breaking research, the Australian Government awarded a public interest grant that helped the Australian firm Cochlear Limited to develop the Bionic Ear industrially. In 1982, the first device for clinical trial world-wide was implanted at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. The international trial established that it was safe and effective and it was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1985, the first multiple-electrode Bionic Ear to be approved by any world regulatory body.

In 1985, the team implanted the first child with a multiple-electrode Bionic Ear. This Bionic Ear was developed industrially by Cochlear Limited in co-operation with The University of Melbourne and The Bionic Ear Institute. This was the start of a world-wide trial for the Bionic Ear and its use in young children.

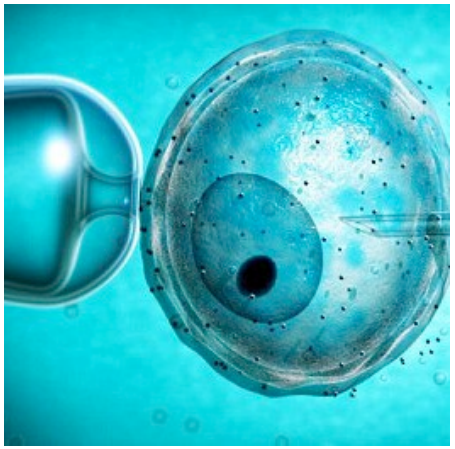
It was approved as safe and effective for use in children born deaf or developing hearing difficulties early in life by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1990. It has also been approved by the Chinese and other world regulatory bodies. It is considered by many to be the first major advance in helping profoundly deaf children to communicate in the last 200 years since signing was established at the Paris Deaf School.

The Australian Bionic Ear has now been implanted in hundreds of thousands of people in over 100 countries. Learn more at Cochlear's History of Innovation, www.cochlear.com









Where will I make my donation or bequest?

Research Australia has developed a worksheet that may help clarify the reasons that are important to you and thus help you make a decision about what you want to support with a donation or bequest.

We also have a database of our member organisations that undertake health and medical research and can accept bequests and tax deductible donations. This database can be searched by the types of research the organisations undertake and the diseases or conditions they are seeking to address. This database can be searched by following this link:

http://www.researchaustralia.org/search-directory

The search results provide a description of the organisation and a link to the organisation's website where you can obtain more information, including how you can make a donation or bequest.

Alternatively you can conduct you own internet search, to identify research organisations in particular locations.

If you can't find the information you need on the organisation's website, contact them by phone or email to explain what it is you are looking for and what you have in mind.



For information please refer to these other resources:

- What is Health and Medical Research?
- Why Support Health and Medical Research?

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AN ALLIANCE FOR DISCOVERIES IN HEALTH