

Diabetes Australia Research Trust announced the largest-ever funding of Australian diabetes research projects last night on the eve of World Diabetes Day in Melbourne.

46 research projects were granted funding nationally, totalling \$3.5 million. 23 Victorian-based grants were allocated.

The largest allocated funding of \$150,000 in Victoria went to Dr Eliana Marino, Monash University, for the major Millennium Type 1 Diabetes Grant.

Dr Marino's research will focus on understanding the role of diet, gut microbiota and immune cells in the development of type 1 diabetes.

Diabetes Australia – Vic CEO Craig Bennett said that the generosity of Australians has made it possible to allocate the Trust's largest-ever funding towards diabetes research. "The 2014 Diabetes Australia Research Trust awardees are doing some of the most important work right now in Australia as diabetes will become the number one burden of disease in Australia within the next five years."

Dr Marino says that her research explores "a totally new and exciting area of investigation with huge impact in worldwide health as it represents a potential and safe therapeutic intervention to prevent and/or cure individuals with autoimmune type 1 diabetes."

"The incidence of type 1 diabetes in young people has been increasing particularly in 'Western lifestyle' countries where dietary habits and lifestyle have dramatically changed over the last decades. We believe that the intake of diet deficient in fibre, may increase the chances to be exposed to microbial pathogens which may result in developing type 1 diabetes."

World-wide, 382 million people are living with diabetes. Diabetes killed 5.1 million people around the world last year. In Australia, 280 people develop diabetes every day, adding to the 1.7 million Australians already diagnosed and living with it every day.

The 2013 World Diabetes Day's theme is 'protect our future', drawing attention to the fact that if diabetes was a country, it would be the third largest in the world – and it would be a rapidly growing country with a major health and productivity challenge. Today, Diabetes Australia lit a number of iconic buildings in blue to reflect the power of the global diabetes movement to alter the diabetes landscape.

### **About the Diabetes Australia Research Trust**

Established by Diabetes Australia in 1987, the Trust supports and develops the field of diabetes research in Australia through providing funding towards the prevention, management and cure of diabetes, as well as enabling and fostering young and upcoming researchers in diabetes research.

### **Support the Diabetes Australia Research Trust**

Diabetes Australia Research Trust funding applications were up by again this year. We rely on the generosity and support of our member organisations, of trusts and foundations, special sponsorship from Underworks Socks and from individual donors.

Diabetes Australia – Vic is a leading member organisation of Diabetes Australia and a major contributor to the national research program, this year providing \$1.2 million.

**Project scope** - Gut microbiota and SCFAS play a key role in the pathogenesis of type 1 diabetes, by Dr Eliana Marino

This study is focused on understanding the role of diet, the gut microbiota and immune cells in the development of T1D. This is a novel approach to understand T1D, since "metabolite sensors" have not been explored as molecules responsible for driving T1D pathogenesis. Diet and the gut microbiota is now a leading suspect for the increased incidence of diabetes in western countries. We believe that low intake of dietary fiber in western countries leads to an altered microbiota, altered gut homeostasis and increased exposure to microbial pathogens, resulting in corruption of immunological tolerance. If diet/microbiota does underlie development of T1D in humans, then assessment of the mechanisms whereby metabolite sensors influence immune responses, particularly in T1D, will be a new avenue of investigation to understand disease pathogenesis. This could lead to new strategies to prevent or treat T1D.

**About the eftpos Giveback campaign**

Eftpos Australia recently announced that Diabetes Australia will be a beneficiary of the annual Giveback campaign with up to \$1 million subject to community support by pressing CHQ or SAV when purchasing between now and Christmas 2013. The funds will help Diabetes Australia to invest in a leading edge, online platform to enable people with diabetes to access the information, services, supports and products relevant for them anytime, anywhere, from any mobile device.

**FOR INTERVIEW:**

Craig Bennett, Diabetes Australia – Vic CEO

Prof Greg Johnson, Diabetes Australia CEO

Dr Eliana Marino, Millennium Type 1 Diabetes Grant recipient

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

Lyn Curtis P 9667 1714 M 0411 019 924 E [lcurtis@diabetesvic.org.au](mailto:lcurtis@diabetesvic.org.au)

Ali Hickerson P 9667 1744 M 0455 043 324 E [ahickerson@diabetesvic.org.au](mailto:ahickerson@diabetesvic.org.au)