

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR PRESTIGIOUS PRO-LIFE MEDICAL RESEARCH GRANT**

Australian-based medical researchers are invited to apply for a grant of \$100,000 to support a diverse range of research all focused on supporting vulnerable human life.

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> pro-life medical research grant offered by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney since 2003.

The research may investigate medical approaches to assisting infertile couples, medical treatments conducted on babies in-utero, palliative care treatments at all stages of life with a focus on pain management or research involving the therapeutic use of adult stem cells.

The Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP said the grant is aimed at supporting innovative research which respects Catholic moral teachings.

“We are committed to a culture of life, including scientific research that respects human life from conception until natural death”, Archbishop Fisher said.

“At a time when many state parliaments have implemented laws that attack the sanctity of life through abortion or euthanasia, and the federal parliament is considering laws to allow the creation of babies with three genetic parents, these research grants are more important than ever to advance responsible medical research which respects the dignity of human life”.

As part of the research grant, medical researchers report back on how they have practically used the grant to potentially improve health outcomes for patients.

The 2015 recipient, Professor Nick Di Girolamo from the School of Medical Sciences at the University of NSW submitted his report this month entitled “Improving clinical outcomes for patients receiving corneal stem cell transplants”.

Professor Di Girolamo said the Archdiocese of Sydney grant has been pivotal to his work towards treating and potentially curing corneal disease that can cause blindness.

“To date we have located stem cells in the mouse cornea and we are beginning to validate our findings in adult human donor corneas which is very encouraging”, Professor Di Girolamo said.

“Through the award from the Archdiocese of Sydney, we were able to accrue key preliminary research data that helped us secure additional funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia and a soon to be awarded grant from the US Department of Defence, to progress our studies towards clinical outcomes”, he added.

“Our hope is that within four or five years, we will be able to clearly apply our findings on mice to humans. Ultimately this would lead to better treatments because patients would be able to receive transplants with better quality stem cells than are currently available”.

More information on the research grant, selection criteria and how to apply can be found online:  
<https://www.sydneycatholic.org/about-us/awards/medical-research-grants/>

Applications close on 18 October 2021 and the winner will be announced on 29 November 2021.

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