

**Media Release**  
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## **Aussie Kids Secure \$35 million to Find a Cure for Type 1 Diabetes**

### ***Largest ever single commitment to type 1 diabetes in Australia***

Many young Australians living with type 1 diabetes are celebrating after the Minister for Education, the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP today announced the award of \$35 million to fund the most promising research and researchers dedicated to finding a cure for type 1 juvenile diabetes and its complications. This is the largest ever single commitment to type 1 juvenile diabetes in Australia and JDRF's young advocates were the central force in securing it.

The young JDRF advocates asked Australian politicians to fully fund an expansion of JDRF's Type 1 Diabetes Clinical Research Network (T1DCRN), as part of the *Promise to Remember Me* campaign. The advocates and their families met with more than 135 politicians from electorates across the country. Countless letters, phone calls, tweets and facebook posts were also made. By sharing their personal stories, the JDRF advocates were able to explain to politicians some of the realities and risks of life with type 1 diabetes. This highlighted the urgent need for them to support funding for the T1DCRN.

Hannah Gordon, now 14 years old, was one such advocate who met with her local MP to discuss funding for research into finding a cure for type 1 juvenile diabetes. Hannah, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was seven years old, explained why research into finding a cure for type 1 diabetes was so important to her, saying "I want to know why I have type 1 diabetes. I know I couldn't prevent getting type 1 diabetes, but perhaps we could find a cure for me and possibly prevent others from developing it."

The campaign culminated in JDRF's *Kids in the House* lunch event held at Parliament House in Canberra in 2012. The event was attended by over 120 politicians from both parties and over 100 young JDRF advocates and their families. It was here that the Coalition (then in opposition) confirmed their election commitment to support the T1DCRN with \$35 million to be delivered over 5 years, a promise that has been delivered today.

"I feel overjoyed, it is really exciting and one big step towards finding a cure!" Hannah said upon hearing of the Australian Government's announcement today.

The funding (\$35 million over five years, or \$7 million each year) has been awarded to JDRF, the leading global organisation funding type 1 diabetes research by the Australian Research Council (ARC) under its *Special Research Initiatives* scheme. It will enable a significant expansion of JDRF's existing T1DCRN, supporting the prioritisation and delivery of real benefit to more than 122,300 Australians living with type 1 diabetes today.

JDRF's existing T1DCRN is a national collaborative network that supports and promotes the most promising emerging researchers and research projects in type 1 diabetes clinical research in Australia. Led by Australia's brightest minds in type 1 diabetes, it is built around an innovative model that facilitates national and international collaboration on cutting edge research projects.

The new Initiative will bring together and build research teams from multiple research disciplines to answer the most important type 1 diabetes research questions and brings us closer to finding a cure for type 1 juvenile diabetes and its complications.

JDRF Australia CEO Mike Wilson said: "This is an important moment for type 1 diabetes research in Australia and we are delighted to see the hard work and dedication of so many young JDRF advocates and their families pay off. We also recognise the important role that the Australian research community has played, delivering research that places them in the top echelons of global type 1 diabetes research."

The ARC funding will be used to significantly increase the excellence and impact of research in this field in Australia. It will also support the more efficient and effective delivery and adoption of research outcomes, build long-term research capacity in Australia, nurture the next generation of research leaders and create a more connected and cohesive research system.

Mike Wilson continued, "The funding award provides us with a secure stream of \$7 million each year for five years. The \$35 million will significantly increase the excellence of type 1 diabetes research in Australia and also reshape how the research system works and connects. Ultimately, it provides JDRF with an increased ability to positively impact the lives of people with type 1 diabetes – which is why JDRF exists."

Minister for Education, the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP said: "Australia has a proven record of progress in this difficult area of research. This Initiative will build Australia's capacity in type 1 juvenile diabetes research and position our researchers for national and international collaboration, delivery, adoption and investment."

The T1DCRN was initially launched by JDRF in 2011 through a \$5 million grant from the Australian Government and currently funds twelve projects and a number of other grants across Australia. Over the coming months, the new Initiative will be inviting research applications for cutting edge research projects along with applications for research capacity building.

"I know that the current researchers involved in the T1DCRN are 100 per cent devoted to finding a cure for type 1 diabetes and its complications, and now that there is new support from the Government, it's only a matter of time before people living with type 1 diabetes see hope for a cure turning into a reality," Hannah said.

**Further information, interviews or images, please call Catherine Strong 0406 759 268 or Lyndal Howison 0411 110 717.**

### **About Type 1 Diabetes and JDRF**

Typically striking young people, type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that destroys the body's ability to produce insulin, which is vital for life. Type 1 diabetes requires a daily regime of multiple injections or continuous infusion of insulin through a pump, as well as 6-8 finger-prick blood tests, just to stay alive. Researchers are working hard to understand the complicated mix of genetic and environmental factors that may cause or trigger this disease. However, it is certain that going on a diet or cutting down on sugar doesn't stop type 1 diabetes.

JDRF is the world's leading not-for-profit supporter of type 1 diabetes research globally, investing more than \$1.6 billion since 1970 including more than \$63 million into Australian research. JDRF's support has been behind most major advances in type 1 diabetes research in the past four decades. For more information, please visit [www.jdrf.org.au](http://www.jdrf.org.au).

### **About the Australian Research Council**

The Australian Research Council (ARC) is a statutory agency and advises the Government on research matters, manages the National Competitive Grants Program, a significant component of Australia's investment in research and development, and has responsibility for the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative.

The ARC's mission is to deliver policy and programs that advance Australian research and innovation globally and benefit the community.

In seeking to achieve its mission, the ARC supports the highest-quality fundamental and applied research and research training through national competition across a broad range of disciplines. In addition, the ARC brokers partnerships between researchers and industry, government, community organisations and the international community.

The outcomes of ARC-funded research deliver cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits to all Australians.

The [\*ARC Special Research Initiative for Type 1 Juvenile Diabetes\*](#) will fund a new research initiative which will support Juvenile Diabetes research through the ARC's Special Research Initiatives (SRI) scheme. The Australian Government has committed funding of up to \$35 million for a period of up to five years.

The Initiative will run a competitive process to select research proposals for a Network and Research Program, including team-based cross-disciplinary research projects. The Initiative's core function will include significant progress towards finding a cure for Type 1 Juvenile Diabetes.

[www.arc.gov.au](http://www.arc.gov.au)