



# Funding approved for tuberculosis, HPV research projects

18 December 2012

Papilloma virus infections and superbug tuberculosis strains will come under renewed attack, after the federal government today agreed to support two University of Queensland research projects.

The funding will allow [Professor Ian Frazer](#) — co-inventor of the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine — to seek treatments for people infected with the cancer-promoting viruses.

The second project — led by [Professor Matt Cooper](#) of UQ's [Institute for Molecular Bioscience](#) — will improve the treatment and control of tuberculosis, which affects every country in the world and causes two million deaths a year.

Health Minister [Tanya Plibersek](#) said the [National Health and Medical Research Council](#)'s Development Grant scheme would provide \$513,630 for Professor Cooper's three-year tuberculosis project, and \$209,782 for Professor Frazer's HPV study, over two years.

Scholarship funding for seven UQ PhD students also was announced yesterday.

Professor Cooper said current tuberculosis treatments required patients to take four drugs for six to nine months.

"This prolonged treatment means many patients don't finish the course of medicine. This has led to the TB bacteria developing resistance to multiple drugs, so we need to develop new medications," he said.

"Reducing the treatment time would help us improve patient cure rates, contain TB's spread and potentially save millions of lives."

The [World Health Organisation](#) estimates one in three people is exposed to TB, which is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It becomes active when a person's immune system is compromised, as in HIV/AIDS patients.

Australia's [Torres Strait islands](#), which border Papua New Guinea, have been declared a multi-drug resistant TB hot spot, along with PNG, which will affect the long-term control of TB in Australia.

The incidence of TB in Australia's indigenous population is 10 times greater than in the wider community.

On the HPV project, Professor Frazer said his team would work with [Coridon Pty Ltd](#) to transform the HPV vaccine into a treatment to cure people already infected with cancer-promoting papilloma viruses.

Professor Frazer, head of the new [Translational Research Institute](#) in Brisbane, is the co-inventor of the vaccine known variously as Gardasil® and Cervarix®. The vaccine has been administered to 90 million people in more than 124 countries in the past decade.

"We have some understanding of what will be required to develop a therapeutic vaccine effective for persisting HPV infection in skin," Professor Frazer said.

He said the work would be an example of the collaborative effort to develop new treatments that TRI is designed to deliver to Australia.

"The project aims to find novel solutions for immunotherapy for cancer and chronic viral infections, and reflects our collective research expertise in immunology and Coridon's strength in optimising vaccine technologies," he said.

The UQ PhD students who received NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships will work on topics including *Biological drivers of lung cancer*, *Evaluation of swallowing sounds in children with dysphagia*, and *Assessing effectiveness of publicly funded vaccination programs in Queensland*.

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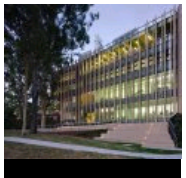


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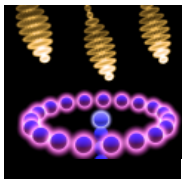


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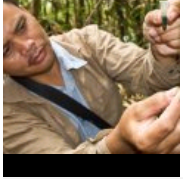
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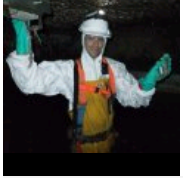
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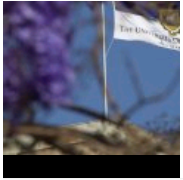
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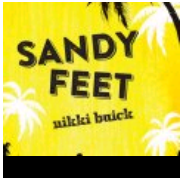
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